# The Feast of PURIM

(An Annual Appointed Time)

"For Such a Time as This!"

"that these days of Purim should be observed at their appointed seasons."

Esther 9:31

The Feast of PURIM	page 1
Simple "Short" Bible Video Overview of the Book of Esther	page 3
The Story of Saul's Disobedience Demonstrates how very Important it is that We Obey God's Command: "Blot out the Memory of Amalek" and the Destructive Consequences even in Future Generations	page 4
Future Prophetic Fulfillment of the Feast of Lots	page 4
Holocaust Day – January 27 <sup>th</sup>	page 5

### The Feast of PURIM

"For Such a Time as This!"
Esther 4:14

**Purim/Feast of Lots:** (reading of the book of Esther)

**14th - 15th Adar** – "these days of Purim should be observed at their **appointed seasons**," **Esther 9:31** "For <u>if you keep silent at this time</u>, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place . . . <u>And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" **Esther 4:14**,</u>

(Begins at sundown and Ends at sundown)
2022
March 17, Thursday
2023
March 7, Tuesday
2024
March 24, Sunday

One of the most joyous of all the Biblical festivals, **Purim** (Festival of Lots), celebrations **the exemplary leadership and bravery of Hadassah** (Esther), a Jewish girl who rose to become ancient Persia's Queen Esther. As the queen, Esther risked death to uncover and overturn a plot to murder the Jewish People in Persia. Purim is a "Celebration of Forgetting" – forgetting our enemy's plan for our destruction and our remembering God's plan for his destruction instead – VICTORY OVER DEATH ("blot out the memory of Amalek," Exodus 17:14, "you shall blot out the memory of Amalek," Deuteronomy 25:19). Haman, the villain who wickedly plots to destroy the Jewish People, was a descendant of Agag, the king of the Amalekites, representing pure evil or those who have "given themselves over" to the dark side of impurity. Indeed, the name Amalek symbolically is an eye, meaning "doubt" and "haughty", therefore represents "the evil eye of doubt", understood in this way, Amalek represents spiritual blindness acting arrogantly in the world, and therefore the Lord vowed perpetual warfare against Amalek" (Ex 17:16). Concerning this verse, it suggests that God's rule will be incomplete until the powers of darkness are totally wiped off the face of the earth (by the hand of Jesus our Lord; see Revelation 19-20). Amalek embodies the principle of, the lack of the fear of God, and therefore represents the power of darkness and evil in the world.

**Like Esther, who submitted herself to a prolonged preparation time for the king, Believers, continuously dedicate themselves in preparation to meet Jesus their Messiah**. This process begins with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, who washes and renews us (*Titus 3:5*), brings us into unity (*Ephesians 4:3*) and enables us to obey the truth (*1 Peter 1:22*), among other important works. And like Esther who was **faithful, beautiful, pure, and courageous**, even to the point of being willing to lose her life to save her brethren, with the help of the Spirit, the Bride of Messiah is called to be faithful to God's word, beautifully pure in spirit, and courageous in sharing the truth of who Jesus is. As a result of their courage, many Believers, past, present, and future, suffer and will suffer severe persecution, even death. Relying on God and not her own talents and natural abilities, Esther, like Believers, know they cannot accomplish anything for the kingdom of God without relying totally on God's leading and protection. Carrying the full authority of the King and the seal of his signet ring, Esther to is able to

issue decrees that cannot be revoked (*Esther 8:8*), in the same manner, Jesus gives His followers the authority to defeat the works of the enemy (*Luke 10:19*).

The Holiday of PURIM always begin 30-days out from the Feast of Passover, annually during the same time of the beginning of Spring. Like Esther, are you called FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS?

"For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch." (Isaiah 62:1)

One of the most joyous of all Jewish celebrations, Purim (Festival of Lots), begins at sundown on Adar 13<sup>th</sup>. This fun and inspirational holiday celebrates the exemplary leadership and bravery of Hadassah, a Jewish girl who rose to become ancient Persia's Queen Esther. As the queen, Esther risked death to uncover and overturn a plot to murder the Jewish People in Persia. In struggling with the decision to seek the king's mercy, she modeled courage, wisdom, and perseverance, while rallying her people to fast and pray for their lives. The story of Esther can be our story. We may or may not reach the status of a queen, but each of us are placed in positions of influence where we can access God's wisdom to overturn schemes and expose evil plots against God's people and plans. Let's now take a closer look at how Esther did just that and what followers of Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah) can learn from her.

