

## Purim in Esther Predicts Nazi Germany and Jewish Extinction

You all know the story: expelled from the Holy Land, Jews settled in different towns of the Persian Empire. At some point the king of the empire, the Emperor Ahasuerus, was looking for a new wife and thus the beautiful and pure Esther – *Hadasah*, an orphan raised by her cousin, a godly Jewish man named Mordechai – became a queen of this world empire. Obedient to Mordechai's command, she did not reveal her background to anyone. (This is our first "hidden", by the way: a righteous Jewish girl with God's light inside of her heart, is hidden inside of this dark heathen place – the King's palace.)

As the story goes, Mordechai refused to bow his head in honor of Haman, a royal adviser to Emperor Ahasuerus. In utter rage at Mordechai, Haman pays off the King to decree a mass genocide of all Jews: the Emperor issues a decree commanding *"to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day"* ([Est.3:13](#)).

An amazing conversation between Mordechai and Queen Esther follows: Mordechai tells Esther about Haman's plot and the King's decree, and asks her to intervene to save her people. We all know his famous words: *"Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"* ([Est. 4:14](#))

Mordechai rallied the Jews to fasting and prayer, Esther also fasted and prayed for three days, and as a result, the evil was reversed and the Jews saved. A decree that the king had sealed could not be nullified, but Esther was able to convince Ahasuerus to hang Haman and to issue a second decree, allowing Jewish people to defend themselves.

On the 13th of Adar, battles were fought throughout the empire between the Jews and those who sought to destroy them. The following day, Adar 14, became a day of celebration of the ensuing Jewish victory. Since the battle in Shushan went on for two days, the celebration in Shushan was held on Adar 15. Thus, these two days were instituted as the festival of Purim – Adar 15 in walled cities, and Adar 14 in unwalled towns (today, the only city in which Purim is celebrated on the fifteenth of Adar is Jerusalem).

### THE PROPHECY

Now, fast forward to 1946 (around 2500 years), and you will see that when I wrote: "prophetic book", it was not a typo – even though, as you probably know, the book of Esther is Part of the *Ketuvim*, or Writings, of the Hebrew Bible. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1946, after 216 court sessions, the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg delivered its verdicts sentencing the leaders of the Nazi party to death. Ten Nazi leaders were to be hanged. One of them was Julius Streicher, a key Nazi propagandist and the publisher of the anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Sturmer*. Seconds before he was

hanged, Streicher turned suddenly to face the witnesses and screamed: “**Purim Fest 1946!**”

In order to understand Streicher’s final words, let us look into the text. In chapter 9 we read:

*And the king said to Esther the queen, “The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the capital, **and the ten sons of Haman**... Now whatever your petition, it shall be granted; whatever your request further, it shall be done.” Then said Esther, “If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews that are in Shushan **to do tomorrow also as this day, and let Haman’s ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.**” ([Est. 9:12-13](#))*

For generation, our sages have pondered this strange request: if Haman’s ten sons had already been killed, how could they be hanged? They found an answer in the word “tomorrow”: ‘There is a tomorrow that is now, and a tomorrow which is later.’ In other words, Esther was asking that the hanging of Haman’s ten sons should recur in the future, as well. Why? Because, even though in the days of Esther the genocide was avoided, Megillat Esther is telling us explicitly **that the first decree was never nullified**. The hateful plans and the cruel intentions of Haman— “*to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews*”—have been there ever since, and are still there.

Therefore, Esther is asking for the same victories in the future. In this sense, the hanging of 10 Nazi leaders in 1946 was indeed—Purim 1946.

But there is an even more amazing “hidden prophecy” in the text of Megillat Esther linking the story of Purim with this execution. If we read the original text, we see that four letters in the names of the 10 sons of Haman are written in a different font: three letters are smaller – *tav*, *shin* and *zayin* – while one letter is larger – *vav*. Jewish sages have always taught that any variation in the size of a letter in Scripture has a specific meaning. So, what is the meaning of these unusually sized letters? The numerical value of a letter *vav*, (the big one), is 6; the small *tav*, *shin* and *zayin* together form 707 (400+300+7).

Therefore, these numbers signify 707<sup>th</sup> year of the sixth millennium – in other words, the Jewish year 5707, which corresponds to... yes, your guess is correct, **1946**, the year of the execution of these ten Nazi war criminals.

Note that the original number of the Nazi leaders to be executed, was 11; however, following the Nuremberg Trials, Hermann Göring committed suicide and thus the number became 10 – exactly as in Esther’s request. Note also that since the trial was conducted by a military tribunal, the condemned should have been executed by a firing squad; however, the court’s verdict was “death by hanging” – again, exactly as in Esther’s request. Undoubtedly, the sovereign hand of God orchestrated these events – and apparently one of the condemned, Julius Streicher, was able to see this hand of God as he grasped this link to Purim in his final words: “Purim Fest

1946”<sup>[1]</sup>. Now I think you will agree that the Book of Esther is a prophetic book indeed!

