

# THE DISEASE OF THE AGES

THE SILENCE OF MANKIND



PURIM 2018

It's that time of the year when we celebrate fact that we serve a GOD who continues to provide deliverance to His people by way of miracles.

While we stand still at the story of Esther and consider how the Glory of GOD shines through the darkest of clouds and the deepest of crisis that we may face, we should note that this pattern is **repeated** time and time again.

## THE PATTERN OF REDEMPTION

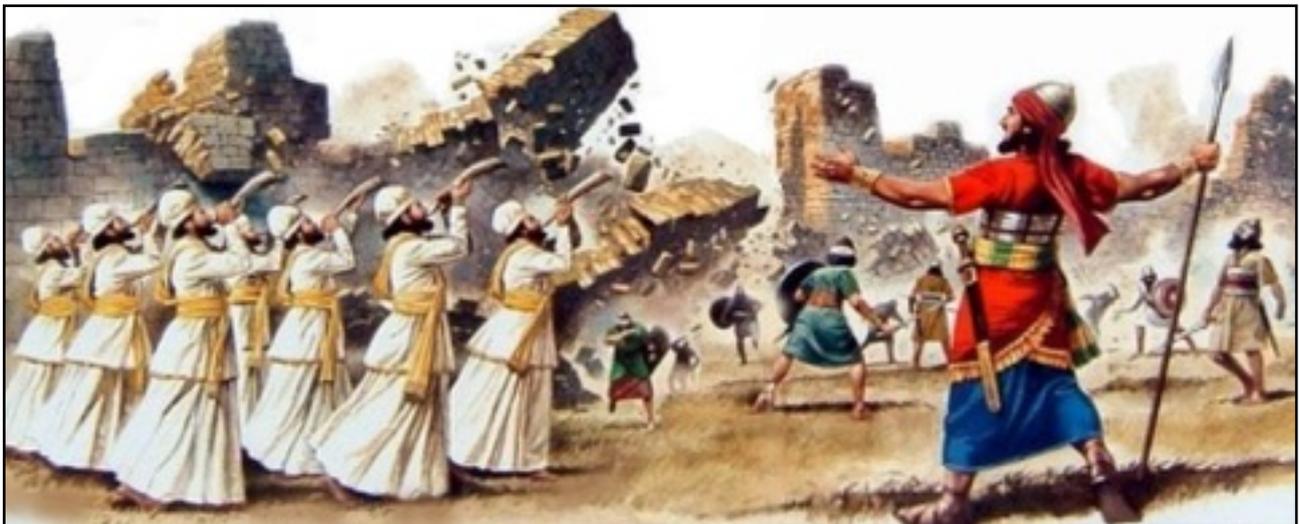
Let's look at this pattern carefully

(a) The children of Israel are under bondage to Pharaoh ... times could not be worse - these are the darkest of days.

Yet in a moment, all of the people will leave Egypt, in one day, and be delivered from the worst of slavery.

(b) The children of Israel have wandered around in the wilderness for the past 40 years – while there is hope of a new beginning, there is also the reality that they will have to face the giants in Canaan.

Yet in a moment, after 7 days of marching around Jericho, the walls of that city will fall and the children of Israel will be empowered with confidence in order to take on the challenge of the many battles that still lie ahead.



(c) The children of Israel have been living under the cloud of a terrible drought ... it has taken it's toll - some of those people have left the land to find relief.

