

## PURIM – A CELEBRATION OF VICTORY!

Estër/ Esther 9

15<sup>TH</sup> OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> MONTH 2014/2015

Shabbat Shalom all,

Tonight begins the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month which, as you may well know, is a very significant date that is recorded for us in the Book of **Estër/Esther**. Having said that I would like to share briefly with you an overview of the events that took place, on and before this memorable date in the history of the Yehudim who were in exile, in a message called, '**PURIM – A CELEBRATION OF VICTORY!**'.

The 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month are celebrated as a memorial of a great victory over the enemy, known in Scripture as פּוּרִים – '**Purim**' which is the plural of the root word פּוּר **Pur – Strong's H6332** which means, '**a lot, piece**', and is used 8 times in 7 verses, all of which are in the book of **Estër/Esther** (3 times in the singular and 5 times in the plural). It is notably different to the typical Hebrew word for '**lot**', which is the Hebrew word גּוֹרָל **goral – Strong's H1486** which means, '**a lot, allotted, choice, territory allotted**', which is used 77 times in Scripture with the majority of these being used in **Yehoshua/Joshua** in giving us the various tribal allotments. We are told in **Estër/Esther 3:7** that the פּוּר **Pur – Strong's H6332** is the גּוֹרָל **goral – Strong's H1486**. The noun פּוּר **Pur – Strong's H6332** which means, '**a lot, piece**', while of possible unknown origin, is thought by many to come from the root verb פּוּר **pur – Strong's H6331** which means, '**to bring to nought, broken, utterly take, to break, crush**'. As we remember the historical events recorded in the Book of **Estër/Esther**, we are able to recognise how it was the enemies plan to break, crush, destroy and bring to nought the exiled Yehudim that were in all the 127 provinces that Ahashwërosh reigned over from India to Kush. Ahashwërosh was the king to whom Estër would become queen to and boldly intercede for the life of all the Yehudim in these 127 provinces, who had been given a death sentence under the craftiness of a wicked Haman. We can actually take the story a little further back, to the time of Nebukadretsar, who became an instrument of יהוה's wrath against the apostate House of Yehudah, when he besieged Yerushalayim, burnt the Temple and took the Yehudim into captivity for a 70 year period of exile appointed by יהוה. It was during this exile that Dani'ël ended up serving in the courts of Nebukadretsar, and after Nebukadretsar died, it is believed through other historical evidence that Dani'ël served under another 4 kings before Bëlshatstsar became king, who is mentioned in **Dani'ël/Daniel 5** as the king who made a big feast and drank from the gold and silver vessels that Nebukadretsar had taken from the Hëkal of the House of Elohim which was in Yerushalayim. While he was getting drunk and praising the mighty ones of silver and gold, he saw the fingers of a man's hand appear and write on the wall: **MENĚ, MENĚ, TEQĚL, UPHARSIN**. None of his soothsayers could interpret the meaning of these words, and Dani'ël was brought before him and told this wicked king that his reign had come to an end and that he has been weighed and was found lacking and that his reign would be given to the Medes and Persians. That same night Bëlshatstsar was killed and Dareyawesh the Mede took over the reign. Dani'ël served for over 70 years under all these kings!!!

When Dareyawesh died Ahashwërosh became king, and this is where we come to the story of **Estër/Esther!**

We are told in **Chapter 2:7** that **Estër** was **Hadassah**. אֶסְתֵּר **Estër – Strong's H635** is of Persian origin and means, '**star**', while the Hebrew name הַדַּסָּה **Hadassah – Strong's H1919** means, '**myrtle**', which is from the noun הַדָּס **hadass – Strong's H1918** which is translated as, '**myrtle or myrtle trees**'. The myrtle tree is a very significant tree in Scripture! The myrtle tree stays green the longest and the branches of myrtle trees were used to make the booths for Sukkot/Tabernacles – which is also a great reminder to us of יהושע being in our midst as we sojourn here! Why I say that is simply because of the clear prophetic words we see in **Zekaryah/Zechariah 1** which speaks of the Messenger of יהוה who stood among the Myrtle trees, and pictures for us a wonderful encouragement that shows how יהושע Messiah, The Living Word, stands amongst His Covenant people, even in the midst of our troubles and oppressions, just as He is in the midst of the seven lampstands as recorded in **Hazon/Revelation 1**! The Myrtle trees are spoken metaphorically in **Yeshayahu/Isaiah 55:13** of those who shall not be cut off – those who bear the Name of יהוה – the true '**trees of righteousness**' that are planted by יהוה.

