



Purim 5782

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שרבית הזהב

The Golden Scepter

The primary message which the Holy Writings reveal is that the G-d of Israel gives life. In regard to this message, one finds that there is only one way to receive this life. In other words, the message is extremely narrow and although available to all people, it is indeed exclusive. The good news concerning this message is that G-d provides it freely and all one is required to do is to receive it. This message is of course a religious one and because there are many religions in the world, it is common for individuals to think that each religion also provides life. Although this view is politically correct, it is theologically incorrect. The Bible is full of numerous examples and a clear proclamation that Israel's Messiah is the world's only Redeemer and therefore only faith in Him and His redeeming work will provide life, i.e. eternal life in the Kingdom of G-d.

As we approach Purim and read the Scroll of Esther, one finds within this writing a great example of life being provided by only one means. Although this example is only of an earthly life, the principle which this article will address is nevertheless clearly seen. As one reads the Scroll of Esther, it becomes clear that Esther is presented as a typology for Messiah. She must be willing to give her life if the Jewish people are going to be spared from annihilation. It was Mordechai, her uncle, who instructed her to go before the king (her husband) and plead for her people. According to Persian law, individuals, including the queen, cannot go before the king unless he calls for them.

כָּל-עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְעַם-מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ יֹדְעִים אֲשֶׁר כָּל-אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר יָבֹא-
אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-הַחֲצַר הַפְּנִימִית אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִקְרָא אַחַת דָּתוֹ לְהִמִּית לְבַד
מֵאֲשֶׁר יוֹשִׁיט-לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת-שִׁרְבִיט הַזֶּהָב וְחִיָּה וְאֲנִי לֹא נִקְרָאתִי לְבֹא אֶל-
הַמֶּלֶךְ זֶה שְׁלוֹשִׁים יוֹם:

"All the servants of the king and the people of the provinces of the king know that every man and every women who shall come to the king, to the inner courtyard who shall not be called, this alone is the law, to be killed; except whom the king shall extend to him the Golden Scepter and he will live and I have not been called to come to the king this thirty days."

Esther 4:11

Esther, knowing this very well, and having not been called by the king for thirty days, did not want to risk going before the king without being summoned. Despite Esther's unwillingness, Mordechai implored her to do so and she agreed, only after three nights and days of the Jews of Shushan fasting for her and this matter.

The Biblical text states that it was on the third day that Esther went before the king. This was against the law of the Persians, but was in obedience to Mordechai, who had taken her after her parents' death as his own daughter. Hence, Esther was demonstrating submissiveness to authority, i.e. obeying the Torah, אֶת-כְּבוֹד אֲתָּא "Honor your father

and your mother....” It was certainly as a result of her submissiveness and prayer that נְשָׂאָה she lifted up favor in his eyes and the king extended to Esther the Golden Scepter which was in his hand, and she came near and touched the top of the Scepter.

There are a few Scriptural truths which must be discussed concerning what took place between the king and queen Esther. The first truth is that Esther received favor from the king. It was certainly her submissiveness to authority and the prayer, accompanied with fasting, that played the major role in G-d moving and bringing this about in the king's heart. The second truth is that both the Golden Scepter and extending it to Esther belong to the king. The Golden Scepter is what the Persian law required the king to possess and it was solely at the king's discretion whether or not to extend this Scepter. This law was in force and it could not be altered.

When it comes to the Gospel message, it is based upon a Divine Decree which cannot be changed. In the same way that Esther found favor from the king, all who come before G-d, having trusted in and submitted to the Gospel, will also find favor from G-d. There is one additional truth that also has great significance. The reader is told that after the king extended his Golden Scepter, Esther moved forward in order to touch it. This moving to the Scepter and touching it shows her willingness to accept the only means by which she could be in the king's presence and find the help she and her people needed. In this same manner, one must be moved by faith, in order to move away from his or her thoughts and beliefs and accept what G-d has provided for humanity so one can be saved.

The point which I want to stress is that there is not a multiplicity of ways of finding G-d's deliverance, but only one way, the Gospel, which focuses solely on the Person and Work of Messiah Yeshua. Today, in the society in which we live, such a belief that Yeshua is the only Savior is seen as a type of religious bigotry and those who will not affirm other religions as providing a legitimate way of salvation are now considered bordering on hate speech.

There is no doubt in my mind that before Israel will experience Jacob's Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), believers in the Gospel will be harshly persecuted for accepting Messiah Yeshua as the only Savior. We will need to follow the example of Esther and submit and obey to the truth of G-d in order to find the favor of G-d and experience being delivered into the Kingdom of G-d.

May you have a blessed and meaningful Purim.