

PURIM UNMASKED



Hidden Truths in the Book of Esther

Ohr Chadash Al Zion Torah Studies

Adar 5771 / February 2011

What is Purim?

- Celebration to commemorate the deliverance from the wicked schemes of Haman to destroy the Jews living in Persia
- Two-day festival commanded for all Jews and *"upon all who might join them."* -- (9:26-29)
- Required by every generation so as not to forget.
- Purim = lots ("Pur" singular) that were cast by Haman – to determine the day of annihilation.
- Megillat Esther unfolds this dramatic play – scroll contains 12,110 letters

Purim 5771/2011

- **14 Adar = Purim Katan = 17 Feb, Thursday (at sundown)**
 - *Little Purim*
- **11 Adar II = Ta'anit Esther = 17 Mar, Thursday (at dawn)**
 - *Fast moved to Thursday because 13 Adar falls on Shabbat (O.C. 686:2)*
- **14 Adar II = Purim = 19 Mar, Saturday (at sundown)**
- **15 Adar II = Shushan Purim = 20 Mar, Sunday (at sundown)**
 - *Observed by those dwelling in walled cities (i.e. Jerusalem)*

Setting

- Persia circa 475 BCE???
- Capital city of Susa / Shushan
- Shortly after 70-year Galut Bavel / Babylonian Exile
- During reign of Xerxes???
- Commandment to rebuild Jerusalem and Temple had been issued
 - Only 42,360 returned ☹ (Ezra 2:64)



Location of ancient Persian capital of Susa.

Scenes

- **Scene I – Prelude: Eternal Struggle with Amalek**
- **Scene II – Customs Unveiled**
- **Scene III – Hidden Secrets in Sefer Esther**
- **Scene IV – Prophetic Significance**
- **Closing Act**

Scene I

Prelude: Eternal Struggle with Amalek

Shabbat Zachor

- **שבת זכור** Shabbat Zachor
- Sabbath preceding Purim – Mar 19
- Zachor means "*Remember*"
- Special readings:
 - Torah: Devarim 25:17-19, Haftarah: 1 Samuel 15:2-34

Why do we read these portions prior to Purim?

Devarim 25:17-19

- 17: **Remember** what Amalek did to you, on the way, when you came up out of Egypt,
18: that he **happened upon you** on the way, and he struck those of you who were hindmost, all the weaklings at your rear, when you were faint and exhausted, and he **did not fear G-d.**
19: It shall be that when HaShem, your G-d, gives you rest from all your enemies.....you **shall wipe out the memory of Amalek from under the heaven – you shall not forget!**

See also Shemot 17:7-16

Commandments

- **From this portion are derived 3 Torah commandments**
 - 1. Wipe out the memory of Amalek**
 - **Positive commandment #188**
 - 2. Remember what Amalek did to you**
 - **Positive commandment #189**
 - 3. Do not forget**
 - **Negative commandment #59**

Then came Amalek....

- Shemot 17 – the battle at Rephidim
- *"He called the place Massah U'Meribah, because of their test of HaShem saying, Is HaShem among us or not?" (7)*
- *"Then came Amalek and battled Israel in Rephidim." (8)*
- As Israel begins to doubt and complain....then comes Amalek to make unprovoked war
- Rephidim means "place of rests" derived from root meaning "to be slack or remiss"

יהוה נסי



“Adonai Nissi”

“Adonai my Miracle”

Hints:

- On a hill
- Arms extended
- Holding wooden staff
- Two witnesses
- Brings deliverance
- Sitting on the **אבן**
- Eben = Av + Ben
- Son of the Father

Gee...I wonder what this is all about?

משיח יהושע

What Amalek Represents?

Sages describe Amalek (and his descendants) as the essence of all evil; type of HaSatan

More concerned with Olam Hazei vs. Olam Habah

Amalek is seen as always trying to thwart the plans and work of HaShem

Eternal enemy of Israel

A negative physical and spiritual force

Associated with doubt and unbelief, no fear of G-d (gematria = 240 same as *safek* meaning “doubt”)

Who is Amalek?

