



Oasis

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Hidden in Plain Sight

By Marty Shoub

The Book of Esther is a curious addition to our Bibles; it poses a number of theological and historical problems and has been the subject of great controversy. The Talmud records that Esther had to convince the Sages to include her story in the Scriptures and the rabbis debated whether the text was inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Church Fathers did not settle on the canonicity of Esther until the latter half of the fourth century, Esther is the only book from the Hebrew Scriptures not found in the Dead Sea Scrolls – and even today, there are Christian scholars who doubt the Book of Esther’s veracity or value.

Overshadowing the historical and ethical difficulties of the Book of Esther is its controversial absence of any reference to God. Nowhere in the book is God mentioned. When Mordecai explains to Esther that she must speak to the king on behalf of her fellow Jews he seems knowledgeable of the Lord’s covenant fidelity to preserve the Jewish people (see Leviticus 26: 40-45). How odd that when he cautions Esther about the consequences for failing to take on this responsibility, he explains she will perish but the people’s deliverance “**will arise... from another place**” (Esther 4:14). Another place? Where will deliverance come for Israel if not from the God of Israel? It is if Mordecai purposely avoids any reference to divine deliverance.



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At Work Behind the Scenes

Sometimes in Scripture, the reader has to discern the hand of God through the events described in the narrative - the narrator does not always spell out the moral lesson or explain how the divine plan is unfolded. We see many examples of this in the life of the Patriarchs and in the history of the kings of Israel and Judah. But usually, there is some commentary to guide us through the story. God is always at work – but sometimes behind the scene. In the book of Job, our hero is fulminating in the throes of perplexity. “Why is this happening?” Job protests. But unlike Job and his ignorant three friends, we have been privy to the scene in heaven’s throne room. We know there is an unseen hand at work that brings everything right in the end. When we read Esther we do so with the knowledge that this is how our God works - sometimes with signs and wonders but more often, as an unseen power providentially exercising His sovereign will.

Despite His awesome power our God is not flashy. Why should He be? As Sha’ul explained: **“For ever since the creation of the universe his invisible qualities — both his eternal power and his divine nature — have been clearly seen, because they can be understood from what he has made. Therefore, they have no excuse”** (Romans 1:20). The Creator does not need to justify Himself to the creation. We should assume He is at work, as Sha’ul also explained, **“For from him and through him and to him are all things”** (Romans 11:36).

The book of Esther beautifully illustrates this truth. Evil men may seek to thwart God’s plans, heroes and heroines can either accept their callings or refuse, but always, the divine will ultimately prevails. Sometimes a sleepless night is the consequence of eating too much pizza, but other times it is the perfect timing of the Creator to save the innocent and resist the proud.

Herod in a Castle, Yeshua in a Barn

In January, my wife and I and a couple of friends went to explore Herodium, Herod’s magnificent mountain fortress just east of Bethlehem and south of Jerusalem. Herod built many imposing fortresses, a world class artificial port and even leveled Mt Moriah to re-create the Temple to rival the splendor of Solomon. Yet this was the monument he was most proud of – the only one he named after himself. Herodium was a magnificent castle built within an artificial mountain that Herod erected out of the rock from the mountain opposite his fortress. By the force of his will, without faith or divine power, he literally moved a mountain from one place to another. Herodium’s main tower stood fourteen stories high, an unmistakable monument to a king who was determined to demonstrate his majesty to anyone who had eyes to see.

Almost under the shadow of this magnificent structure, the true king of Israel, the King of Kings, was born in the humblest shelter one could imagine. Angels sang and at some point magi paid homage, but for the most part, this king was born in obscurity. Yeshua was the opposite of Herod; He didn’t need a legacy of stone to commemorate His majesty. He didn’t need any external prop to proclaim His kingly identity. More than that, He avoided the limelight, usually telling those He healed to keep silent. When He saw that a crowd was coming to crown Him as Israel’s king he literally “headed for the hills” to get away from them (see, John 6:15). The Scriptures tell us, **“He came to His own homeland, yet His own people did not receive Him”** (John 1:11). For the most part this was because we did not have ears to hear and eyes to see, but also sometimes, in a very intentional way, Yeshua hid His messianic identity. The Gospels record Yeshua instructing others, **“See to it that you tell no one”** on several occasions. Yeshua even ordered His disciples to keep silent after Peter had correctly identified Him as the Messiah (See, Matthew 16:20; Mark 8:29,30; Luke 9:20,21).

Mystery and Revelation

Why all this hiding? Why did the Almighty send His Son in obscurity? Why doesn’t the book of Esther credit the God of Israel for Israel’s deliverance? It seems sometimes we should just know, without having to be told - that is, if we know our God, we will see Him at work in our lives and in the world. If we have faith and we know the Scriptures, we should also have discernment. It is our responsibility to **“search things out”** (Proverbs 25:2). Those in the crowd who heard the words and saw the miracles but did not reflect deeply on the matter soon fell away. “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” was Yeshua’s challenge to reflect deeply on His words – to look beyond the surface to really see.

