

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG83 – The Feast Of Purim

We are coming up to the Feast of Purim, and personally, I am in preparation for it. It is one of the best, most significant Feasts, personally, that I have experienced. I have had the pleasure of being in Israel during the Feast of Purim, and my gosh, it is so fun! The children are dressed in costumes, out dancing in the street. There are street parties. It is just a crazy, crazy time in Israel, and you really get to see the Jewish people in a celebration. And Purim is worthy of a celebration, because of its significance.

Now, I know many Christians don't celebrate Purim. Many are not even aware of what it is. Probably some have not read the book of Esther in a long time. But if we read the book of Esther – and I will try to go through and summarize part of the story – you really find that this is maybe one of the most significant teachings that we get from the Scriptures about spiritual warfare and how it works. And I think it is very appropriate to the end-time days that we are into on the earth to see how we, as the sons of God, the saints of God, are to move, and how we are to see the victory of the Kingdom of God manifest on this earth.

When you are in Israel, celebrating the Feast of Purim, one of the fun things is to go to synagogue; because the entire book of Esther is read by a cantor, and it is just craziness! Every time you hear the name Mordecai, who is the hero of the story, everyone cheers and claps and has a joyous celebration. Every time you, on the contrary, hear the name Haman, or Haman, you hear booing and hissing; people have noise makers, and they are creating quite a stir and a racket within the synagogue. They read through the whole book of Esther, and it is very animated. It is very expressive of what the book of Esther is about, and how the Jewish people were saved from annihilation under the decree of Haman in that time.

If you say, "Well, I still don't see the significance of this for me, I'm a Christian, I read the New Testament." Well, just try this one on: If there wasn't the victory in the book of Esther that we see happening through this story, if Haman had been successful in his decree, then all Jews in the world at that time would have been annihilated and murdered – men, women, and children. That means for you, as a Christian, that you would not have Christ being born in a manger and coming forth as the Messiah. So with that said, I hope you see the significance of this victory that is Purim – not just for the Jewish people, but for Christians and all allies of the Jewish people. The reason we have a Savior today is because of this tremendous victory that took place under Esther and under Mordecai against the decree of annihilation that was brought about by Haman. So I am going to give a little bit of the story and try to get across some of the major topics of things that happened. But at the end, I want to make some very specific points of what we should be looking for and celebrating during this time of the story and the celebration of Purim.

The story of Purim begins at a party. King Ahasuerus is having a party and he calls for his queen, Vashti, to come and to dance at the party for all of his guests; and Vashti refuses to do that. So the king decides that she is no longer going to be the queen, and he is going to replace her. This begins to open the story where we find Esther's entrance.

Esther is a young woman, and she is being raised by her uncle Mordecai. She is brought to the palace to be one of the young virgins who is going to be evaluated to be the new queen. She goes through this tremendous time of preparation, which all of the women did; and this is very much a part of the story, because the story surrounds the significance of what she experienced in preparation to go before the king. Of course, as we look at the significance of the story, we know the king represents God the Father, the Creator; and she is going to make an appearance before the king. In order to do that, she goes through six months of preparation with myrrh, and she also goes through six months of preparation with sweet spices. She then is brought and presented to the king.

Now, the king loves Esther, chooses her to be the queen, and loves her very much. She develops this relationship with the king, which becomes very important as the story goes on, because her life is going to hang in the balance as she presents herself at times before the king. You didn't just, at that time, present yourself to the king, walk into the throne room; because if you did that, the punishment was death. Unless the king would extend his scepter, you would die for entering into the king's presence without being called for by the king.

As the story goes on, we see that Esther becomes the queen; and as she is in the palace now and loved by the king, the story kind of changes into a focus upon Mordecai and Haman. Haman is someone who serves the king. He is over his princes, and he is very high up in the government at that time under the king. And so, he makes this declaration, because he is so in love with himself, that anybody who sees him has to bow down to him and do obeisance to him as he is passing by. Well, Mordecai, being a good Jew, is not about to give worship in obeisance to anybody but God. And so Haman gets very, very upset at Mordecai, because Mordecai is never being submissive to him, or respectful of him, or bowing down to him as everyone is supposed to do. Because of that, then we see that Haman comes up with this plot. His main purpose is to kill Mordecai, but in the process of doing that, he is more than willing to destroy everyone, all of the Jewish people.

