

Torah Portion #21: Ki Tisa (כי תשא) "when you take"

Torah ~ *Exodus 30:11-34:35* | Prophets ~ *1 Kings 18:1-39* | New Covenant ~ *Acts 7:35-60; 2 Corinthians 3:1-18*

Purim

The meaning of the word Purim is "lots". It refers to the lottery that Haman used to choose the date that he would destroy the Jewish people. Purim is celebrated on Adar 14th, which usually comes in March. Though this is not a God given Feast from *Leviticus 23*, it is still a Biblical Feast found in the Book of Esther. It was being celebrated during the time of Yeshua and could have been the unnamed feast in *John 5:1* that Yeshua was celebrating. Purim remembers a time when the Jewish people living in Persia (modern day Iran) were saved from total destruction.

The Amalekites

To tell the full story of Purim we must go back to the book of Genesis. One of the two sons of Isaac was Esau. He chose to no longer be apart of Israel because his brother Jacob was chosen over him to be their leader. One of Esau's grandsons was named Amalek in *Genesis 36:12*. Amalek would go on to father the Amalekites, which goes on to be one of Israel's most enduring enemies.

The Amalekites first attacked Israel after they had left Egypt in *Exodus 17:8-16*. Here Israel defeats the Amalekites and God promises to one day utterly destroy them. Once again in *Numbers 14:25, 43, 45* do we see Israel fighting against the Amalekites. Before the death of Moses, he reminds the Israelites in *Deuteronomy 25:17-19* of God's promise to destroy the Amalekites. The Israelites went on to have a number of battles with the Amalekites during the time of Joshua and the Judges but was unable to destroy them at that time.

Finally the opportunity came for Israel to completely destroy the Amalekites in *1 Samuel 15:1-3* where God told King Saul to not spare any of them. But King Saul did not obey the Lord, he spared King Agag of the Amalekites in *1 Samuel 15:9*. So the prophet Samuel had to kill Agag, but some of Agag's household was able to escape and later reappear.

Israel goes on to be a powerful Kingdom under the rule David and Solomon. But after their death, Israel declines until King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Iraq) defeats them and carried away the people of Jerusalem in *2 Kings 25:1-12*. But later, Persia conquers Babylon, this is why we find in the Book of Esther so many Jewish people living in Persia.

The Book of Esther

Esther (Hadassah), a beautiful young Jewish woman living in Persia, was taken from her home to become apart of a group of women from which the King would choose his new queen. King Ahasuerus loved Esther more than the other women therefore he chose her to be queen, but he did not know that she was a Jew. Esther is a picture of Yeshua's mother, Mary. Both were virgins chosen to bring deliverance to God's people.

Then comes Haman, an anti-semite and Prime Minister of Persia. He was a descendant of King Agag. Haman is a clear picture of the anti-messiah and the book of Esther is a picture of modern day anti-semitism. During World War II, Hitler tried to do the very same thing as Haman but once again the Lord saved His people from destruction.

Esther's cousin, Mordecai, refused to bow down to Haman, so Haman sought revenge by destroying the Jewish people. The King handed over the fate of the Jewish people to Haman, to do as he pleased with them. Mordecai told Esther to speak to the King on behalf of the Jewish people. So Esther fasted for three days to prepare herself, then she went to see the King. The King accepted her request to speak with him, and granted her anything she asked. So the Jewish people was saved, and Haman was hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

The message of Purim

Esther is the only Book of the Bible that does not contain the name of God. Thus, one important message of the story is that God often works in ways that are not apparent on the surface. The Book of Esther and the Feast of Purim is a picture of how the Holy Spirit is always working behind the scenes on our behalf. Also, this feast reminds us that God will always preserve His people, even at the end of this age, for it says in *Romans 11:26* that "all Israel will be saved". We should always speak up for and pray for the peace of God's people (*Esther 4:14 & Psalms 122:6-9*).