The story of **Estër/Esther** is a great encouragement for us all, as we consider how she too was planted 'in the wilderness' so to speak and raised up for the purpose of shining the light of יהוה in the face of darkness and death, as a true 'star' that reflects the brilliance of our Creator. She was not a star that would be swept away by the tail of the fiery dragon that has ten horns, as spoken of in **Hazon/Revelation 12:3-4**!

In a brief summary of the story of **Estër/Esther** the true myrtle that shone the Truth with boldness, we take note of the following:

Ahashwërosh, like Bëlshatstsar, liked to have drinking parties and he showed off his riches for 180 days after which he gave a 7 day feast for all and drinking was according to the law! No one was compelled but each could do as they please and stems from a pagan rooted practice of having a week of lawlessness and revelry, without any punishment given!

Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women and on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the feast, when the king was drunk, he wanted to impress his drinking buddies by calling for his queen to come and parade before him. She refused and he got angry and after consultation with his legal team he stripped her of being queen and made a decree that all wives must give esteem to their husbands and not disobey them at all, and that each man should be master in his own house.

After sobering up he remembered what had been done to Vashti and that he now did not have a queen and a decree was made to let lovely young maidens be brought to him, and the one who pleased him would become his queen in the place of Vashti.

At the decree of all the young maidens being taken for the king, Estĕr was taken. She had no parents and was being raised by her older cousin who took her as his own daughter. When she was taken she never revealed her identity as she followed the command of Mordeḳai. Each maiden would have a 12 month preparation period before being presented to the king, and when it came to Estĕr's turn she found favour with all, and also found favour in the eyes of the king, who put Vashti's crown on her head and made her his queen.

Mordeḳai sat in the sovereign's gate, which tells us that he was a well-respected man who gave right-ruling and judgements on certain matters. He heard a plot that was being made by two of the king's eunuchs, who were seeking to kill the king. Mordeḳai told Estĕr and she told Aḥashwĕrosh in Mordeḳai's name, and after the matter was proved to be true the two guilty eunuchs were hanged!

After this Aḥashwĕrosh promoted Haman above all his princes and commanded all to show obeisance to Haman.

Mordeḳai refused to do so and this angered Haman who then sought to kill Mordeḳai and after finding out that Mordeḳai was a Yehuḏi, Haman sought to destroy all the Yehuḏim!

In the 1<sup>st</sup> new moon of the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Aḥashwĕrosh someone cast Pur – that is the lot – before Haman until it fell on the 12<sup>th</sup> new moon. He then plotted a complete assassination and destruction of the Yehuḏim in all the 127 provinces of Aḥashwĕrosh, and after receiving the signet ring of the king, the scribes were called on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> new moon to write according to the commands of Haman – to cut off, kill and destroy all Yehuḏim (that is both young and old, little children and women) in one day! That day was decreed to be the 13<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, where they would not only cut off and kill all Yehuḏim, but also plunder all they have! This was made law and runners were sent throughout all the provinces and lands. Can you imagine this death sentence being sent out and knowing that in 12 months' time you were going to be killed and wiped out as a people!!!

Haman, having got the law he wanted put into action, sat down to drink and celebrate while there was great confusion in Shushan! I mean, can you for a moment think what it must have been like in the city at that time? All of a sudden there is a huge target on the backs of all the Yehuḏim! This was a direct attack and an all-out war of destruction upon יהודה's people, and while there may have been seeming peace for a long time, anyone who was identified as belonging to יהודה had a clear death sentence that would be carried out in 12 months' time!