But sometimes we encounter a mystery - a truth of God that according to providence remains hidden, to be revealed at the right time. When we consider the details, timing and happenstance required for the Jews’ Purim deliverance, we see a hidden move of God revealed. Yeshua spoke of a day “when the Son of Man [will be] revealed” (Luke 17:30), when **“every eye will see Him, including those who pierced Him”** (Revelation 1:7). In that day, the Jewish people will see that throughout their long-sufferings in the world there has always been a hidden hand at work to bring about their deliverance. And so, as it is written, **“all Israel will be saved”** Romans 11:26). That which is now hidden in plain sight, will be revealed to all. ✨

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Our Vision:

Tents of Mercy - to participate in today’s historic exodus by assisting Israel’s returning exiles.

No spectators in the Kingdom - to be a worshiping, sharing community based in homes, equipping each one for service.

Come back Yeshua - to welcome Yeshua home to Israel, by restoring the Jewish roots of New Covenant faith.

Baruch Ha Ba

We Welcome You!

By Eitan Shishkoff

Middle Eastern hospitality is legendary, biblical, and still in evidence. From his desert tent, Abraham entertained the Lord as a guest (Genesis 18:1-14). When we moved into our apartment sixteen years ago, our Israeli neighbor, whom we had never met, brought us a tray of fresh Turkish coffee and sweet cakes to say “Welcome to the neighborhood.”

Undoubtedly, you have your own tales of hospitality and warm welcomes in new places. We would like to add to those experiences. Here’s the recipe that awaits our guests, this coming October 15-24:

- ☆ Bible-centered teaching on Israel, Yeshua, and the Last Days
- ☆ Worship and Intercession within the reborn communities of Jewish disciples
- ☆ Sites and sights from both historic and modern Israel
- ☆ Bonding with Messianic congregational leaders and members who will be travelling with the “tour” throughout the entire journey
- ☆ A taste of the classic traditions of the Middle East—both Jewish and Arab
- ☆ Surprising personal encounters, leading to long term relationships with fellow visitors from the nations and local Israeli believers
- ☆ Tenderly covering it all—Yeshua’s love for His disciples

My appetite is being stimulated just thinking about the love feast God is preparing for us this coming October. Since we are not so new at this (Baruch HaBa 2013 is our sixth tour/conference), we have a good idea what to expect. The ingredients I described above are not

wishful thinking. Rather, the consistent feedback we have received includes statements like this:

“This is unlike any other tour I’ve been on. It’s personal and enables you to become involved.”

“The friendships we made with members of the tour from Asia, Europe and Africa were worth pursuing even after we get home.”

“We were amazed that the leaders were with us day in and day out, on the buses, in spite of their very packed schedules.”

“The cooperation between Tents of Mercy, Revive Israel and Tikkun International is a refreshing example of God’s servants sharing their resources and covenant history.”

According to Matthew 23:39, the Messiah will not return until He hears a chorus of voices calling to Him from Israel at the end of the age: **“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”** It is not for us alone, as Israeli disciples, to call upon Yeshua. We need the strong, devoted participation of all of our brothers and sisters in the nations, to join us in interceding for Israel’s salvation, world redemption, and the return of our King.

To sum it up, I am truly excited to invite you to the Baruch HaBa 2013 Conference/Tour. Please pray earnestly about this extraordinary opportunity to encounter the real Israel, while walking with us hand in hand, through its highways and byways. ☆

For more information and a registration form, please see the Tents of Mercy or Revive Israel websites.



Baruch Haba is worship and intercession



Together on the Temple Steps



The call of the Shofar

COME JOIN US IN 2013



Baruch HaBa 2013

Israel Conference & Intercessory Tour

Hosted by Revive Israel, Tents of Mercy & Tikkun Ministries Int'l.

You Are Invited...

The God of Israel has called us to re-establish Messianic faith in the land promised to our forefathers. We recognize that this enterprise is a partnership between us and our friends and fellow believers from around the world. We are here to prepare for the Lord's return. Our hearts stir with anticipation to declare, "Baruch Haba b'Shem Adonai - Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

This coming October we will gather to raise our voices together to prophetically declare this welcome to our Lord, Yeshua the Messiah. Come and join with us for our sixth intercessory conference tour, Baruch Haba 2013. Together we will lift our voices to proclaim, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

October 15th-24th, 2013

Trip Costs:

Double Occupancy: **\$1397** per person includes* all ground transportation, lodging (11 nights, 10 days), tips and entrance fees except the following:

- ▶ Airfare is not included and must be arranged separately by each traveller (please arrive by October 14th and depart on October 25th, 2012)
- ▶ \$25 fee for transport to the airport on October 25th (optional)
- ▶ All meals included from the evening of October 14th to the morning of October 25th, except 3 lunches on your own (see itinerary for details - we have added an additional day this year)

Deposit Deadlines (per person)

\$600 due by August 14th, 2013

\$587 due by September 14, 2013

\$210 due to Tents of Mercy upon arrival

For complete payment information, please check our website: www.tentsofmercy.org

*Transport to hotel from airport and overnight accommodation on October 14, 2013 included