The king is approached by Haman, and Haman tells the king, "Hey, there are these people in your Providence who are really a threat to your kingdom. They are not really submissive to you, they are not bowing down to me, and I think you would be better not to have them in the kingdom. I think they are a long-term threat to your authority and your rule, your kingship." And we see that the king responds to him. Of course, he trusts Haman; he is over all the princes and he is one of the rulers in his kingdom. And so he tells Haman, "Hey, okay. Well, you draft then a letter. You decide what you want to do." He gives Haman his signet ring, he takes off his signet ring. And as we all know, the signet ring in those days was the authority of the king. It was the very voice of the king. Whenever a decree was made, the king would seal it with his ring. When someone saw the ring sealing a document, they knew that that was the voice of the king. It was the word of the king. And so whatever that order was, it was absolutely carried out completely. It was the law of the land. The king hands Haman his ring and he says, "You deal with these people as you see fit." So Haman has letters drafted, and he uses the seal of the king's ring to send these letters out to the province.

I will read Esther three, starting at verses 13-15. It says, "Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder. A copy of the edict to be issued as law in every province was published to all the peoples so that they should be ready for this day. The couriers went out impelled by the king's

command while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa” - which is the city that the king and Haman lived in – “and while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was in confusion.”

Then Mordecai learns about this decree that was made. He tears his clothes, he goes into mourning, sackcloth and ashes, and he is wandering around the city weeping over this command that has been made. This is the entire kingdom that was under Persian rule at this time. The kingdom reigned from India to Ethiopia, it was over 127 provinces that were set under the royal throne in the citadel of Susa. So this was a huge area of the world at this time that was under the king.

We see that Mordecai goes into fasting and prayer, he is in mourning, and Esther hears about this. In Esther, the fourth chapter, starting at verse 11, she says, “All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned.” So Mordecai calls to Esther and says, “Look, you’ve got to go before the king. You've got to explain to him what is happening.” And here in verse 11, Esther is responding to Mordecai and reciting the law of the land that is saying, “I cannot go before the king. I have not been summoned by the king. And it doesn't matter that I am the queen. It doesn't matter that he loves me. I have yet to be called, and if I go before him, he could dictate my death.”

All of these words then of Esther are passed on to Mordecai through the servants. And in verse 13, it says, “Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, ‘Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.’” In other words, “Esther, you are a Jew. And when this day comes, you, likewise, will be killed along with all of the Jews.” Verses 14-15, ““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?”” Mordecai is telling Esther, “This may be the reason why God chose to put you at the side of the king, make you a beloved queen in his presence. It could be for the salvation of the Jews that this love of the king is placed upon you.” And so Mordecai tells Esther, “Look, you are not going to survive either, if you don't follow this.” Esther replies to Mordecai again, she says, ““Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go into the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”” What a tremendous thing. Esther puts her life, her very life on the line. She decides that she will go in and find a way to approach the king in order to try to resolve this assassination of the Jewish people, this annihilation of the Jewish people, that is about to happen.

So again, we find this amazing story that is playing itself out. And again, all of this has so much to do with us, because we know that our hope is in the King. Our hope is in the Lord of lords. Our hope is in the Creator of the universe who rules heaven and earth, who is the Creator of all things. Before Him we have to make our cry. We have to bring our plea to Him when we find ourselves in danger of destruction, which we as humans live under, the futility of what God has said against us because of the sin that has come through Adam and down through the ages. And so we are seeing this picture, which you can overlay to where we are now in our lives, in the things that have happened in the bringing forth of Messiah.

We find that Esther goes in before the king; the king sees that she is very distraught, and he loves her very much, and he wants to know what is wrong with her. So she asks him, “Please, I want to have a party. And I want you, king, and I want Haman, to come to this party that I am going to give. At that

time, I will tell you what is going on.” And so the king grants her her wish, and extends the golden scepter; she was not destroyed. And again, we see this connection between the fact that Esther had gone through all these days – she had gone through a year of preparation to come, in the beginning, before the king. All of this preparation, and then when she finally entered the king's presence, the king loved her, and accepted her, and received her. And now, as she goes in, once again, he extends the scepter and accepts her presence in his throne room.

