



*If you remain silent
at this time*



**A study on the book
of Esther**

“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place ... Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this’ (Esther 4:14) NKJV

The book of Esther tells not only of the removal of wicked Haman and the salvation of the Jews, but it opens on the theme of the removal of disobedient Queen Vashti, and the surprising appointment of a successor ... a virtual ‘nobody’ who came from orphan background.

Bearing in mind that all scripture ... is profitable (2 Tim 3:16) there are vital parallels herein for our correction and instruction today:

1. Vashti had her own agenda, and threw her own party, declining the banquet when the king ‘showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendour of his excellent majesty...’ (Esth 1:4, 17, 22) The seven wise men later counselled that Vashti be removed because of the effect her behaviour would have on other women who could become contemptuous of their husbands!!
2. The ‘replacement’ Queen elect, Esther, did not disclose her Jewish ancestry, obeying her wise counsellor, Mordecai (Esth 2:10). Let us note also that Esther used none of the ‘cosmetics’ by which the other women sought to win the king’s favour, but ‘she requested nothing but what Hegai the king’s eunuch, the custodian of the women (symbolic of the Holy Spirit) advised ...’ and the king loved Esther more than all the other women’ (Esth 2:15,17).
3. But the paramountcy of Esther’s appointment lay in the timing - something arose in her time which she herself was called to confront. This was the planned, systematic destruction of her own people, the Jews. This is not mere mythology or theology, but plain recorded history. The events concerning Vashti and the appointment of Esther, and the attempted destruction of the Jews are recorded in the annals of Persia. The ongoing Jewish celebrations at Purim of the deliverance of the Jews did not arise out of fairy tales, but from the event itself, which later had its satanic counterpart in the Holocaust.
4. While much has recently been said about the silence of the Church, of Britain and other nations at the time of the Holocaust - little or nothing is publicly uttered about the current efforts before our very eyes to again destroy the Jewish nation - Israel. So much for the ‘Never Again!’
5. Esther was clearly warned that even though she was Queen, she and her relatives would perish if she did not speak up for the Jews. ‘If you remain silent...’ She had obviously been silent up to that point, and was given a choice: ‘If.’ Mordecai, the uncle warning her, again symbolises the Holy Spirit. Our thoughts turn to: ‘He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches. To him that overcomes, I will give...’ Many churches being spoken to, but only an individual here

and there actually hearing and responding. Rabbinic interpretation of our opening text above, takes it to mean that, if Esther does not respond, God Himself will just intervene in some other way. That is undoubtedly a correct view.

6. If after many years of extermination attempts against Israel (from 1948), the Church as a whole continues to remain indifferent and silent, with the whole matter of the Messiah's return and 2nd Advent pivoting entirely upon Israel's salvation, (Matt 23:39) what is God to do with us, His body - called to be co-labourers with Him? God is not merely wanting PFI prayer groups. He is looking for whole Church response: prayer on Sunday mornings when the whole church is assembled. This is not PFI, para-church stuff. It is to do with the fulfilment of God's Word and His end-time purposes! It parallels the elder brother of the prodigal son: he just had no idea of what was in his father's heart, yearning for his far-off son.

7. Scripture makes it clear that God is 'exceedingly angry' ... 'with the nations at ease' (Zech 1:15.) And the Lord is 'zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great zeal.' (Zech 1:14) God is not speaking in figurative terms here. He is talking about literal Jerusalem - of which it was recently Islamically claimed - 'It has never been Jewish - not even a stone thereof!'

8. While we pursue our daily rounds, ignoring the huge issues swivelling on Israel, we need the trumpet warning of the approach of 'the day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion' (Is. 34:8) - addressed specifically to Gentile nations (Is. 34:1,2). Neither the rapture of the Church, nor many other things that we hope for, are going to occur before certain other difficult events - including this Day of Vengeance - first find fulfilment.

9. For Esther, silence was irresponsibility. So she first called for 3 days prayer and fasting (even though prayer is not specifically mentioned here). She knew what to do and did it, even though she knew she was putting her life at risk. Many ministers and Bible teachers know what God's purposes are for Israel, but for the sake of expediency and to avoid rocking the boat - they are silent. While we can understand that 'there is a time to speak and a time to be silent.' God is not pleased, and reminds us of Vashti's own agenda being contrary to His. Vashti's fate seems also to be mirrored in Romans 11: 21 - 'For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.'

10. It was a grave risk for Esther to go uninvited into the king's palace, but she put on her royal robes and came to stand right opposite the very presence of the leading monarch of the world at that point in world history! She had gone saying - 'If I perish, I perish!' She drew near and touched the top of his sceptre.

What courage! what fortitude! and what a picture of the overcoming church that God longs to see. What an example of the plea and prayer that God waits for from our own hearts and lips!

While we could say that, in Esther's day the way into the holy place had not yet been disclosed, (Heb. 9:8) today it is far different. Jesus Himself has opened 'a new and living way' and we are bidden to 'come boldly to the Throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need' (Heb. 10.20, 4:16). Plus 'if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us' (1 Jn. 5:14).

11. It is no accident that Jesus died (some 500 years later) on the very day after Haman's edict had gone forth to destroy the Jews - 13th of Nisan! (See Esth 3:12ff) '... now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month (Nisan). Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it (the unblemished male lamb, a year old) at twilight' (Ex. 12:6) (Exodus 12:6). 'There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin: He only could unlock the Gate of Heaven and let us in.'

12. Esther (in Hebrew means Hadassah which, in turn) means 'Myrtle'. The myrtle tree, more than anything else, symbolises the intercessor. In Zechariah 1, you find the 'man on the red horse' mentioned three times as 'standing amongst the myrtle trees - hidden in the ravine.' Why? Because the Lord is particularly with the praying remnant - here pictured as myrtle trees.

The myrtle tree is fragrant, lowly and well-watered. Its sprigs are long-lasting and evergreen. It has shining leaves and bears starry, white blossoms. From it beautiful garlands are made. It is a main component of the Lulav, for the year's final Feast of the Lord - Succot, the Feast of Tabernacles, rounding off the main and final harvest.

Will you be a sprig of myrtle for Israel?

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