### Purim: Evil Plans and the Courage to Expose Them

The story of Purim is recorded in the Book of Esther (*Megillat Esther*). This wonderful book has three main characters: Esther and her cousin Mordecai, the heroes of the story, and Haman, the villain who wickedly plots to destroy the Jewish People. **Esther** is an orphan who had been raised in Persia by her cousin Mordecai. She grows into a beautiful, young Jewish woman who becomes part of the Persian king's harem after the king banishes the queen, Vashti, for her disobedience to him (*Esther 1*). Esther receives 12 months of beauty treatments and eats special food in preparation of being presented to the king. **The hidden hand of God is at work in her life while living in the king's harem.** He falls head over heels in love with her. The king loves her so much, in fact, that he singles her out to marry her and be his queen. **The king does not know, however, that Esther is a Jew,** since Mordecai had advised her not to reveal her identity.

While Esther is serving as queen, Mordecai uncovers a plot to kill the king, which saves the king's life. Yet, Mordecai's loyalty to the king does not earn him favor with the king's chief minister, Haman, who is appointed after this event. Mordecai, who sits daily at the palace gate, **refuses to bow to Haman. In retaliation, Haman plots the deaths of all Jews living in the empire.** With the king's permission, he casts lots (*purim*) to determine the best date on which to carry out the massacre. It falls on **Adar 13.** 

### "If You Remain Silent . . . "

Mordecai advises Esther to bravely go to the king to plead with him for their lives. Going in to see the king may, of course, seem like the logical thing to do, but it will put Esther's life in immediate danger. Even though she is queen, Esther cannot come into the king's presence without him first summoning her. She tells Mordecai that she may be put to death if she shows up uninvited. But Mordecai reasons with her, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this? (Esther 4:13–14) Esther realizes the wisdom in Mordecai's advice and says, "I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish, "(Esther 4:16)— which is to say, "God's will be done." Though the name of God is not mentioned in the Book of Esther, she commits her ways to the Lord by calling her people to a three-day fast before entering the king's presence: "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done." (Esther 4:16) She fasts for three days before going to the king, and when she enters his presence, she finds his grace, instead of his wrath. In a series of comical twists and turns (you'll have to read Esther to find out what they are), God humbles the proud and exalts the lowly who trust in Him. Esther, the Jewish orphan who rose to become a Persian Queen, finally has the opportunity to expose Haman and save the Jewish People from his savage plot to destroy them.

# Esther: A Picture of the Body of Messiah

On the surface, the Book of Esther has some simple lessons, but digging deeper, it also reveals surprising mysteries. The heroine, Esther, seems to reflect the Bride of Messiah (His followers) in several ways: She is not like the former Queen Vashti, who was rebellious to her husband and king, perhaps occupied with her own "agenda" and, therefore, banished from the kingdom. The world is certainly occupied with its own agendas, wealth, and prestige. But dedicated followers of Messiah are occupied with obeying and serving their Lord and Savior, Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah). Likewise, Esther

occupied herself with her duties as queen as well as her duties to the Jewish People. The Megillat Esther (Scroll of Esther) is read twice on Purim, once on the Eve of Purim and once during Purim day.

**Esther submitted herself to a prolonged preparation time** before being brought into the king. She was anointed with oil of myrrh (which is symbolic of suffering, cleansing, healing, and anointing), as well as beautifying preparations and perfumes. (Esther 2:12)

Esther desired to please the king; therefore, over all the other women seeking to be elevated to the position of queen, she was chosen as his bride. **Likewise, dedicated Believers continuously prepare to meet Messiah Yeshua**. This process begins with the anointing of the Ruach HaKodesh (*Holy Spirit*), who washes and renews us (*Titus 3:5*), brings us into unity (*Ephesians 4:3*) and enables us to obey the truth (*1 Peter 1:22*), among other important works.

Esther was faithful, beautiful, pure, and courageous — even to the point of being willing to lose her life to save her brethren. With the help of the Ruach (*Spirit*), the Bride of Messiah is called to be faithful to God's word, beautifully pure in spirit, and courageous in sharing the truth of who Yeshua is. As a result of their courage, many Believers suffer severe persecution, even death. Esther relied on God and not her own talents and natural abilities. She sought God through fasting and prayer before embarking on a courageous plan of action. So, too, Believers know they cannot accomplish anything for the kingdom of God without relying totally on God's leading and protection. Esther carried the full authority of the King and the seal of his signet ring to issue decrees that cannot be revoked (*Esther 8:8*). Likewise, Yeshua gives His followers the authority to defeat the works of the enemy (*Luke 10:19*).

#### **Purim: More Than a Time to Remember**

While Purim is a time to remember God's deliverance of the Jewish People from anti-Semitic forces in Persia about 2,500 years ago, it is also a time to remember that enemies have risen against the Jewish People in every age.