### **The Hidden Beginning**

I will show you one more example of the hindsight – or the hidden beginning – in this book. It is hidden so deeply that it is often overlooked. However, like all the events here, it is also “the revelation of the hidden”; it is also the hindsight, allowing us to see God behind all the events of Purim and to know that He is the One who orchestrated these events.

In 1 Samuel 9, we read: *There was **a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish...** And he had a choice and handsome **son whose name was Saul.*** Then, in 1 Samuel 15 *Samuel also said to Saul... Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them... And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur... But Saul and the people **spared Agag** and the best of the sheep... and were unwilling to utterly destroy them.*

Agag had to be destroyed – and it seems that his destruction was very important in God’s eyes, since Saul was rejected as King right after he had spared Agag.

Now, fast forward to the time of Esther (approximately six centuries later), and once again, you will see how prophetic the book of Esther is.

[Esther 3:1](#) *After these things King Ahasuerus promoted **Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite...***

[Esther 2:5](#) *In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name was **Mordecai** the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, **the son of Kish, a Benjamite.***  
Can you see the story in hindsight here?

Saul was commanded to destroy Agag; his failure to do it almost resulted in a slaughter of the Jews by an Agagite six centuries later. Haman was a descendant of Agag; Mordecai was a descendant of Kish and Benjamin; the line of Agag and the line of Kish had to meet again. In fact, the story of Purim began six hundred years before Esther, with Saul and Agag—but this was a *hidden* beginning. According to Jewish tradition, Mordecai had to destroy Agag’s descendant, Haman, because Saul didn’t destroy Agag. This is just one more profound lesson of this fascinating book.

### **The Revelation of the Hidden**

So, what is so unique about this book? The answer to this question might surprise you at first: The book of Esther is the only book in the Bible that does not explicitly

mention God! What?! So why is it in the Bible, anyway? Why was it included in the canon, in the first place?

And here we come to a point of great importance. This book was included in the canon because, in fact, *it is all about God*. The word “God” doesn’t appear openly in the Book because oftentimes God remains hidden in our lives—until we recognize Him and His handwriting in the circumstances and events that unfold. Yes, it sometimes happens that God’s salvation comes as a miracle, defying natural laws (like in the book of Daniel, for instance). However more often than not, divine salvation is “disguised” in ordinary events – “hidden” in what can be perceived as a series of “coincidences” – as we have uncovered here in the book of Esther. Even the name of this book – *Megillat Esther* (the Scroll of Esther) – is very profound and reflects this amazing dynamic between *hidden* and *revealed*: the name Esther (אסתר) is probably related to the word “*nista*”: “hidden”, “concealed”; while the word *Megillah* might be related to the word “*megaleh*”: “reveal”. So, even the words “**Megillat Esther**” can literally be translated as “**the Revelation of the Hidden**” – and this is the name of this amazing book!

Do you know who else in the Torah had a very similar name? In [Gen. 41:45](#) we read: “Pharaoh then gave Joseph the name *Zaphenath-Paneah*.” The meaning of this name is not clear, and to this day there has not been an interpretation accepted by all. The ancient Jewish interpretive tradition, however, derives the name Zaphenath-Paneah from Hebrew (and not Egyptian) roots. (*paneah* and *tsaphan*). So what are the meanings of these roots? *Tzaphan* means to hide, treasure or store up. We find a good example in the well-known words of [Ps.119](#): *Thy Word have I hid in mine heart...* (In Hebrew, it is: *Belibi tsaphanti...*).

*Paneach* means to decipher; to figure out, solve; decode, interpret. Thus, Zaphenath-Pa’neach, the Egyptian name of Joseph, might be translated as: “He who explains hidden things”—and that really could be the name that Pharaoh would give to Joseph, after-all, he interpreted Pharaoh’s dreams. However, this interpretation has also an additional and deeper meaning. The name might be also translated as “The Revelation of the Hidden” – which would describe very well, not only Pharaoh’s understanding of Joseph, but the entirety of God’s plan with Joseph. This is what the story of Joseph is all about.

The Book of Esther is also about this mystery: the mystery of the God being hidden – disguised – revealed – recognized. In the story of Esther, just as in the story of Joseph, the evil is reversed – and that’s how God reveals Himself in these stories – that is *how* He is recognized. But first, both Joseph and Esther needed to trust God completely; first they had to understand that their lives were in His hands – and only then, through their lives, in a seemingly “natural” way God intervened and changed history forever.