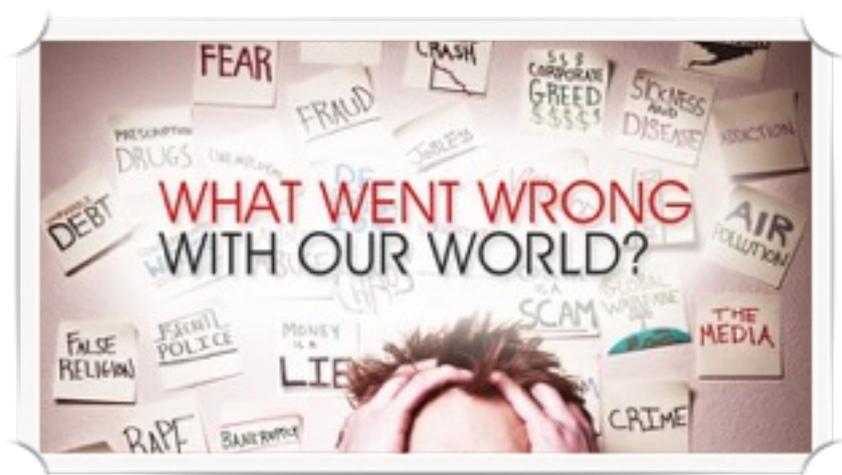
Yet in a moment, Ruth recognizes the truth ... that YHVH is the absolute Creator. She makes up her mind and joins with the people of Israel, by becoming a daughter of the Covenant.

In each case, we see that YHVH responds to mankind as soon as:

- ❖ We repent and turn away from the world system.
- ❖ We connect to the Covenant, fully.
- ❖ We take up our position in the Body of Messiah ... i.e. we stand with our “tribe” or we take up our position of “leg /arm” or we operate in the “gifting” that YHVH has placed inside of you at birth.
- ❖ We walk in obedience to the Commandments ... doing exactly what Y’SHUA tells us to do ... do whatever it was that HE did – revealing acts of justice, compassion and humility.

## REVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THIS WORLD

Our world is in a mess.



The weather patterns are all mixed up - unprecedented floods, and even worse, droughts for example in the Western Cape that are almost unknown.

Consider the daily news – we hear how the “Date zero” when all water is used up, is changed from time to time.

Daily we are faced with stories of large scale corruption ... where people arrange “deals”

that have one purpose in mind - to move money destined for the needy, into the hands of a corrupt few. Recently we heard of scam where millions of Rand’s are paid out to a few, for a function that “never” happened.

A number of years ago, the world economy went into free-fall ... when banks and other financial institution’s played games with investment’s that resulted in a market crash.

In our country, we felt the effect of that crash ... for the past 7-8 years our economy has stagnated ... jobs have been lost at a time when large numbers of youth have come through the learning institutions and have an expectation of being able to work.

At the same time, State-run institutions have continued to highlight management failures and have built up colossal losses.

Numerous projects designed to better the lives of many ... better health, better living conditions and better education have all been stalled due to the lack of finances.

More concerning is a strong world-wide trend of increasing anti-Semitism and has been evidenced by word of hatred, acts of violence - murder, collusive actions by people to intimidate other people who have different views on Israel and the Jewish people.

What has become evident is that these actions are now focused on any one who publicly declares that YHVH is GOD and that JERUSALEM is His Holy City.



# THE DISEASE THAT EATS AT THE HEART OF MANKIND

Back to the story known as Purim, the story of Esther.

This story highlights for me, the disease of Silence.

When man remains silent in the face of injustice, pride and abuse, then a cancer is caused that breaks down man's value and destroys the Glory that should be revealed by those who are made in HIS Image - those who are Sons / Daughters of Abraham.

I ask you to read the **Book of Esther** and expect to be blessed with words of life, hope and courage.

There are two circumstances where our choices can have a negative impact:

- i) We can take up a position to verbally abuse others.
- ii) We can take up a position to "look the other way" and remain silent when we are aware of wrong-doing.

I however, am going to highlight various instances where mankind fails to speak up to defend the oppressed.

We will see that the saying "silence is golden" is far from the Biblical Standard of righteousness.

And it's the second example – namely to remain silent when we see others being wronged, that we are going to look at.

(a) Vashti – the wife of the king is abused.