- **Grandson of Esau, son of Eliphaz – B'resheit 36:8-12**
- **Illegitimate son of Timna, a concubine – B'resheit 36:12**
- **Eliphaz means "*My god is fine gold*" ==> idolatry, materialism**
- **Fight for the Blessing:**
 - **Isaac vs. Ishmael**
 - **Jacob vs. Esau**
- **Ishmael = Arabs = mostly Islam (false religion)**
- **Esau = Edom / Amalek = Rome = Catholicism (false religion)**

Historical Nations

Edom = Southern Jordan / Arabia

Moab/Ammon = Northern Jordan

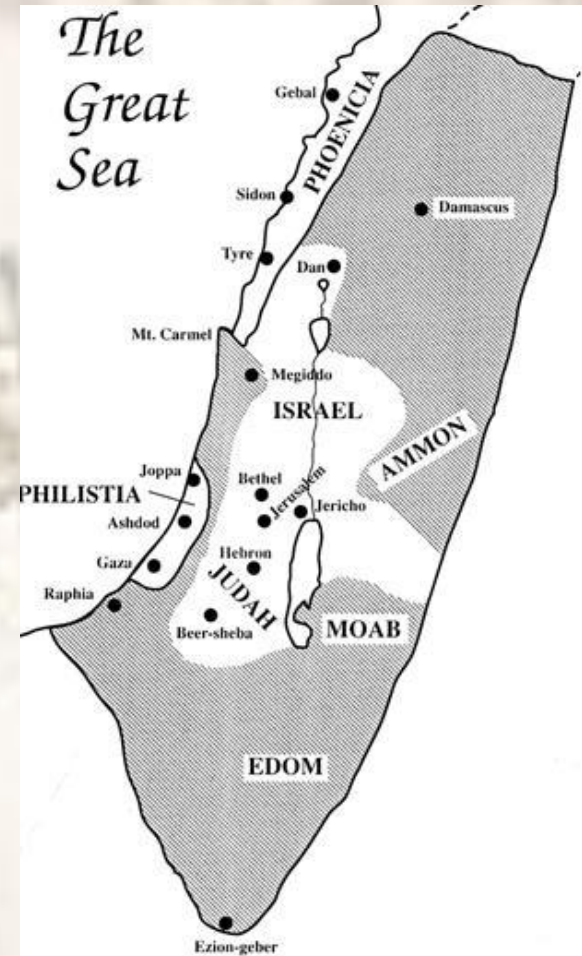
Philistia = Palestinians / Hamas

Tyre / Phoenicia = Lebanon / Turkey

Ashur / Assyria = Syria / Iraq

Ishmael = father of Arabs (a great nation; mixed with Esau)

Persia = Iran



Link to Sefer Esther

- **Amalek first mentioned in B'resheit 14:7**
 - **Over one hundred years before Amalek is born?**
- **Amalek next mentioned in B'resheit 36:12**
- **Number of characters between two verses = 12,110**
 - **Exact number of characters in Megillat Esther!!**
 - **Coincidence??**
- **Two other people mentioned in TaNaK by name before their birth**
 - **Cyrus, king of Persia – Is. 44:28, Is. 45:1**
 - **Agag – B'midbar 24:7**

I Samuel 15

2 So said HaShem T'zvaot, I have remembered what Amalek did to Israel....

3 Now go and strike down Amalek and destroy everything he has. Have no pity on him....

8 He (Saul) captured Agag, king of Amalek, alive, and the entire people he destroyed by the edge of the sword.

9 Saul and the entire people took pity on Agag...

33 And Samuel hewed Agag before HaShem in Gilgal.

Saul's Unfinished Work

- Saul disobeys the command to destroy Amalek / Agag
- Midrash teaches that Agag sired offspring in the days following his capture
- Haman is a direct descendant of Agag, king of Amalek
- Saul's disobedience almost caused the genocide of the Jewish nation in Persia
- This act of disobedience cost Saul his kinship

We MUST take Amalek seriously

Rachel's Children

- *Yalkut Shimoni 1:264 "According to our traditions, Esau will fall, in the hands of Rachel's children".*
- Benjamin ("son of my right hand") never bows to Esau because he is still in the womb (B'resheit 33:7)
 - Mordechai refuses to bow to Haman

Rachel's Children vs. Amalek	
Yehoshua ben Nun	Ephraim
Saul ben Kish	Benjamin
Mordechai ben Kish	Benjamin
Yeshua haMashiach	Son of My Right Hand

Scene II

Customs Unveiled

Masquerade Party Anyone?