**Purim is also a time for Believers** around the world to heed the call of the Ruach HaKodesh (*Holy Spirit*) to rise up like Esther on behalf of the Jewish People. Today, forces in modern-day Persia (*Iran*) again seek to annihilate Israel. Moreover, anti-Semitism is on the rise in nearly every nation, even in the United States and throughout Europe. A European Union (EU) report published in December states that "anti-Semitism pervades everyday life" in EU member states and "anti-Semitic harassment is so common that it becomes normalized." (EUFRA) In 2018, hate crimes against Jews in New York totaled more than all other targeted groups combined. (*Haaretz*)

In these end times, it will take courage to count the cost of speaking out and saying with Esther, "If I perish, I perish." Indeed, now is not the time to remain silent. A poem attributed to Martin Niemoeller, an influential Lutheran pastor from World War II, who was arrested and imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp for withdrawing his support of Hitler, illustrates the importance of challenging hatred and injustice:

They came first for the communists,

And I didn't speak up because I wasn't a communist.

Then they came for the Jews.

And I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the trade unionists,

And I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Catholics,

And I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.

Then they came for me,

And by that time, no one was left to speak up.

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Simple "Short" Bible Video Overview of the Book of Esther:

https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=purim+video+bible+project&docid=608041629903161385&mid=301348FEDA36DEE81612301348FEDA36DEE81612&view=detail&FORM=VIRE

The Story of Saul's Disobedience Demonstrates how very Important it is that We Obey God's Command to "Blot out (unmask) the Memory of Amalek (eye of doubt/evil)" and the Destructive Consequences even in Future Generations.

In the Shabbat Zachor ("Remember!") portion of the reading (Deuteronomy 25:17-19; 1 Samuel 15:2–15:34), the Shabbat before Purim, the holiday on which we celebrate the foiling of Haman the Amalekite's plot to destroy the Jewish people, in which we are commanded to remember the evil of Amalek and to eradicate it from the face of the earth, God commands King Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites:

"This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys." 1 Samuel 15:2–3

But Saul fails to carry out God's command and spares the life of Agag, the king of Amalek:

"But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed." 1 Samuel 15:9

For this disobedience, God regrets choosing Saul as king and decides to give the kingdom to another:

"Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: "I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out My instructions." 1 Samuel 15:10–11

Why is this special Scripture portion read just before Purim?

It is because the anti-Semite in the book of Esther, Haman, who tried to annihilate all the Jews of Persia, is believed to have descended from the Amalekites.

Esther 3:1 describes Haman as being an Agagite – a descendant of Agag the Amalekite king.

The story of Saul's disobedience demonstrates how very important it is that we obey God's command.

Failure to do so can have destructive consequences even in future generations.

# **Future Prophetic Fulfillment of the Feast of Lots**

"Future Prophetic Fulfillment" of the Feast of Lots: will be fulfilled at the unveiling of the worker of lawlessness who will erect an image of himself in the Temple, during what has been prophesied as the "Abomination of Desolation" ("So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand" – Dan 7:25, 9:26-27, 11:3, Matt 24:15-28, 2 Thess 2:4, Rev 11:7, 13:5-6). And this, at an Appointed Time, as Jesus instructed, "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath," Matthew 24:20, which describes a specific time, during a curtain Feast/Appointed Time, the Feast of Purim, "the Jews firmly obligated themselves and their offspring and all who joined them, that without fail they would keep these two days according to what was written and at the time Appointed every year, that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, in every clan, province, and city, and that these days of Purim should never fall into disuse among the Jews, nor should the commemoration of these days cease among their descendants," Esther 9:27-28, which falls exactly 30-days before the Feast of Passover, but even more significantly, falls most years, at the beginning of Spring, "not in winter or on a Sabbath". And like Hamon in the story of Esther, the Anti-christ's plan is to destroy God's people, either by deception ("The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception," 2 Thess 2:9-12) or persecution ("For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be," Matthew 24:21).

## Holocaust Day January 27<sup>th</sup>

"For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers.

My heart is blighted and withered like grass; I forget to eat my food. In my distress I groan aloud and am reduced to skin and bones." (Psalm 102:3-5)

The tragic shooting at the Chabad synagogue in San Diego, California on the last day of Passover 2019 is a vivid reminder that hatred towards the Jewish People is still alive and well 74 years after the Holocaust death camps were liberated.

The shooter believed lies that have been told for centuries about the Jewish People – lies similar to those told by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime, which convinced millions of educated Germans and other Europeans to try to exterminate the entire Jewish bloodline.