That is what we look forward to. That is what we see that has happened for us; that when the King, the Lord, sent forth the Messiah, He received Him into His throne room. He accepted Him: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” God extended His scepter to Christ, to Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus. He extended that scepter to Him. He received Him. He accepted Him, and accepted His sacrifice. And because of that, we know that the door was open for many things to transpire for us, so that the decree of death and annihilation against us – we have to remember that the wages of sin are death; that we as humans have labored under the wages of sin. We have labored under the futility of death and sin that was decreed on Adam. Now, it wasn't brought about by satan; that was brought about by God. It was the King's decree. And we have to remember, in this story, it wasn't Haman making a decree; it was the king's decree. It may have been initiated by the words of Haman and the act of Haman; just like the judgment that came on Adam and Eve may have been initiated by the manipulation that happened by the serpent, so that they sinned and were disobedient. But ultimately, it was God's declaration of judgment that came on them. They were removed from the Garden; they were removed from the reality that they were created not to die, but to live. And so the King's decree brought the death, brought the sentence of death, brought the futility onto the earth that we still see ourselves living in.

As the story goes on, we will see the significance of that, because yes, God Himself sends the Messiah. And so there is an intervention into the story that comes directly from the king. But other things will transpire in the story as we go on, and they are ready to unfold now, as Esther is having this party before the king, where she has invited only the king and Haman. In Esther 7, starting at verses 1-4, it says, “Now the king and Haman came to drink wine with Esther the queen. And the king said to Esther on the second day also as they drank their wine at the banquet, ‘What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done.’ Then Queen Esther replied, ‘If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given to me as my petition, and my people as my request; for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king.’” In other words, if they just had sold the Jews into slavery, she would not have bothered the king; but this is about life and death.

In verses 5-6 it goes on to say, “Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, ‘Who is he, and where is he, who would presume to do thus?’ Esther said, ‘A foe and an enemy is this wicked Haman!’ Then Haman became terrified before the king and the queen.” And the king gets so mad that he walks outside into the garden. He is pacing around the garden. And while he is pacing around the garden, Haman comes and grabs onto the Queen, he is begging for mercy. Oh my God, he realizes that the king probably is going to kill him for what he has just found out. And so here is Haman holding on to Esther, you know, you can see he is shaking her, going, “Please!” pleading for his life. The king walks in from the garden and thinks Haman is attacking the queen right in front of him. So now he is really mad, and he asks what should be done. One of the eunuchs that are there says to the king, in Esther 7:9, “Behold indeed, the gallows standing at Haman's house fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai who spoke good

on behalf of the king!” I didn't give a summary of this part of the story, but Mordecai had blessed the king and saved his life at one point, and so the king knew Mordecai and was looking to bless him. Haman in his anger to kill Mordecai had built gallows to hang him right in front of his house. Those gallows were standing, waiting for the day of annihilation. And the king said, “Hang him on it! Hang him on it!” So the king orders that Haman be hung on his own gallows.

We see this is part of the reality of spiritual warfare – that which someone sends out comes back upon their own head. And that is why we are so careful with our spirits and what we say and what we voice and how we minister things. Because, you know, if you judge, you are judged, right? If you curse, the curse comes back on you. So Haman's curse comes back on him, and the way he had planned for Mordecai to die, he ends up dying. And the king sends Haman out to be hung on his own gallows. So this is, again, a great part of this story. We see that when the king finds out and hears the cry of the queen before him, the intercession of the queen before him for her life and the life of her people, he sends Haman to the gallows that he had built for himself. And we see this is what happens through the cry, the intercession, the pleading of Christ before the King in His throne room. We see that satan is brought into judgment, and the plans that he had for the destruction of mankind are brought back upon his own head. And in fact, what happens through the cross of Jesus Christ, through Yeshua, is that satan himself is judged and brought into eternal death and damnation. His own plan to destroy humanity comes back upon his own head.