Mordeḳai heard of this and he tore his garments and put on sackcloth and ashes and went about mourning! There was mourning throughout all the land – wherever the decree was sent and heard there was mourning and wailing – after all what could the Yehuḏim do!!!

Estĕr heard and she sent clothes to Mordeḳai who refused to put new clothes on. She then sent one of the eunuchs to go to Mordeḳai and find out how he was. Mordeḳai then told the eunuch everything and how Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to kill the Yehuḏim and he gave a copy of the decree to go and show Estĕr, and commanded her to go and plead with the king for her people. She sent word back to Mordeḳai telling him that she could not just go as she pleased before the king, as she could only see him if she was called, yet Mordeḳai makes a clear statement we have all come to know. He tells her that if she did not go before the king then deliverance for the Yehuḏim would rise up from another place while she would perish. He then says..., **“And who knows whether you have come to the reign for such a time as this?”**

While Mordeḳai did not directly say to Estĕr that she had been put there by Elohim, he implied that by asking her a question that would get her to urgently take the time to review her life, and clearly see and believe that there had been a clear leading of Elohim over her life. If Elohim had brought her to the throne, then He had a purpose in mind, and that purpose had now become evident – she was there to intercede for her people. Her purpose as queen was now clear – and she needed to step up, despite the threats of the enemy and the seeming obstacles that were stacked against her ability to do so! This in itself is a great lesson for us all, as we must recognise our life's purpose – for the goal of our faith is the deliverance of lives!!! While we recognise that יהודה does not need to use any of us, we know that He chooses to use us, as great stars in His Hand that brings forth His message of deliverance!

The question is whether you are in His Hand, as you stay in Him by guarding His commands, or have you let go and find that the threat of the enemy has cast you from His presence because of fear, stubbornness and pride?

As you know – Estĕr did step up and boldly went before the king – and in doing so Haman's wickedness was exposed and the decree of death upon all the Yehuḏim was turned around and Mordeḳai was promoted to the highest position in the land!

This is where we come to the chapter that I would like to read.... Please turn with me to **Estĕr/Esther 9** (Read):

12 months after the decree had gone out to kill all the Yehudim – on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month – all had been turned around! The Yehudim overpowered all those who had hated them, and fear fell on all the people as the Yehudim struck all their enemies! On that day – the 13<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Ahashwërosh – 500 men were killed and destroyed in the capital city of Shushan, as well as the 10 sons of Haman! Haman and his house were destroyed!!!

Haman had been killed 12 months earlier, but now his sons were killed too! What we must take note of as we learn some vital lessons from these historical events, is that Haman and his sons are a clear picture of Satan and his system of destruction, and his 10 sons are a clear prophetic representation of the power of the wicked beast that is pictured in **Hazon/Revelation** as having 10 horns and tries to destroy the true set-apart ones! Haman was the son and Hammedatha the Aḡaḡite. Aḡaḡ was the sovereign of the Amalëqites, and we will remember from the Torah portions how Amalëq would be an enemy against Yisra'ël from generation to generation, yet because of the mighty Hand of Yah, who reigns on High, יהוה would fight against Amalëq:

We are reminded of this when Yehoshua had victory over Amalëq in the valley of Rephidim, after which Mosheh built a slaughter-place to יהוה:

**Shemoth/Exodus 17:15-16** “**And Mosheh built an altar and called its name, יהוה Nissi, 16 for he said, “Because a hand is on the throne of Yah, יהוה is to fight against Amalëq, from generation to generation.”**”

Haman and his 10 sons were Amalëqites and their wicked decrees could not be brought to pass against יהוה's allotted inheritance – His chosen nation and royal priesthood!

What is interesting to take note of here in this great turnaround of a decree of death, is that the sons of Haman were killed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, and after this the king asked Estër what else she wanted as it would be given her. She asked for another day to be given for the Yehudim like the first and that on the 14<sup>th</sup> they would do to their enemies as they did on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and she also asked that Haman's son's be hanged on the wooden structure!

Many of you may not have taken notice of this before, but I want you to think about it for a moment – why would she ask for the sons of Haman to be hanged the next day, when they had already been killed?

