



## **Parasha Ki Tisa**

March 15, 2024

*Torah:* Exodus 30:11-34:35

**See message notes [beitshalom.us](http://beitshalom.us) for parasha specific messages**

*Haftarah:* 1 Kings 18:1-39

*Ketuwim Shlichim:* Luke 24:13-27

**Specific to today's message**

### Disciples of Yeshua 19

*Shabbat shalom Mishpacha.* The real story of *Purim* is about hatred. Remarkably, the hatred that has now spread worldwide originated with a relative of the Jews— a great-great-grandson of Abraham. His name was Amalek, and he was Isaac's son Esau's grandson. But the story began with Esau, the firstborn son and rightful heir to the birthright—an inheritance that granted its owner the leadership of Abraham's family. But Esau sold it to his twin Jacob for a bowl of red lentil stew. In selling it, the *Torah* says that Esau despised his birthright (Genesis 25:34). Many years later, Jacob was urged by his mother Rebecca to deceive his father Isaac into giving him the blessing intended for Esau, the firstborn son. Jacob was rightfully named. He was a supplanter who not only took Esau's birthright but also tricked his father into believing he was Esau so that he would bless him. Isaac's blessing of Jacob was: *28 May God give you— from the dew of the sky and from the fatness of the land— an abundance of grain and new wine. 29 May peoples serve you and may nations bow down to you. Be master over your brothers. May your mother's sons bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and may those who bless you be blessed.*" (Genesis 27:28-29 TLV). This blessing rightfully belonged to Esau, and losing it to Jacob made him hate his brother. *41 So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "Let the time for mourning my father draw near, so that I can kill my brother Jacob!"* (Genesis 27:41 TLV). But Jacob was sent away by his parents before Esau could follow through. Although Jacob bought the birthright and received his father's blessing through trickery, it was ADONAI's will for him to lead the family, for He knew Esau's heart.

Esau married two Canaanite women, bringing grief to his parents (and later married Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael). His grandson Amalek was born to Eliphaz, the son of his first wife Judith, who was the daughter of Beerli the Hittite. Rather than submit to his brother Jacob as head of the family, Esau left the area and settled in the hill country of Seir, east of the Dead Sea. The area became known as Edom, meaning "red," the name given to Esau because he came out of the womb "all reddish." Hatred began with one individual, Esau, and was passed down through his family. His grandson, Amalek, continued the hatred and passed it on to his family members, and it grew for four hundred years. The hatred became physical when Amalek's descendants, the Amalekites, attacked Israel at Rephidim when coming out of Egypt (Exodus 17:8-16). Esau's original hatred was amplified and passed on to each succeeding Amalek family generation. After the Amalekites attacked Israel

at Rephidim, their hatred continued to persist for eight to nine centuries, lasting until the time of Esther.

After the Amalekite's defeat, ADONAI said to Moses 14 ..., "Write this for a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in the hearing of Joshua, for I will utterly blot out the memory of the Amalekites from under heaven." (Exodus 17:14 TLV). But their defeat at Refidim didn't end it, and they continued to attack Israel through the years. A little over a hundred years later, they allied with the Midianites to fight against Israel, and Gideon commanded the army that defeated them. Another hundred years later, ADONAI directed Samuel to have King Saul carry out His judgment on the Amalekites. 2 Thus says Adonai-Tzva'ot: 'I remember what Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. 3 Now go and strike down Amalek and put all he has under the ban of destruction—so have no pity on him; but kill both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys" (1 Samuel 15:2-3 TLV). Saul disobeyed and did not kill all of them; however, he eventually did kill Agag, the Amalekite king, whom he had initially taken captive. A few years later, the Amalekites attacked David's camp at Ziklag while he was away, taking all the women and children captive. David and his men pursued and found them, rescuing everyone. 17 David attacked them from the twilight until the evening of the next day. None of them escaped, except 400 young men who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 TLV). The final reported encounter was about four hundred years later during the time of King Hezekiah: 42 About 500 of them from the descendants of Simeon (**Tribe of Simeon**), led by Pelatiah, Neriaiah, Rephaiah and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi, went to Mount Seir (**Edom**) 43 where they struck down the remaining Amalekites who had escaped, and they live there to this day. (1 Chronicles 4:42-43 TLV).