This is a sovereign move of God, because God sovereignly, in His love – He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. He sent him to earth. And Christ, in that deep relationship, Christ went through the years of preparation of His own being. You remember when He came to the river to be baptized by John, before He has accomplished any ministry or done anything, the Father says of Him, “This is My Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Christ had already appeared before the Father. He had pleased the Father. He had prepared His own heart, and the Father loved Him. And so when Christ appears before the Father, as Esther appeared before the king, in intercession for the lives of humanity, God grants that by turning the judgment that was set upon humanity back on the head of the one who planned it. If satan's plan was allowed to go forth, it says there would be no flesh saved alive. That was his eternal plan, just as it was with Haman – the death and the annihilation of the Jewish people, man, woman, child, everyone was to be gone. And don't forget: if that plan had been fulfilled, there would be no Christ that came to have His intercession for us and to walk out this story in a way that brought salvation into our lives. And so we are thankful for what the King did by His own determination and choosing, that He brought the Christ; He brought the one whom He would receive and accept into His throne room, and hear His intercession. And Christ still lives, ever lives, to make intercession for us. And so this is a beautiful picture of this great story of Esther.

So the king has Haman killed, just as God planned and executed the judgment against satan. The story does go on – and why does the story go on? Isn't that the end of the story? Christ comes, He goes to the cross, and satan is judged; He takes captive these host of captives. We see in Revelation 12 that there was war in heaven, and satan is cast down. Ah! But remember what happens: satan is cast to the earth. The story is not over. The decree has not been dealt with. The author of the decree, Haman, may have been dealt with. Christ coming may have dealt with the author of the decree of annihilation against humanity; but that does not necessarily solve the problem that comes about with the decree. So we find, once again, that Esther has to enter into the court of the king. And once again, the king accepts her. In Esther 8, verses 3-5, it says, “Then Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept and implored him to avert the evil scheme of Haman the Agagite and his plot which he had devised against the Jews.

The king extended the golden scepter to Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king. Then she said, 'If it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him and the matter seems proper to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.'"

We know this was the beginning of the story, right? Haman dictated the letters, the letters were sent out. The letters were stamped by the signet ring of the king, and they were a decree for the annihilation of the Jewish people. Now Esther is coming, saying, "Yes, Haman has been hung on his own gallows, but the decree is still out there through all of the provinces. And they are going to still destroy the Jews on the given day, unless you are able to revoke those letters." Now it gets interesting. Verses 6-8, "For how can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?' So King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, 'Behold, I have given the house of Haman to Esther, and him they have hanged on the gallows because he had stretched out his hands against the Jews. Now you write to the Jews as you see fit, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked.'"

What is the king saying here? The king is saying, "Look, those letters were written. I had given Haman my ring, and he sealed it with the ring, meaning it is the word of God. It is the word of the king, and you cannot revoke the word of God. Something else must happen." And so the king gives the signet ring over to Mordecai, and he says, "Listen, even I, the king, I can't erase the decree. It has to be done in another way. Now you are going to have to write letters to the Jews and tell them what to do. You are going to have to figure this out."

Verses 9-12, "So the king's scribes were called at that time in the third month (that is, the month Sivan), on the twenty-third day; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews, the satraps, the governors and the princes of the provinces which extended from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to every province according to its script, and to every people according to their language as well as to the Jews according to their script and their language. He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horses, riding on steeds sired by the royal stud. In them the king granted the Jews who were in each and every city the right to assemble and to defend their lives, to destroy, to kill and to annihilate the entire army of any people or province which might attack them, including children and women, and to plunder their spoil, on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month."

What did they do? They gave an edict to the Jewish people, giving them the authority to fight back. Now that may seem strange to us, but the truth is, we see that this is what happens. We see the King makes His dictate and brings forth the Christ, receives Christ in His intercession, and grants our salvation, grants us life, grants the end of the one who was set to destroy us. But that does not do away with the plan. That does not do away with what has been set up. We find this in many wars on a natural level – the war can be over, but the minefields still exist. And even today, we see many places where people's lives are being taken by the ordnance that was placed during the time of the war. This is what it is talking about. This decree was like a mine field that had been established; it didn't need Haman for it to continue on. And the things that have been set in motion of decrees against humanity don't need satan in order to be carried out; there is no adversary necessary. You don't need the principalities and powers, necessarily; the decree has been made. And don't forget, the decree was stamped by the King.