I believe there is much to consider in this regard and I certainly do not want to dig into Rabbinic teachings and traditions that link the accounts of Haman's sons prophetically to the 10 Nazi leaders who were hanged in one day in October of 1946. Whether this be the case or not, what we do take note of is the complete destruction of evil, and against that which exalts itself against the Most High!!!

I see another picture being prophetically presented for us, and that is the clear sentence of death – that is the second death that awaits the unrighteous and those not found in the book of life! We know that **Hazon/Revelation** tells us that blessed are those having part in the first resurrection, for the second death has no power over them, and we are therefore able to identify the clear message being given here in Estër!

**Yehudah/Jude 1:11-12** talks about the severe woe that is given to the rebellious who have gone in the way of Qayin, and have given themselves to the delusion of Bil'am for a reward, and have perished in the rebellion of Qoraḥ – they are trees without fruit and twice dead!

With Haman's sons being hanged on the wood we also see the symbolic picture of the curse of sin being death, for cursed is he who hangs on a tree! Messiah redeemed us from the curse of the Torah – which is death – by becoming a curse for us! What we also take note of is that Messiah's body was not left on the tree but was taken down so that the land was not defiled, but he was buried the same day.

Haman's sons were hanged the day after they were killed and would have remained on the wood, bringing us a clear picture of the curse of death that still stands upon those who stand against יהוה and His people!

What we also take note of here in this 'turnaround' of a death sentence is that the Yehudim did not lay a hand on the plunder! While the Yehudim had full legal right to do to their enemies as their enemies had planned against them, we recognise that the Yehudim did not slay those who did not rise up to destroy them and simply stood for their lives giving full proof that they sought their own safety and not the possessions of their enemies.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month they killed another 300 men at Shushan, while in the rest of the provinces they had killed 75 000 of their enemies on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and still they did not lay their hands on the plunder! It was not about the spoil of war – it was about their lives, and we too can learn a great lesson from this as we recognise how we are to take our stand in Messiah, not to get some material blessing out of it, but because it is our life! We guard the Torah for it is not a worthless word, it is our life, and we do not keep Torah to get blessed materialistically! Anyone who attempts to walk according to the Torah in order to gain some physical benefits will be quickly awakened to the reality that obedience to walking in the commands is not about pursuit of material gain, but about guarding the gift of life we have been given in our Master!

After the two days of overcoming and defeating their enemies the Yehudim rested on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day – the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, and then Mordekai established in writing that the Yehudim should perform the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month each year – to make them days of feasting and giving portions to one another, for their sorrow was turned to joy.

The historical accounts of the Yehudim and the days of Purim teach us a great deal about the joy we are to have in our Master who fights for us and because a Hand is on the throne of Yah, the enemy has no chance!!!

Purim is a celebration of victory and while we may not be of the House of Yehudah, we can certainly remember this great turnaround of a clear death sentence and recognise how Messiah has turned around our death sentence for our sin. Symbolically we can recognise that in the Master having turned the decree of death from us by taking it upon Himself, we have a huge responsibility to stand for our lives and for two days (symbolically the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Millennium) stand firm in Him, so that when He comes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day (7<sup>th</sup> Millennium) we shall be able to enter into His rest and rejoice with Him who in the midst of the myrtle trees!

Not putting hand to the plunder also teaches us how we are to live as sojourners here and not be consumed by the deceitfulness of wealth and worries of this life, but simply take a firm stand in the Truth, and see how He fights for us, as we stand firm in Him, raising the banner of praise for our great King!

While the enemy is constantly trying to cast a lot of destruction for us, let us be reminded of the Purim, where we are able to see how our Master and Elohim has turned around the decree and given us the ability to take a stand. This implies a choice – one we all have – will I stand in the Truth and be steadfast no matter what or will I be hunted down and broken by deceit and sin?

That which was written against us has been taken away in the Master and blotted out by His own blood. He has taken it out the way so that we can take a stand and walk in His Torah – what are you doing? Are you standing and celebrating the victory or are you buckling under the weight of sin and compromise?