Custom of wearing costumes and masks at Purim:

- Jacob disguised himself like Esau to obtain the blessing (Gen. 27:15-16)
- HaShem's face is hidden – name is not mentioned
- Vashti refuses to appear before the king naked (1:12)
- Mordechai puts on sackcloth (4:1-3)
- Esther sends Mordechai a change of clothes (4:4)
- Esther dressed herself in royal gowns (5:1)
- Esther's real name, Hadassah, is masked by Persian name (2:7)
- Haman forced to dress Mordechai in royal garb (6:10)
- Mordechai leaves wearing royal blue and white (8:15)

Purim Baskets

ומשלח מנות - Mishloach Manot

"Sending portions each man to his friend"
(9:22)

מתנות לאביונים - Matanot La'evyonim

"and gifts to the poor." (9:22)

- At least two for it is plural (OC 694:1)
- Men to men, women to women (OC 695:4)

Curse Who & Bless What?

Until He Know Longer Knows (Megillah 7b) – tradition to drink until you can't discern between:

**“Cursed be Haman” or “Blessed be Mordechai”
Gematria of both = 502**

How can Haman and Mordechai be equal?

Because G-d uses Haman (e.g. Amalek) to bring Mordechai (e.g. Israel) back to Himself → thus a great blessing.

Cliché: What the Devil meant for bad, G-d turned to good.

Scene III

Hidden Secrets in Esther

Haman's True Colors

First mention of Haman in the Megillah he is called:
"Haman son of Hammedatha the Aggagite" (3:1)

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{המן בן המדתא האגגי} \\ &22 + 450 + 52 + 95 \\ &= 619 \end{aligned}$$

6:6 – The King asks Haman, *"What should be done for the man the King desires to honor?"*

6:8 – Haman's response, *"...with a royal crown placed on his head."* – Haman wants to be king

$$\text{Crown} = \text{keter} = \text{כתר} = 620$$

CLOSE BUT NO CIGAR → see Is. 14:13-15, 2Thes. 2:3-4

Where is HaShem?

- Only book in Bible where the Name is not mentioned
 - Martin Luther advocated discarding Megillat Esther
- Why? See Devarim 31:17-18
- *"..It (Israel) will say on that day, "Is it not because my G-d is not in my midst that these evils have come upon me?" (17)*
 - HaShem did not seem to be involved, He could not be found
- *"But I will surely conceal My face on that day..." (18)*
- Conceal = אֶסְתֵּיר = Esther

The Name Concealed

The Tetragrammaton appears 4 times encoded in the text as acrostics

1. 1:20 – Memuchan – a gentile – backwards – first
“and all the wives will show...”

הי**א** **ו**כ**ל** **ה**נ**ש**י**ם** י**ת**נ**ו**

Yitnu Hannashim V'kal Hi

First decree...HaShem turns back man's counsel

2. 5:4 – Esther – Israelite – forwards -- first
“let the King and Haman come this day”

י**ב**ו**א** **ה**מ**ל**ך **ו**ה**מ**ן **ה**י**ו**ם

Hayom V'Haman HaMelek Yavoh

HaShem begins plan...causes Esther to act

The Name Concealed

3. 5:13 – Haman – a gentile – backwards -- last
“...this is worth nothing...”

זֶה אֵינֶנּוּ שׁוֹה לִי

Ley Shoveh Eynenv Zeh

HaShem is turning back Haman's joy (v9)

4. 7:7 – Mordecai – Israelite – forwards -- last
“that evil had been determined against him”

כִּי כִלְתָּה אֵלָיו הָרָעָה

Hara'ah Elay'v Kal'tah Ki

HaShem is about to judge...Haman knows the end is approaching

The Pesach Connection

Nissan

Sivan

Adar

Pesach

Shavuot

Purim

- **Nissan 13** – Haman's evil decree (3:12) → Consider Matt. 26:14-15
- **Nissan 14** – Esther and Jews fast for three days (4:15)
- **Nissan 16** – First banquet for King and Haman (5:4)
- **Nissan 17** – Mordecai exalted by King (6:11)
- **Nissan 17** – Second banquet; Esther & Haman revealed (7:1)
- **Nissan 17** – Haman is hung on his own gallows (7:10)

Nissan 17 = Redemption & Deliverance

- Noah's ark rest on Mt. Ararat (Gen. 8:4)
- Pharaoh & Egyptians destroyed in Sea of Reeds (Ex.14:30)
- Captain of Hosts appears to Joshua (Jos. 5:13)
- Hezekiah rededicates the Temple (2Chron. 29:20)
- Yeshua is raised from the dead

Scene IV

Prophetic Significance

In Every Generation...