When we go back to Genesis, we see the decree against mankind. We see what is to happen. We see the death and the futility that is to come because of the disobedience and the sin. That may have been, again, a plot that satan had, the trap which we see many times in the Scriptures, where satan manipulates man to a place where God's judgment comes; because satan knew he couldn't destroy man himself, he had to bring God against man. He did that with the children of Israel under Balaam; we see the same principle in action. God had to come and judge Israel because of their idolatry and their disobedience. See, those things were set in motion by the Lord. And you say, "Well, what is set in motion?" Well, again, the futility. When we read Romans 8, starting at verses 20-24, it says, "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved."

See, it is this hope in which we have been saved. But something must happen. We must be the ones. Christ was taken into the throne room and received by the Father, and He was given the name above every name, that at the name of Yeshua HaMashiach, every knee should bow and every tongue should confess. It is that name of authority by which all things are brought unto judgment. But what does He do with that? He gives that to His people. Christ gives that to His Body.

In Luke 10 is a great example with the sending out of the seventy. Starting at verses 17-19, it says, "The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even demons were subject to us in Your name.' And He said to them, 'I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.'" So what is it that that Christ does? Winning the victory, winning the victory on the cross, shedding His blood for the forgiveness of our sins, He ascends to the right hand of the Father in that throne room, and He gives to us the authority. He gives to us that ability to go in His name and to proclaim the treading on the serpents and the ending of the plan. We are the ones that crush the plan of the enemy.

It says in Romans 16:20, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you." This is something that happens. God played His part. Christ came and played His part, and received from the Father the signet ring. Then, in order to see the totality of the deliverance and the end of the story in releasing mankind from the futility and the death that exists on this earth, we see that the Body of Christ comes forth with the name which is above every name on their lips. And it is they that execute the judgment written. It is they who bring an end to this plot and this plan.

I want us to remember a few things from this. Please, read the book of Esther. Study it carefully. It gives such a pattern, and probably some of the clearest explanations and lessons and teachings so that we can understand what is happening in these great spiritual issues that we call spiritual warfare. So read the book; get the understanding; pray over it for God to open our eyes to see how we, now, as the Body of Christ, must move.

Number two: we see that God in His sovereignty moved to bring Christ to the earth; and through His cross, God sovereignly brought judgment on the adversaries. And though, through the sacrificial blood of Christ on that same cross, our sins are forgiven, the plot of annihilation in death through futility still remains. You say, "I don't know that I can understand that." Well, unless we proclaim the cross of Christ and we proclaim our freedom and confess the Lord, we still see people dying under the futility of sin.

We still see the consequence of death happening, because the wage of sin is death; and people in this age, humanity is still dying under the judgments that had been declared by God that had to happen. It is only through this voicing of the name of Christ that we see those judgments and those death sentences removed – until all humanity rises up with a cry in their heart to receive God, and His work, and what He has done for them in salvation.

The sons of God – this is the last point I want to make – the sons of God now must rise up using the signet ring, the mighty name of Yeshua HaMashiach, Jesus, the Christ. We must bind the strong man and plunder his house. We must execute, in the name of the Lord, the judgments written, as Psalm 149:8-9 says it: “To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute on them the judgment written; this is an honor for all His godly ones. Praise the Lord!”

So we see that this is the course of what is taking place through this great celebration of the Feast of Purim. I encourage you: study it. Get involved with Purim. Have a celebration with you, your family, with your community, whatever; whoever you are with in faith, find yourselves celebrating this tremendous Feast of Purim, this time of deliverance from the annihilation. We bless the Jewish people during this time, that God continue to deliver them from every determination for their destruction and annihilation. We also declare it for the Body of Christ: that which has brought forth to see our destruction, the spirits of hatred and division that would come against us, let them all be brought down in the mighty name of Yehoshua HaMashiach. Amen.