**Esther 1:13-17** *"As was the king's custom, he consulted sages well-versed in matters of law and justice. With him were Karshna, Shetar, Admata, Tarshish, Meres, Marsna and Memukhan, the seven vice-regents of Persia and Media, who were part of the king's inner circle and were the most important officials in the kingdom. (The king asked the sages,) "According to the law, what should we do to Queen Vashti, since she didn't obey the order of King Achashverosh conveyed by the officers?" Memukhan presented the king and vice-regents this answer: "Vashti the queen has wronged not only the king, but also all the officials and all the peoples in all the provinces of King Achashverosh; because this act of the queen's will become known to all the women, who will then start showing disrespect toward their own husbands; they will say, 'King Achashverosh ordered Vashti the queen to be brought before him, but she wouldn't come.'"*

We note that the king is having a party.

The Bible tells us that each man could decide how much he would drink ... does it mean that they were drunk? Could this be an excuse for poor behaviour?

The king calls for his wife to present herself for "display" - again the Bible does not describe exactly what this means but clearly the summons to be presented in front of all the men indicates the extent of the abuse.

However we know that YHVH regards marriage as sanctified, that two people become one in complete unity and that this union should be holy ... it matters not that this is a pagan couple – what matters is that each individual should be protected by the other partner since it's a covenant!

What we see is that 7 princes will express an opinion ... an opinion that calls for swift judgement, simply because a woman **would not come** when commanded.

What makes this case so different is the fact that these men are national leaders - they are the ones who would set the standard for others to follow and cause others to strive for a higher norm in their own lives.

### **Leaders will always be judged to a higher standard of righteousness.**

What we will notice is that these 7 princes will be:

- Silent to call for justice,
- Silent to request a fair trial in a court of law,
- Silent to show compassion for someone who in those days / times would be in a weaker position.

(b) Mordecai – sitting in the king's gate

***Esther 2:21-23*** “On one of those occasions, when Mordekhai was sitting at the King’s Gate, two of the king’s officers, Bigtan and Teresh, from the group in charge of the private entryways, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Achashverosh. But Mordekhai learned about it and told Ester the queen. Ester reported it to the king, crediting Mordekhai. The matter was investigated, found to be true, and both were hanged on a stake. **All this was recorded in the daily journal that was kept with the king.**”

Mordecai sits in the king’s gate. That the place where all legal matters and disputes get sorted out.

Literally dozens of people pass through these gates daily ... each one would have observed the character, integrity and sense of justice that Mordecai shows to all who stand before him.

A couple of men plot harm to the king.

- ❖ Mordecai warns the king.
- ❖ This event is recorded in the “books “ of the kingdom
- ❖ However Mordecai is NOT publically recognized.



What we notice is that ALL of those people (including the scribes who record the incident) who pass through these gates will be ...

- Silent when it comes to requesting a reward / public honour for someone that they know to be a man of integrity.

(c) The scribes – recording the decree to “kill” the Jews

**Esther 3:12** *“The king’s secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month. They wrote down all Haman’s orders to the king’s army commanders and governors in all the provinces and to the officials of every people, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language; everything was written in the name of King Achashverosh and sealed with the king’s signet ring.”*

The Bible tells us that the deeds of Mordecai are recorded in the books of the kingdom ... there is a permanent record of the act of service / the act of compassion / the act of justice where Mordecai speaks out to save the king’s life.

The men who are those who record all of these deeds of service for posterity are also the same ones who will record the decision to kill Mordecai and others like him.

Surely they would remember and wonder why the same man would be saint and sinner?

**Esther 7:9** *“Harvonnah, one of the king’s attendants, said, “Look! The gallows seventy-five feet high that Haman made for Mordekhai, who spoke only good for the king, is standing at Haman’s house.” The king said, “Hang him on it.”*

Later on, after Esther has revealed the heart and character of Haman to the king, one of these scribes / a Eunuch named Harvannah will think to remind the king, that indeed it was Mordecai who was the one who saved the king.