Some believe that the events of Purim took place near the end of the Babylonian captivity, possibly around 510 BCE. The Persian king in the Book of Esther, Ahasuerus, is identified by many Christian theologians as King Xerxes I, who is believed to have reigned from 486 to 465 BCE. If that timeline is correct, the events of the Book of Esther would have begun around 483 BCE, the third year of King Ahasuerus's reign, and almost 100 years after Israel was taken into captivity in 586 BCE. The setting was Shushan, the winter capital of Persia, also known as Susa. It was located in central Iran near the modern Iranian city of Shush. Esther was a young woman, most likely in her teens. She was born in Persia and only knew Jewish history from her family, never having been in Israel. The text suggests that Jews lived in Shushan freely as residents and participated in community and government activities. As we discover, not every Amalekite had been eliminated; we find them living in Shushan nearly two hundred years after their last mention during the reign of King Hezekiah.

The story in the Book of Esther emphasizes the enduring toxic hatred that the descendants of Amalek have for Jacob's descendants, as well as ADONAI's miraculous delivery of them from their ancient foes. In chapter 3, the Book of Esther introduces us to a man named Haman. 1 Some time later, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, son of Hamedatha the Agagite, elevating him and setting his chair above all the officials who were with him (Esther 3:1 TLV). Hamedatha, Haman's father, was an Agagite, which means he was a descendant of King Agag, whom King Saul had executed. As King Ahasuerus's second-in-command, we can appreciate Haman's ambition to excel in his court and his desire for recognition and respect. We also understand his hatred of Mordecai and his people. Everyone was commanded to bow to Haman, but Mordecai would not: 5 When Haman saw that Mordecai was not bowing down or paying him honor, Haman was filled with rage (Esther 3:5 TLV). His hatred prompted Haman to act against the Jews. 8 Haman then said to King Ahasuerus: "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose laws differ from those of every other people and who do not

obey the king's laws. It is not in the king's interest to tolerate them. 9 If it pleases the king, let an edict be written to destroy them" (Esther 3:8-9a TLV). The king agreed to Haman's plan, not knowing who these people were or that his wife was one of them.

Lots, *purim* in Hebrew, were cast, and Adar 13 was designated as the day to kill all the Jews. However, they were unsuccessful, and Haman's attempt to exterminate the Jews not only resulted in ADONAI's miraculous preservation of the Jews in Media-Persia but also the deaths of Haman and his Amalekite relatives. King Ahasuerus ruled over 127 provinces, stretching from India to Ethiopia, a vast kingdom that included the Land of Israel. Jews living in all these locations were permitted to defend themselves, resulting in the deaths of 75,000 of their adversaries. Had Haman's decree been executed, the entire Jewish population would have been annihilated. His inability to eradicate all the Jews was vital, as it enabled their survival as a distinct people. About 300 years later, the Jews were again preserved as a people when Judah Maccabee and his army defeated the Syrians and safeguarded Israel as a nation and a people. The existence of Israel as a nation about 150 years later enabled ADONAI's Son Yeshua to be born there, the fulfillment of numerous prophecies.

The importance of Esther's actions cannot be minimized. As a young woman, she understood the importance of saving her people from destruction. While the Book of Esther does not mention ADONAI, we realize He is behind the scenes, perhaps motivating Esther and Mordecai by His *Ruach*. Mordechai's words to her echo through the centuries: 14 "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place—but you and your father's house will perish. Who knows whether you have attained royal status for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14 TLV). Esther understood why she had come to the throne, and her willingness to risk her life may have stemmed from more than just a desire to protect her people. I believe that part of her reasoning was understanding that ADONAI had a greater purpose for the Jewish people, one that some of us may live to see.

While the Jews killed Haman and 75,000 Amalekites with King Ahasuerus's permission, it appears they still were not completely eradicated. We don't know who the Amalekites are today, as they seem to have blended with the Arabic people. However, the spirit of Amalek has not disappeared and has multiplied among today's Iranian ruling party, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other groups. Their supporters are also in nearly every country outside the Middle East, especially Europe and the United States. Their hatred of Jews has also influenced many non-Arab citizens in the United States who frequently participate in anti-Israel activities. What propels the hatred that has persisted so long? It is not a human emotion but a demonic entity that takes up residence in human bodies and readily attaches itself to new and unsuspecting human beings through their association with those in whom it resides. These demon spirits serve *HaSatan*, who has dispatched them against Israel, and his ultimate target, Yeshua, whom He desperately seeks to defeat. The hatred of Israel that we are seeing in the United States and Europe today is being fed in part by the demonic spirit of Amalek.

