

כְּתוּבִים KETUVIM

HEBREW FOR "WRITINGS"

AMMI MINISTRY February 2010 MISSION REPORT

PURIM 2010

The Jewish holiday of Purim began this week at sundown on Feb. 27 and continues for two days. This is the celebration of the events explained in the book of Esther.

The Story of Purim

The event commemorated by Purim is one of victory over oppressors of the Jewish people. The heroine is Esther, a beautiful Jewish woman who married the king of Persia, King Ahasuerus, after winning a beauty contest. The king loved Esther more than any of his other women and made her his Queen. He was not aware that Esther was a Jew, for her guardian Mordecai, a great Jewish leader, had advised her to not to reveal her true identity.

Haman, the villain of the story, was the king's prime minister. He hated the Jews (especially Mordecai, because he would not bow down before him) and tried to convince King Ahasuerus that it would be in the best interest of his kingdom if the Jews were eliminated. In his speech he argued:

"There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your realm. Their laws are different from those of every other people's, and they do not observe the king's laws; therefore it is not befitting the king to tolerate them." (Ester 3:8)

The king gave Haman permission to deal with the Jews as he saw fit, so Haman made plans to massacre the Persian Jews. He cast lots to determine the day, which was to be 13 Adar. Mordecai convinced Esther to speak to the king on behalf of her people, which would require her to appear before him un-summoned - a crime punishable by death. She fasted for three days to prepare for the meeting.



Esther and Mordecai



Esther comes before King

To make a slightly longer story short, King Ahasuerus welcomed her, listened to her story, and was outraged by what he heard. He had Haman hanged on the gallows that had been intended for Mordecai, and appointed Mordecai as prime minister in Haman's place.

The story does not quite end there, for the king had officially decreed the massacre, and it could not be stopped. But he allowed the Jews to fight to defend themselves. They fought on the 13th of Adar and celebrated their victory on the 14th day. Those in walled cities were victorious a day later, on 15 Adar. Purim is the celebration of this victory and the survival of the Jewish people.

Cultural Celebration of Purim and a Christian Witness

There is a tradition of sending a basket full of sweet goodies to one's family and friends. If you have a Jewish friend, consider sending them a small box of goodies (cookies, small cakes, fruit, raisins, etc.) or wish them a Happy Purim and tell them you are thankful that God stopped Haman because your Messiah came from the Jewish people.

The Jewish people also make a triangle-shaped filled pastry called a Hamantashen (German, for Haman's Hat). This tradition began in Germany, when the style of hats worn was three cornered. This was a way of showing how the Jews triumphed over their enemy Haman, with God's help.



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Christian Significance

God is never mentioned in the book of Esther, but it is obvious that He is behind all that happened. His intervention saved the Jewish people. His providential care for his people, both individuals and the nation, is evident throughout. Later, our Lord and Savior Jesus would descend from ancestors of those who were saved in Persia. As Christians we can remember God's promise in Hebrews 13:5 "never will I leave you nor will I forsake you" (also see Dt. 31:6) We may not always be conscious of God's providential care for us, but He is there ready to come to

the aid of His children. Call upon the Lord all the time. He is not deaf or helpless, that He can't help you.

Modern Day Haman Threatens to Destroy the Jewish People and America!

The themes of this 2,500 year-old story is still very relevant to modern Jews. Today there is a modern day Haman name **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad**, the President of Iran. Iran is the modern name of Persia! Ahmadinejad is threatening Israel with annihilation while he works toward producing a nuclear bomb. If we say that it is Israel's problem not ours, He is also vowing to destroy America. The same God who protected the Jews in Persia during the days of Esther is still God. He is aware of the evil intents of Ahmadinejad and his masters. He will intervene, and woe to those who hate Israel. Even through God is sovereign over all things, He commands us to pray. Therefore, pray for the protection of the Jews and for God to intervene on their behalf. This is an important way to show love for Jewish people. "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you" (Genesis 12:3). Pray our leaders will understand the serious consequences of allowing a Hitler like Ahmadinejad from obtaining the Atomic bomb.

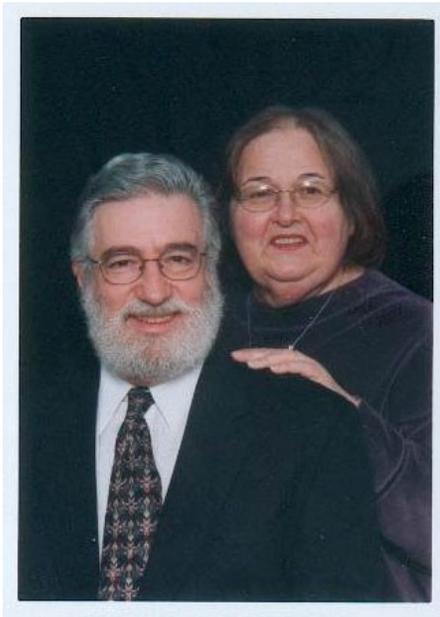
Prayer Requests;

1. On Feb. 21st I preached on Christ in the Passover at Providence Presbyterian Church in Quakertown, PA. I was told later by the pastor that an unsaved young man was in the audience. I clearly presented the Gospel and the mercy shown to us through Jesus. I also explained the consequences of rejecting Jesus' atoning mercy. Pray this young man will respond to the Gospel.
2. Pray for Dr. Ken Morgan. Ken is our webmaster and is working hard updating our website and also writing articles. He is putting many hours into this effort as a volunteer. Ken retired last year as a professor at a college near Fayetteville, NC. He now lives in the Upper Peninsula in MI. I've just added a new article on Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year and Biblical Feast of Trumpets).
3. Rick Brown is an elder in my home church in Willow Grove, PA. He is a professional artist and has volunteered to upgrade the appearance of our website. His first effort can now be seen on our home page header. Rick's website is www.mustardwinds.com. He can create logos, letterheads, business cards, and websites. His rates are reasonable. Please check out his website and contact him if you have a need.
4. Three weeks ago, while shoveling snow, I smashed my already arthritic knee on a concrete sidewalk. I had an MRI taken and found out that I tore the PCL ligament and bruised the bone. This is the rear ligament that helps keep the knee bones from going back too far and a person losing their footing. So far I haven't experienced that problem, but obviously there has been a lot of pain. I was prescribed a brace and things are getting slowly better. Next Wednesday Jackie and I leave for Israel. There will be a lot of walking. Pray that the brace will help me and I'll have endurance and a minimum of pain. I have been getting injections for my arthritis which is also helpful. This accident may hasten my decision to have a partial or whole knee replacement later this year.\
5. Jackie was told she only has 30% use of her kidneys. This was a great shock to Jackie. Her brother Allen died last year from infections that developed from being on dialysis. The first doctor we went to was a bummer, but the second doctor was very detailed and encouraging. He helped us to understand that they have now developed ways to help people to keep their kidney functions for life. Last week Jackie had a follow up

visit with this doctor. She had a massive amount of blood tests done before this visit. The doctor reviewed all her tests and continues to be encouraging. Jackie is very careful about her diet. Please pray our wonderful and merciful creator will intervene and preserve Jackie's kidneys.

6. On March the 3rd we leave for Israel and return on March the 13th. Because of airline scheduling we were blessed with an extra day in Jerusalem. I've located a Jewish Christian tour guide who will help us use this day wisely. I'll also have more time to learn about Jewish-Christians in Israel. Pray God will give our group of six people opportunities to witness and spiritually grow as we see the land of Jesus' ministry.

I wish to thank all those who contribute to our mission work. Your support is a tremendous encouragement and blessing



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