Our rest is coming, but now is the time to stand and stand for our lives, just as the Yehudim who were in exile did back then! We too are in exile and live under the pressures and threats that are foreign to the Covenants of Promise, yet in Messiah who empowers us to stand, we have the ability to uphold His Covenant with great rejoicing, as we have full expectation of the sure promises of our inheritance to be made complete when our Great and Mighty Husband and King returns for His ready faithful and standing Bride!

Purim is a celebration of victory and teaches us how we have the ability to walk in that rejoicing victory each and every day as we stand for our lives, living according to His Torah, and recognise that the goal of our faith is the deliverance of lives!!!

As we remember this great celebration of victory against an age old enemy, let me ask you – “how are you standing?”, and “How are you walking?”

**Qorintiyim Bět/2 Corinthians 2:14-16 “But thanks be to Elohim who always leads us on, to overcome in Messiah, and manifests through us the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 Because we are to Elohim the fragrance of Messiah among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the smell of death to death, and to the other the fragrance of life to life. And who is competent for these?”**

To the Yehudim these two days that that they stood for their lives manifested the fragrance of life, while to their enemies their standing for their lives manifested the fragrance of death! It is no different today – the question is whether you are competent for such a task?

A decree of death upon the Yehudim was given to all 127 provinces of Ahashwërosh, and by the boldness of Estër the decree was turned around. The only other time that the number 127 is used in Scripture is in reference to the life of Sarah, the only woman to have her age recorded. This speaks a great deal about us being the children of the promise who shall rule with Elohim!

שָׂרָה ‘Sarah’ – Strong’s H8283 which means, ‘*princess, noblewoman*’, is the feminine of the word שָׂר sar – Strong’s H8269 which means, ‘*prince, captain, chieftain, ruler*’!

יִשְׂרָאֵל Yisra’el – Strong’s H3478 which means, ‘*he who prevails, overcomes with El*’ and comes from the primitive root words, אֵל el – Strong’s H410 which means, ‘*Mighty, power, shortened form of Elohim – Mighty One*’ and the root word verb שָׂרָה sarah – Strong’s H8280 which means, ‘*to persist, exert oneself, persevere, wrestle, contend*’, is spelt the same as the name of Abraham’s wife. יִשְׂרָאֵל Yisra’el – could also be understood as those who rule with El, as princes! We are a royal priesthood and in a manner of speaking with Abraham as our father in the faith we are also children of Sarah the ‘*princess*’ and so are also ‘*princes*’ in the Kingdom of our King, and we who overcome shall rule with Him!

As you take a stand in the Master and stay in Him, and after having done all continue to stand for your life, then you too can embrace the Purim like celebration we have in our Mighty King, as we serve faithful as a royal priesthood, shining the light of His truth in every way, amidst a wicked, dark and cruel world!

Remember how I mentioned that פּוֹרִים – Purim is the plural of the noun פּוֹר Pur – Strong’s H6332 which means, ‘*a lot, piece*’, and is thought to come from the root verb פָּרַר pur – Strong’s H6331 which means, ‘*to bring to naught, broken, utterly take, to break, crush*’! Well this verb is only used twice in Scripture and we see this being used in:

**Tehillah/Psalm 33:10 “יְהוָה brings the counsel of the nations to naught; He thwarts the plans of the peoples.”**

Translated here as **'to naught'** we are able to firmly understand the great victory that **Purim** celebrates, as יהוה brought the counsel of the nations to naught and turned the decree around; and this is exactly what we celebrate in the victory that our Master and Elohim done for us!

May this story of Estĕr, Mordeḱai and all of the Yehuḁim who stood for their lives, in the 127 provinces of Aḥashwĕrosh, stir you to have a bold faith to stand for your life and celebrate the great victory Messiah has given us over death, and do so with much rejoicing, giving praise to His Mighty Name, amĕn!

יהוה bless you and guard you; יהוה make His face shine upon you and show you favour; יהוה lift up His face to you and give you Shalom!