While physical force is sometimes warranted, *HaSatan's* ultimate defeat will only come at the hand of ADONAI and His Son Yeshua. The word of ADONAI came to Zerubbabel through the Prophet Zechariah as he was facing opposition in rebuilding the Temple: 6 *Then he responded to me by saying, 'This is the word of Adonai to Zerubbabel saying: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Ruach!" says Adonai-Tzva'ot.* (Zechariah 4:6 TLV). This is ADONAI's word for us today: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit." We, as non-physical combatants, must mobilize against the spirit world. How are we meant to do that?

*Sha'ul* tells us how. We are involved in a spiritual battle, and our weapons are not physical. He tells us that as followers of Yeshua, we are physical, but our warfare is not. He

wrote: 3 *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powerful through God for the tearing down of strongholds”* (2 Corinthians 10:3-4 TLV). Even though our weapons are not physical, they are powerful and can tear down spiritual strongholds. But we must know what our weapons are to use them to overcome *HaSatan*. *Sha’ul* continues: 4 ... *We are tearing down false arguments 5 and every high-minded thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. We are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah—* (2 Corinthians 10:4b-5 TLV). *Sha’ul* was defeating false doctrines and the arguments of the followers of false gods, and he encourages us to do this. Even our thoughts must be obedient to Yeshua. It’s all about Yeshua and the truth of His Word. The next verse also has application to today’s body of Messiah. *Sha’ul* had trouble with the Corinthian congregation because some had rebelled against his teaching. He wrote: 6 *ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.* (2 Corinthians 10:6 TLV). In other words, we will have the weapons to combat evil once we stop rebelling and enter complete obedience of our Messiah.

*Sha’ul* also instructed the congregation in Ephesus about spiritual warfare, explaining what our weapons are and who the enemy is: 11 *“Put on the full armor of God, so that you are able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the worldly forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”* (Ephesians 6:11-12 TLV). “Powers” are fallen angels of high rank, the wicked counterparts of ADONAI’s Archangels, Michael and Gabriel. The Book of Daniel suggests that individual nations have high-ranking fallen angels overseeing *HaSatan*’s activities there. The angel Gabriel is speaking: 13 *However, the prince of the kingdom of Persia (a demonic entity) resisted me for 21 days, but behold Michael, one of the chief princes (an archangel of ADONAI), came to help me because I had been detained there with the kings of Persia (possibly defending King Cyrus).* (Daniel 10:13 TLV). There is a command structure in the dark spiritual world. The leader of it is our enemy, the ancient serpent, the devil, *HaSatan*. He is the commander-in-chief of the evil kingdom, accompanied by the rulers and powers mentioned by *Sha’ul*, and the foot soldiers are demon spirits. On the side of good are the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and the other angels, the Cherubim, Seraphim, and Guardian Angels. Their Commander in Chief is Yeshua, the King of Kings and L-rd of L-rds, as we are told in Revelation 19:16. The individuals having these demonic spirits are not our enemies, and we pray for them to be delivered and to come to know Yeshua. We wish every wicked person who can be saved will become part of the Messiah’s body. It is their actions that are our enemy, not them. ADONAI told Moses that we are not to hate our brother in our hearts (Leviticus 19:17) but teaches us that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. As a part of the army of Messiah Yeshua, our battle is not to defeat them physically, but to spiritually free them from *HaSatan*’s grasp. This coming change will drastically alter the world around us.

13 *Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist when the times are evil, and after you have done everything, to stand firm.* (Ephesians 6:13 TLV). *Sha’ul* starts by telling us that, as spiritual warriors, we must have spiritual weapons, all of G-d’s available armor. Even before he describes our weapons, he encourages us to stand firm. We must decide if we’re going to stand firm, if we’re going to do nothing, or if we’re going to run away. Standing firm suggests a battle line where warriors stand shoulder to shoulder. That’s who we are called to be, a united force ready to meet the challenges of the enemy. And every warrior is essential. There are no deferments. Everyone must go to the front line.

*14 Stand firm then! Buckle the belt of truth around your waist,..* (Ephesians 6:14a TLV). The belt of truth we wear is the truth of ADONAI's Word, which we use to witness to others. It is His ultimate and eternal truth, made compelling by our honest words, which can set people free. As bearers of truth, there can be no deceit in us.