They succeeded in murdering six million Jews, including many relatives of our ministry staff.

These were the same lies that the shooter in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania believed when he killed eleven people on Shabbat six months earlier at the Tree of Life Synagogue.

Because we can never forget the tragic consequences of such evil lies and genocidal plans, Israel instituted **Yom HaShoah** (*Holocaust Day*), a day of remembrance.

Israelis set aside this day to remember the six million Jewish people – one third of the world's Jewish population who were murdered in the Holocaust.

On this "Day of Remembrance" at 10 a.m., traffic will come to a stop all over the Holy Land. Israelis will step out of their cars and stand silently in the streets to honor the millions who died in the Holocaust as well as those who risked their lives defying the Nazis to save lives.

While **the death camps were liberated 74 years ago this month** (2019), the threat of exterminating the Jews is not over whether it is a lone gunman shooting up a synagogue or Iran attempting to send nuclearn missiles into the Jewish nation.

Both countries and individuals continue to make plans in public and behind closed doors to exterminate the Jewish People as they did in the years leading up to the Holocaust.

With this memorial, Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day, let us remember how it was systematically planned and consider how such plans are unfolding today, so that we may have the foresight and courage to stop it.

## The Plan to Eliminate the Jews

On January 20, 1942, several high-ranking Nazi party and German government officials gathered at the beautiful villa in the to decide **the Final Solution** for the Jewish people.

The term "Final Solution" was the codename for the systematic, deliberate, physical annihilation of the European Jews, a plan that Germany's leader Adolf Hitler had authorized sometime during 1941. (USHMM)

SS-Obergruppenfuhrer Reinhard Heydrich, who was then the director of the Reich Main Security Office; RSHA, called the meeting.

The goal was to ensure the cooperation of the administrative heads of various government departments in the implementation of the Final Solution to the Jewish question, in which most of the Jews of German-occupied Europe were to be deported to Poland and murdered.

"During the course of the Final Solution, the Jews will be deployed under appropriate supervision at a suitable form of labor deployment in the East. In large labor columns, separated by gender, able-bodied Jews will be brought to those regions to build roads, whereby a large number will doubtlessly be lost through natural reduction.

Any final remnant that survives will doubtless consist of the elements most capable of resistance. They must be dealt with appropriately, since, representing the fruit of natural selection, they are to be regarded as the core of a new Jewish revival," Heydrich announced.

These plans actually began a decade earlier with the rise of the Nazi regime and its leader Adolf Hitler.

#### **How a Nation of Murderers Was Made**

"With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish." (Psalm 83:3)

The Nazis (National Socialist German Workers' Party) rose in power following WWI, **promoting an ideology of anti-Semitism and racial purification through eugenics** — an attempt to improve the quality of humanity's gene pool by eliminating all unfit specimens.

They also promoted the need for territorial expansion.

The Nazis intended to invade Poland and the Soviet Union and deport or kill the Jews living there, since they were viewed as inferior to the Aryan "master race."

In Germany, the legal discrimination of Jews had been put into force immediately following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor on the 30th of January 1933, at which time he and the Nazi party that he led seized dictatorial power.

The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service was passed as early as April 7, 1933, **making it illegal for Jews to practice law or to serve in the civil service**. Other legislation restricted them from other professions.

Initially, economic sanctions, such as these labor laws, as well as violence, had been employed to force Jews to voluntarily leave the country. **The systematic killing of Jews** began following the invasion of Poland in September of 1939 and accelerated following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June of 1941.

In July of 1941, Hermann Goring, head of Germany's defense forces and second in command to Hitler, authorized Heydrich in writing to **prepare a plan for the** "Total Solution of the Jewish question" in those areas that were under German control.

As well, to define the limits of the exterminations, they had to determine who were Jewish.

German nationals with three or four Jewish ancestors were considered Jews according to the Nuremberg laws.

Only people with four German non-Jewish grandparents were considered to be "full-blooded" Germans.

The **Mischling grade** (*determining how Jewish one was*) was depended on the number of one's Jewish ancestors who were members of a Jewish synagogue.

It was decided in future meetings after the first meeting at Wannsee that **Mischlings** would be socially and academically restricted and should be subject to sterilization.

However, any **Mischlings** who looked or acted Jewish could be sent to the concentration camps at any time.

With these foundations in place, on January 20, 1942, the first Wannsee meeting commenced.

Adolf Eichmann, one of Heydrich's subordinates, kept the minutes of the meeting and handed out 30 copies to the participants.