- ❖ Why did he not speak up before?
- ❖ What we notice is that all of these scribes will be:
  - Silent while they stand by while they see injustice being done before their eyes
  - Silent while knowing that the character of the people in question...a small minority in the land is above reproach (they may not be serving YHVH appropriately but there is nothing to suggest that they were not good citizens in the land)

(d) The family and friends of Haman

**Esther 5:14** *“At this Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, “Have a gallows seventy-five feet high constructed, and in the morning speak to the king about having Mordekhai hanged on it. Then go in, and enjoy yourself with the king at the banquet.” Haman liked the idea, so he had a gallows made.”*

- ❖ Haman will get angry - so angry that he will go to any length to kill Mordecai.
- ❖ Haman will decide to, and then go on to build a gallows.
- ❖ His family and friends all know about the purpose of the gallows.

Indeed most of the citizens of the city would also know – it's completely inconceivable to think that nobody asked any questions!

It's not something seen every day ... what's this for, who is it for, when will it be used, would have been the every conversation by everybody that lived nearby or who walked past that gallows.

What we notice is that all the community surrounding the gallows will be ...

- Silent as to the level of injustice that is about to take place.
- Silent as to the obvious works of abuse that Haman performed daily in this city – this has to be more than common occurrence as the people seem to be used to this type of justice.
- Silent as to the character of the man who has been has judged / sentenced and will be hanged without a fair trial.

(e) The children of Israel remain silent



While I have highlighted how **our silence in the face of** injustice, a lack of mercy or obvious acts that are based on ego / pride will allow those who are ungodly to continue their merry way of abusing all who stand in their path.

We, as believers, are expected to **voice our value system.**

However, this time it's **not by words**, but by our actions - **by what we do that should set us apart!!**

We are called to be “set apart” – a nation of priests that live within a foreign land but whose lifestyle reveals the attributes of YHVH.

*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.*  
 - a quote of unknown source

## SET APART PEOPLE MUST HAVE A “VOICE” OF ACTION

As we look at the Book of Esther, we note that the children of Israel, had assimilated fully into this foreign society. There was no visible difference between them and the other people (with the exception of Mordecai and Esther).

- No one knew that these were a set apart people
- No one knew what the attributes of YHVH were as these were not revealed
- No one saw the TRUTH and the SPIRIT of YHVH flowing as a blessing to those people

## A FINAL THOUGHT

- ❖ We must recognize where this disease of silence originates from....
- ❖ We must learn to deal with it in a Godly manner

Let's return to the GARDEN of Eden.

Mankind is given a **work** ... to plant and manage the GARDEN AND a **responsibility / mandate** to look after / guard that GARDEN.

**Genesis 2:15** *“Adonai, GOD, took the person and put him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it.”*

We are to speak up - in words and actions!

This original “sin” **not to** set a GODLY Standard has been woven into mankind's DNA.

**We fail to recognise the GODLY Benchmark OR the plumb-line that YHVH has set for us.**

We fall back into a position, of not getting involved - of it's not my problem, of keeping my belief system to myself, of letting others also have a place in the sun...

It's got so bad that governments are passing legislation that bans people from speaking out against others who are performing acts which YHVH sees as ungodly – it's possible that you can face legal action and judgement / goal for acting in terms of the standard's set in the Bible!

YHVH wants to see men / women of honour ... a nation of people that are ready to be set apart.

It's not without reason that YHVH tells Joshua - just before he enters the land ...

### **BE STRONG AND TAKE COURAGE**

- ❖ We must deal with the corruption of our DNA that has been formed by thousands of years of being silent.
- ❖ We must repent of every time that we failed to stand up for the oppressed, the abused, the down-trodden.
- ❖ We must ask YHVH to plant into our DNA a strength of character that STANDS UP at every opportunity to reveal YHVH's Standard of Holiness.

SHALOM | שלום