"..HaShem maintains a war against Amalek, from generation to generation." (Ex. 17:16)

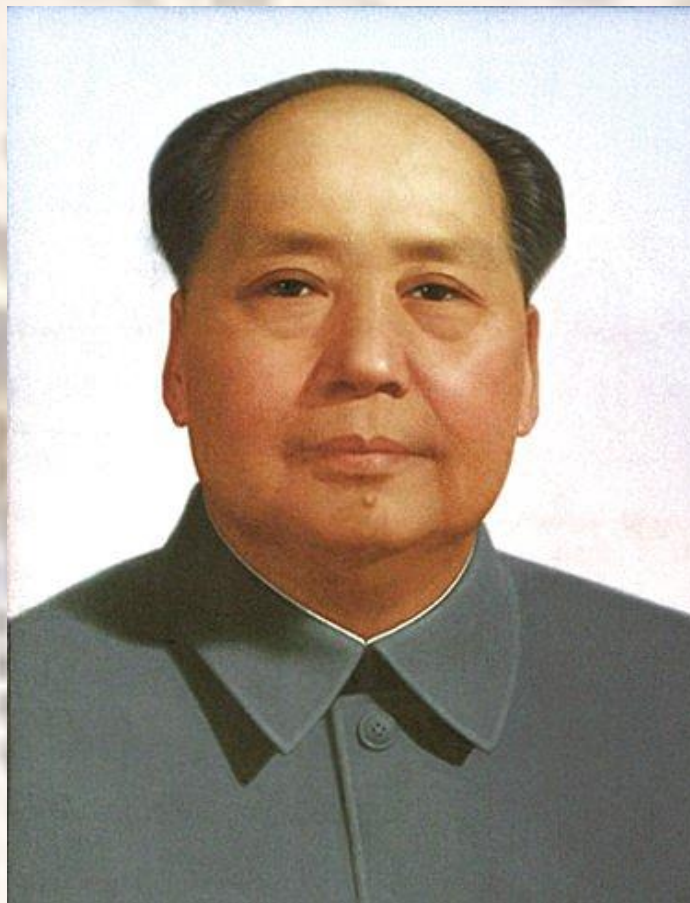
Every generation has a Haman who arises.

Here are a few in modern history.

