



Mordekhi's Drash for Shabbat March 22, 2008 / II Adar 15, 5768

Parashah #25

Torah: *Tsav* (Command), *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 6.1(8)-8.36

Haftorah: *Yirmeyahu* (Jeremiah) 7.21-8.3, 9.22-23(23-24)

Suggested Messianic Writings: Hebrews 9.11-28

Shalom,

The Fast of *Ester* (Esther) on II Adar 13 and the Feast of Purim on II Adar 14 are observed this week, corresponding to Thursday and Friday, March 20 & 21 in 2008. Readings for the Fast of Ester are *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 32.11-14, 34.1-10 and Isaiah 55.6-56.8. The readings for *Purim* (Lots) are *Sh'mot* 17.8-16; the book of Ester; *Tehillim* (Psalms) 3.3; and Hebrews 11.

Bible students are aware that in the book of Ester, no mention is made of HaShem, yet at the same time it is very obvious that His hand was in control of all events, even though outwardly He appeared to be invisible and not-present. That is actually a picture of present-day Israel – by all outward appearances, HaShem seems to be doing nothing, but behind the scenes His hand is in control of all events.

Haman was a descendant of Agag, the wicked king of the Amalekites; this was the wicked king that *Sha'ul* (Saul), the first king of Israel, and who was from the tribe of *Binyamin* (Benjamin), was to have destroyed. *Sha'ul* failed at this, and the prophet *Sh'mu'el* (Samuel) ended up doing the job (see *Sh'mu'el Alef* / 1 Samuel 15). As the story of Ester unfolds, we see that one of the primary individuals, Mordekhi, was of the tribe of Binyamin. We are told that he was a descendant of Kish, but unless this is a genealogical record that only the names more prominent characters, he was probably not the same Kish who was the father of King *Sha'ul*. However, the same tribe of Binyamin is involved. So in a bit of a turn-about, HaShem was able to bless the tribe of Binyamin through Mordekhi, to make up for *Sha'ul*'s failure.

In *B'reshet* (Genesis) 49.27, as *Ya'akov* (Jacob) prophesied over his sons near the end of his life, he said of Binyamin, "Binyamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey, in the evening still dividing the spoil." *Sha'ul* of Binyamin got into trouble because not only did he did *not* destroy the wicked king Agag, he also kept the spoils after defeating that group of Amalekites. Later on, *Moshe* (Moses) prophesied over the tribes of Israel near the end of his life, and of the tribe of Binyamin he said, "ADONAI's beloved lives securely. He protects him day by day. He lives between his shoulders" (*D'varim* / Deuteronomy 33.12). This seems to be a picture of Mordekhi, as the pendulum swings to his side *from* the side of *Sha'ul*. *Sha'ul* in this instance seems to be a picture of the curse of *D'varim* 28, while Mordekhi pictures the blessing of the same chapter.

Rabbi Shmuel noted a couple of weeks ago that the name of Ester, אסתר, can be found in the Hebrew root of "hidden," *sah-tahr* סתר, and a hint of the reason of HaShem's hiddenness in the book of Ester can be found in *D'varim* 31.17, as HaShem said to *Moshe* concerning Israel's straying in the future, "...they will abandon me and break my covenant which I have made for them. Then my anger will flare up, and I will abandon them and *hide* my face from them." The same root word is also found in Psalm 30.8(7), "...when you [Adonai] *hid* your face, I was struck with terror." In fact, the entire Psalm 30 seems to be a prophetic picture of Mordekhi and Israel and the events of the book of Ester.

I see the possibility of another hint of HaShem's hand in the book of Ester, for in 2.15 we are told that Ester was the daughter of אביחיל *Avikhayil*, whose name means, "my Father of might;" *avi* אבי meaning "my father," and *khayil* חיל meaning, "a force, an army, wealth, virtue, valor, strength." The root of *khayil* is *khool* חול, which means, "to twist or whirl, to dance; to writhe in pain or fear, to wait;" thus, basically the word has a dual meaning, that of "spinning," and also "twisting in labor pangs," both describing feelings of great intensity¹. We find this word in Ester 4.4, after Ester had been told of Haman's decree to destroy all of the Jews, "[when Ester heard this news], the queen became *deeply distressed*." But this dreaded news caused the daughter of "my Father of might" to rise and come to the defense of her people.

In our day, we must be aware that the spirit of Amalek that controlled Haman is still alive and is controlling the Hamans who are currently hoping to drive Israel into the sea. The Fast of Ester should cause us to realize that the threat of annihilation is a very real threat, a constant hound nipping at the heels of the Jewish people. Purim is a time to celebrate the joyous deliverance of Israel, all the while remembering

that Israel remained in exile after this victory for some time, but yet the stage was set for the return to the Land and rebuild the Temple during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Daily we watch the Middle East and Israel. The time is soon coming, I believe, for HaShem to show His hand with great strength. The enemies of Israel are mocking. It would seem to be a good time for another Mordekhi or Esther, or a Joshua or Gideon, to arise and lead Israel to a Godly victory. Better yet, time for Mashiakh Yeshua to return and deliver His people. Time for the god of Islam to be defeated and crushed. Time for the enemies of Israel and HaShem to fall on their knees in repentance, or be removed. Yet Biblical prophecy tells us that there are still some characters yet to appear, still more troubles to come, still a few more scenes to be played out; but in the long run, there remain just a few more risings and settings of the sun. The lesson for us from the Torah portion: the fire on the altar is to be kept burning.

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah

(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi (Marc)

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

(Acts 1.11 CJB)ⁱ

¹ Other examples are: Isa 66.7, "Before she *travailed*, she brought forth...;" Isa 66.8, "for as soon as Zion *travailed*, she brought forth;" Ps 29.9, "The voice of the Lord makes the hinds to *calve* (or, *to be in pain*; to give birth prematurely);" Ps 114.7, "*Tremble*, earth, at the presence of Adonai;" Lam 3.26, "It is good that a man should both *hope* and quietly wait for the salvation of ADONAI," among many such usages. The Lamentations verse seems to indicate both trembling excitement with *khool* "hope," and calm control, as one waits upon the L-rd.