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Before the reading of the Book of Esther

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d,
King of the Universe,
who has made us holy through His commandments,
and has commanded us about reading the Megila.
Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe,
who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time.
Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe,
who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this time.

Esther Megilah (replacing Torah Reading)

Esther 9:20-22 NIV 1984

20 Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Achashverosh, near and far,
21 to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar
22 as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

After the reading of the Book of Esther:

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d,
King of the Universe,
who pleads our cause,
judges our claim,
avenges our wrong,
brings retribution to our enemies,
and punishes all our foes,
Blessed are You, L-rd,
Who on behalf of His people Israel,
exact punishment from all their foes,
the G-d who brings salvation.

Service Portion

1. The book of Esther is all about how the Lord turned the tables on Haman

Proverbs 16:9 NIV 1984

In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.

Divine Reversal #1

Haman planned to kill Mordecai because Mordecai did not honor Haman at the king's gate. But when Haman went to the king to get permission to kill Mordecai for this reason, the Lord turned the tables and the king commanded Haman to honor Mordecai instead.

Esther 6:4-11 NIV 1984

4 Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows he had erected for him...

6 When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?"

7 So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor,

8 have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head.

9 Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!'"

10 "Go at once," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended."

11 So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"

Divine Reversal #2

The king gave Haman the royal signet ring, and Haman used it to try to annihilate the Jewish people. But the Lord turned the tables and had the royal ring transferred to Mordecai instead.

Esther 8:2 NIV 1984

The king took off his signet ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and presented it to Mordecai.

Divine Reversal #3

Haman used his wealth to try to destroy the Jewish people. But the Lord turned the tables and caused all of Haman's wealth to be transferred to Jewish people.

Esther 8:7 NIV 1984

King Achashverosh replied to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Because Haman attacked the Jews, I have given his estate to Esther"...

Esther 8:1-2 NIV 1984

1 That same day King Achashverosh gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews...

2 And Esther appointed him [Mordecai] over Haman's estate.

Divine Reversal #4

Haman planned to hang Mordecai. But the Lord turned the tables and Haman and his 10 sons were hanged instead.

Esther 9:25 NIV 1984

But when the plot came to the king's attention, he issued written orders that the evil scheme Haman had devised against the Jews should come back onto his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

Esther 7:10 NIV 1984

So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

Divine Reversal #5

Haman hired armies to destroy the Jewish people. But the Lord turned the tables, and Haman's armies were destroyed instead.

Esther 9:1 NIV 1984

On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to

overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them. The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and they did what they pleased to those who hated them.

Divine Reversal #6

Haman wanted the 12th month to be a time of rejoicing that the Jews were annihilated. But the Lord turned the tables and made the 12th month a time of rejoicing that Haman was annihilated.

Esther 9:20-22 NIV 1984

20 Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Achashverosh, near and far,

21 to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar

22 as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday....

Divine Reversal #7

Haman wanted to exterminate all the Jews. But the Lord turned the tables and increased the number of people who identified as Jews.

Esther 8:17 NIV 1984

And many people of other nationalities declared themselves Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.

2. We need to wait for the Lord

Psalm 27:14 NIV 1984

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Isaiah 8:17 NIV 1984

I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. I will put my trust in him.

Hosea 12:6 NIV 1984

...wait for your God always

Zephaniah 3:8 NIV 1984

Therefore wait for me...

3. What does Purim have to do with Yeshua?

Rabbi Russ Resnik:

Yeshua hinted at this reversal when he said, “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32)...The *lifted up* wording appears three times in John’s Gospel to refer to the crucifixion...In the crucifixion, Yeshua is lifted up to reveal God—the God of self-sacrificing love....Yeshua’s death is followed, of course, by his resurrection, the greatest of all divine reversals....The Messiah who dies in defeat and disgrace rises up three days later in power and glory....Messiah’s death and resurrection remain the source of hope from God in a world that holds little real hope apart from him (*Divine Reversal*, 177-180)

1 Samuel 6:20 NIV 1984

Who can stand in the presence of the L-rd, this holy G-d?

Babylonian Talmud (Berakhot 28b):

“O master, O tall pillar, light of the world, mighty hammer, why are you weeping?”

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai replied, “Do I now go to appear before a king of flesh and blood, whose anger, if he should be angry with me, is but of this world? And whose chastising, if he should chastise me, is but of this world? Whom I can, moreover, appease with words or bribe with money? Truly, I go rather to appear before the King of Kings of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be he, whose anger, if he should be angry with me, is of this world, and the world to come, and whom I cannot appease with words or bribe with money!”

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai continued, “Moreover I have before me two roads, one to Paradise and one to Gehenna, and I know not whether he will sentence me to Gehenna or admit me to Paradise”...