The only surviving copy was found in March 1947 among German Foreign Office files by American War Crimes investigators. (Jewish Virtual Library)

**This one copy was discovered by Robert Kempner**, a Jewish lawyer from Berlin and lead US prosecutor at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. In a twist of sweet fate during the trial, Kempner prosecuted the man who revoked his German citizenship in 1935 – Wilhelm Frick.

Because the minutes only sum up what was discussed, they do not give a completely accurate picture of what transpired. It is known, however, that the main element of the conference was Heydrich's extended exposition of past, present, and future policies.

Those who attended the meeting represented longstanding respected government bodies that predated the Nazi state, such as the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Foreign Ministry, and the Reich Chancellery.

### Not one of them protested!

Kempner himself, who had held a post in the pre-1933 Prussian Justice Ministry, found it **incredible that such individuals**, apparently civilized men, eight of whom held doctorates, agreed with the plan.

Euphemisms were used to cloud the clear intent, such as Heydrich's discussion of protocols for "new possibilities in the East." Eleven million European Jews, which are listed by country, were included in these "possibilities."

The use of these euphemisms has led Holocaust deniers to say that they were not talking about murder; however, during his trial, Adolf Eichmann confirmed that they were absolutely talking about the systematic destruction of the Jewish People.

"Murder and elimination and annihilation were discussed," he said. (Holocaust History)

For the most part, all those attending agreed about the need to find a "final solution" for the Jewish people.

The purpose of the buffet luncheon / meeting was logistics: how to round up and transport millions of Jews to gas chambers with the cooperation of political leaders where the Jewish People resided. (Holocaust Explained)

Up until this time, extermination in German-occupied territories had been mostly piecemeal with Einsatzgruppen (task force) death squads employing locals to gather the members of Jewish communities. They murdered them and then buried them in mass graves like trash.

Other Jews had been herded into mass ghettos, such as the Warsaw Ghetto and that of Lvov Poland, where they were starved in a slow, agonizing death.

### **Collaborating Governments**

Included in the logistics were those countries that were cooperating with the Nazis, such as Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia and Romania; Italy and France were not expected to be a problem.

Dr. Josef Buhler, Secretary and Deputy Governor to the General Government of **Poland** requested that the "solution" begin in his territory since, according to Buhler, the majority of Jews there were unfit for work and carried diseases.

Buhler promised that Heydrich's work "would have the support of the authorities of the Governor General."

He had only one request: "that the Jews in this area be murdered as quickly as possible."

### **Apathy Fuels Anti-Semitism**

The German Wannsee Meeting took a big step among many previous steps to the "Final Solution" of exterminating the Jewish People.

**All of those steps over time led people and nations into a mass hatred** against the Jewish People and a mass silence against pure evil.

In 2017, the United Nations released a report that revealed the US, UK, and Russia knew about the atrocities in the concentration camps already in 1942, two years earlier than previously thought.

In his speech on the eve of Yom HaShoah, 2017, Isareli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said,

"Had the superpowers operated against the extermination camps in 1942 – and all that was required was a recurrent bombardment of those camps . . . they could have saved four million Jews and millions of additional human beings."

### "The superpowers knew and did nothing about the situation."

Scripture says,

"Whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." (James 4:17; see also Romans 7:7–25; Deuteronomy 22:1–4; Proverbs 3:27, 21:13; 1 John 3:16–18)

We might think the Holocaust could never happen today, but in recent decades, we have seen people, nations, and organizations taking steps to eliminate or delegitimize the Jewish State of Israel.

They do this through public declarations of extermination, rocket attacks, street violence, incitement by Muslim leaders, social media campaigns, indoctrination of hatred at early ages, and international efforts aimed at boycotts, divestment, and sanctions against Israel.

Much of this is promoted and supported on university campuses and leadership meetings around the world.

The United Nations, which helped to form the State of Israel in 1948, has issued more sanctions against this young Jewish nation than against any other country.

We can all **pray for righteousness to prevail** and **share the Word of God** so hearts can be changed from the darkness of evil intentions to the light of Godly righteousness and love toward our fellow man.

We can speak truth to counter the lies.

If God-fearing, Bible-centered Christians showed up for duty in these ways, imagine what they could accomplish for the sake of righteousness!

"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people groan." (Proverbs 29:2)

### You are Our Esther:

- Beautiful and Set Apart for "Such a Time as This"
- A Woman of Great Authority and Influence for "Such a Time as This"
- One with a Great Calling and Mission for "Such a Time as This"
- Full of the Holy Spirit to Change your World for "Such a Time as This"
- And One who Walks with the Support and Love of the King of Kings for "Such a Time as This"
- You are Strong, and you are Courage for "Such a Time as This"

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