Joseph Stalin



Mao Zedong



Yasser Arafat



Yasser Arafat



Saddam Hussein



Osama bin Laden



Osama bin Laden

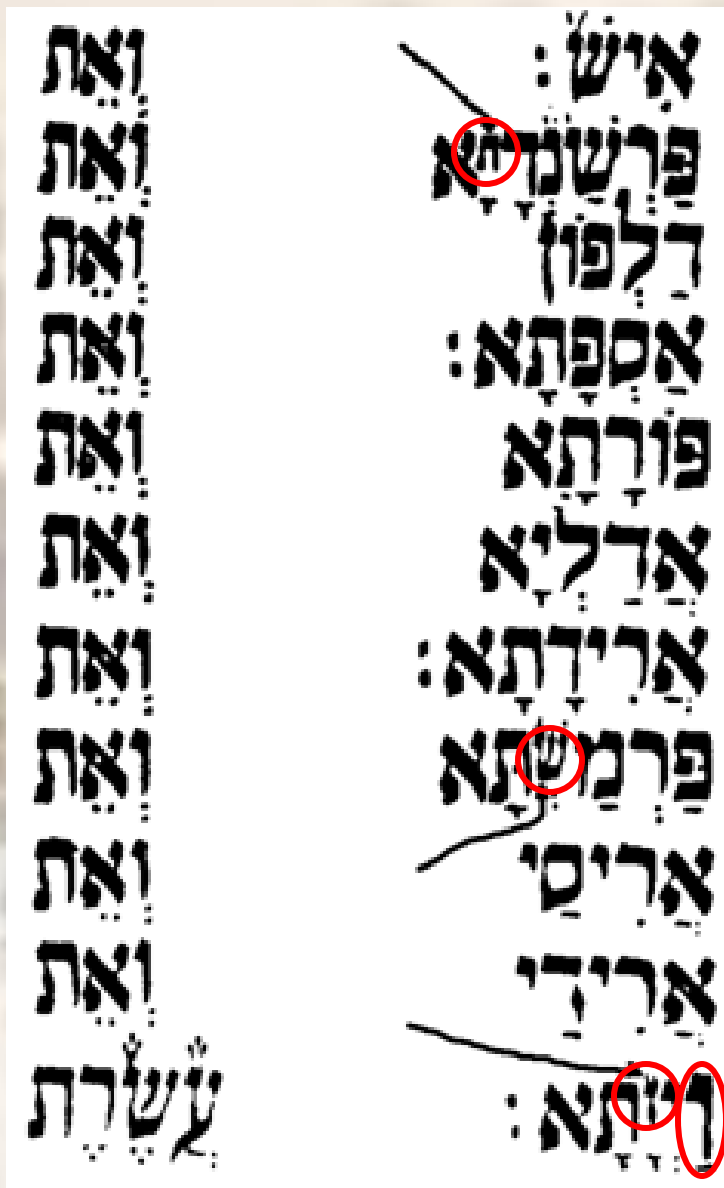


Adolf Hitler



The Ten Sons of Haman

Read Esther 9:6-10



Esther 9:7-10 from the Scroll

Four unique Hebrew characters:

1. Small tav **ת**
2. Small shin **ש**
3. Small zayin **ז**
4. Large vav **ו**

Gematria of three small letters:

ת ש ז

$$7 + 300 + 400 = 707$$

Enlarged **ו** = 6

And so what's the point?



The Ten Sons of Hitler



Nuremburg Trials

Military tribunals held in Nuremburg, Germany from 1945-1946 following Allied victory over Nazis.

- **11 top Nazi officers sentenced to death on October 1, 1946**
 - **1 committed suicide the night before his execution**
- **10 executed by hanging on October 16, 1946**

....what's the connection to Esther 9?

Das Purimfest 1946

The enlarged “Vav” = 6 = sixth millennium

The small “tav, shin, zayin” = 707th year

The year 5707 on Jewish calendar = 1946

Sentenced on Tishri 5 during Days of Awe

Executed on Tishri 21 → Hoshana Rabah

Zohar Vayikra 31b – “On the 7th day of Sukkot the judgment of the nations is finalized. Sentences are issued from the residence of the King. Judgments are aroused and executed on that day.”

The Next Haman?



Ahmadinejad



Egypt



Who will arise as the new Pharaoh?

Will he know Yoseph?

The Final Haman

Daniel 7:24 "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise, and yet another will rise after them. (25) And he will speak words against the Most High and try to exhaust the holy ones of the Most High."

Revelation 13:1 "And I saw a beast come up out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads. On its horns were ten royal crowns and on its heads blasphemous names."

Revelation 13:7 "It was allowed to make war on G-d's holy people and to defeat them..."

Revelation 13:10 "...This is when G-d's holy people must persevere and trust!"

HIStory Repeats

Megillat Esther and the rehearsal of Purim teach us about the future Haman and the final redemption.

To understand the anti-Messiah you must study Esther.

Scripture indicates that the last Haman will rule and wreak havoc for "...a time, times and half a time". (Dan. 7:24, Dan.12:7, Rev. 12:14) → 3.5 years / 42 months / 1260 days

From Nissan 14 Pesach + 1260 days = Tishri 15 Sukkot

From Adar 14 Purim to Tishri 15 = 1290 days (Dan. 12:11)

Perhaps Purim still has a role to play in the final redemption?

Closing Act

So what's the moral of the story of Esther?

- **HaShem is always in control –**
 - **Even when we can't see Him working**
- **We MUST be vigilant to eradicate Amalek!**
- **G-d can turn tragedy into triumph**
- **Purim has prophetic significance for us now**
- **Trust Him and Him alone!!**

Encore

Psalm 83

Revelation 19:11-16

So Let's Party!!