



Purim
Festival of Faith...
displayed in submissiveness

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The book of Esther tells of the Jewish people finding deliverance through faith. Although the name of G-d does not appear in this book, religious practices such as prayer, fasting, and repentance all are found throughout the chapters of this scroll. When examining the two main characters, Mordechai and Esther, one learns that both of them possessed a strong faith in the G-d of Israel.

Faith is found within the soul of an individual and therefore it cannot be seen. However, true faith works within a person's life and the results of faith are clearly discernible in the actions of faithful people. Although faith will manifest itself in a variety of ways, one consistent manifestation of faith is seen in submissiveness. For the purpose of this brief article, the submissiveness of Esther will be examined in one significant event in her life.

Esther was an orphan and she was raised by her uncle, Mordechai. Mordechai was a man of faith, who believed deeply in the G-d of Israel; therefore, he instilled within his niece this same faith. When young women were assembled to Shushan, the capital of the kingdom, in order to find a new queen for Achashverosh, the king, Esther was also taken. When Esther's turn came to go before the king, it is stated,

וּבְהִגֵּיעַ תֵּר-אֶסְתֵּר בֵּת-אֲבִיחַיִל דָּד מֶרְדֳּכַי אֲשֶׁר לָקַח-לָוּ לְבַת לְבוּא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ לֹא בִקְשָׁה דְבָר בִּי אִם אֶת-אֲשֶׁר
יֹאמֶר הִגֵּי סָרִיס-הַמֶּלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר הַנָּשִׁים וְתַהֲי אֶסְתֵּר נִשְׂאֵת חֵן בְּעֵינַי כָּל-רְאִיָּה: אֶסְתֵּר ב.ט"ו

“And when (the) turn of Esther arrived, [the daughter of Avichail, (her) uncle was Mordechai who had taken (her) for a daughter], to come before the king, she did not request a thing, except what Hegai, the king's eunuch, the keeper of the women would say and Esther would take favor in the eyes of all (who) sees her.” Esther 2:15

It is very significant that Esther did not request anything when she went before the king. This is in contrast to the other women who received whatever they wanted in order to endear themselves to the king (see Esther 2:13). This fact reveals two important things to the reader. First, Esther did not think like the other women. It was the faith which Mordechai had instilled within her that caused her to behave differently. In other words, the truth of G-d will always cause an individual to act uniquely. Secondly, it states in verse 15, *“she did not request a thing, except what Hegai, the king's eunuch, the keeper of the women would say”*. Hegai was in a position of authority and acted as an intermediary between the women and the king. Because of this position, he would have certainly interacted with the king and presumably would possess information which could be most helpful in the objective of finding the favor of the king. All the other women made their own decisions on what to request; however, Esther was able to see Hegai as one who could provide valuable instruction to her on what she should bring with her.

The spiritual principle is that when one is led by faith and does not lean on one's own understanding, this one can see G-d's provision in his or her circumstances. G-d is always faithful, but it is our faithfulness that allows us to see the faithfulness of G-d, Who provides for us what we need in order to accomplish His will. Esther's faith demonstrated itself in **submissiveness**, which has several benefits in the believer's life.

First, submissiveness will serve as an invitation to the Holy Spirit to get involved in one's life. Many times those who do in fact have faith in Yeshua remark that they do not seem to be experiencing G-d's presence in their lives. Just believing is not enough to experience the moving of the Spirit of G-d in one's circumstances. It is a willingness to submit and trust in G-d Who will indeed provide the means for His people to serve Him successfully. It is important for one to realize that submissiveness begins the process of G-d moving in one's life and there are specific steps which will lead to the primary objective, which is obedience to the plans, purposes and will of G-d.

In the account of Esther, it became clear that it was part of G-d's plan for Esther to become the queen. It was her submissiveness that positioned her in the king's palace as the queen. In addition to this, one reads that "*Esther would take favor in the eyes of all (who) sees her.*" (...וַתְּהִי אֶסְתֵּר נְשֵׂאת חַן...). Such a statement is certainly not a normal occurrence, but reveals to the reader G-d's activity in the life of Esther. The expression relates to one receiving the kindness and assistance from others in a manner which is not normal. This favor is provided for one purpose, so that the believer can serve G-d and carry out His purposes. In fact, submissiveness begins with the believer's sincere desire to obey G-d and be used by Him for His purposes. Without this desire, the "believer" will greatly stifle the Holy Spirit from working in his or her life.

When looking at Mordechai and Esther, it is discerned that both of them were not looking only at their individual situations, but understood how each person's behavior can and usually does impact others as well. In fact, the concept of ministry is based in this reality and a strong desire to bless others. In other words, both Mordechai and Esther had a heavenly ambition to be used by G-d to influence others to receive His covenant promises. Once again, there is an inherent relationship between submissiveness and such an ambition. Most people have ambition, but few have this heavenly ambition. Without a Biblically-based faith, rooted in the truth of G-d, one's ambition will be misdirected by satanic influences. This certainly describes wicked Haman.

Unfortunately, Purim is a festival which is all but ignored by most believers. Also within Judaism, the great spiritual significance of the event and the revelation from the Scroll of Esther are substituted for parties, costumes, and drinking. Purim has become a type of Jewish Halloween or a milder form of Mardi Gras (Carnival). This serves as another sad example of how instead of G-d's people influencing the world, the world is having a corrupting influence of the people of G-d.

Jewish law requires that one hears the Scroll of Esther read. While it is true that faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of G-d, simply listening to someone chant the Megillah (the Scroll of Esther) is not enough. I am all for listening in one's congregation to the Megillah being read, but it is only when one carefully studies the words of this Scroll that he or she can appreciate the powerful message which is contained in it. Make a commitment now that on Purim (February 26, 2021) you will read carefully the book of Esther and prayerfully ask G-d to teach you what He would have you to learn from this Scroll. As you read, realize that the Megillah does not only contain historical information, but it is also prophetic and reveals

principles which will help one have a proper perspective for the End Times. This means that the deliverance which one reads about in the Scroll, should not only be understood as a past deliverance, but within this victory, which took place more than 2,400 years ago, are the Scriptural instructions on how to behave when the empire of the antichrist is ruling over the world.

May you have a very meaningful Purim Observance. Shalom