*14 ..., and put on the breastplate of righteousness.* (Ephesians 6:14b TLV). The breastplate covering our chests and protecting our hearts is our righteousness. While our emotions exist in our minds, it is in our hearts, our spirits, that our real person lives. Our hearts are complex, the part of us as human beings that joins with ADONAI, spirit to Spirit. Our heart provides us with spiritual orientation, forming the foundation for our actions. As Yeshua's followers, it is in our hearts that our spirit joins with the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit. Yeshua spoke about the importance of the heart. They must be circumcised, turned toward Him. A circumcised heart is an obedient heart. After salvation and trusting in Yeshua as Savior and Messiah, we maintain our ongoing righteousness by obeying Yeshua and ADONAI. Yeshua also taught us about the evil thoughts that come from the heart and people who honor him with their lips but whose hearts are far from Him (Matthew 15:8). This does not define us, who are His faithful followers. The breastplate covering our hearts is our righteousness, our right standing before ADONAI. Righteousness is more than eternal salvation; it is also how we serve Yeshua during our days on earth. We can't be passive followers of Yeshua. He has told what He will do with those who are lukewarm (Revelation 3:16).

*15 Strap up your feet in readiness with the Good News of shalom.* (Ephesians 6:15 TLV). Our shoes are our readiness to go where we are called to share the Good News of *shalom*. Yeshua's gift of salvation brings eternal *shalom* to those who choose it. We must always be spiritually aware of every opportunity to share the *Besorah*, the Good News of the Kingdom.

*16 Above all, take up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.* (Ephesians 6:16 TLV). Our shield against the accusations of *HaSatan*, the accuser of the brethren, is our faith. Our faith is our trust in G-d, His Son Yeshua, and the truth that He is the universe's Creator and Savior. But our faith is also our faithfulness in service to Yeshua and the understanding that we are in it for the long term. We must be vigilant and remain faithful as long as we live.

*17 And take the helmet of salvation ...* (Ephesians 6:17a TLV). The helmet that protects our minds is the truth of the promise of salvation. We do not waver in our firm belief that Yeshua's sacrificial blood has paid the price for us to live in eternity with Him. The catcalls of the Atheists and the derision of the followers of false gods do not affect us. We remain firm in our belief that ADONAI is the only real G-d and that He sent His Son Yeshua to become the perfect sacrifice for our sins that we might have eternal life. He will soon return as King Messiah to defeat His enemies, and we will reign with Him for eternity.

*17 ... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* (Ephesians 6:17b TLV). Lastly, we use the sword of the *Ruach*, the Word of ADONAI, to answer every spiritual challenge. Just as Yeshua did in the wilderness when he was tempted by *HaSatan*, we should also use the Word, not only to confront ADONAI's enemies offensively but also to defend ourselves when they attack. We all need to be equipped with an understanding of the Word. We cannot depend on others to filter the Word for us. Each of us must be a faithful student of the Bible, rightly dividing the Word of truth: *15 "Make every effort to present yourself before God as tried and true, as an unashamed worker cutting a straight path with the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15 TLV). Who is an unashamed worker? It is a person who diligently responds

to the call to study and understand God's Word. The rabbis equate *Torah* study with worshipping ADONAI, a perspective we can all agree on.

What is Purim's message for us today? It serves as a reminder that ADONAI's enemies remain active, and the spirit of Amalek is very much present in today's world. But there is an even more wicked spirit that also inhabits many with the Amalek spirit, the spirit of the anti-messiah (the anti-Christ). Near the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, *Yochanan* wrote, *2 You know the Ruach Elohim by this—every spirit that acknowledges that Messiah Yeshua has come in human flesh is from God, 3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Yeshua is not from God. This is the spirit of the anti-messiah, which you have heard is coming and now is already in the world.* (1 John 4:2-3 TLV). The good news is that neither the Spirit of Amalek nor the Spirit of Anti-Messiah has to remain in these individuals and can be removed, cast out, allowing their former hosts to trust in and serve Yeshua. But they must desire it to happen. However, the unfortunate reality is that many will not be freed from these spirits and will continue to have them until the end, ultimately facing Yeshua's judgment. *12 And I saw the dead—the great and the small—standing before the throne. The books were opened, and another book was opened—the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what was written in the books, according to their deeds.* (Revelation 20:12 TLV). This a picture of *Yom Kippur* when Yeshua will make the final Judgement; the scene is also shown to Daniel in 7:9-14. Purim also reminds us that we are the Esther's and Mordechai's of today, and our end is much different than those inhabited by these unholy spirits. *Sha'ul* wrote, *11 Trustworthy is the saying: If we died with Him, we will also live with Him; 12 if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; 13 if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.* (2 Timothy 2:11-13 TLV). Endurance is essential. We must remain faithful until the end. We will soon live with Yeshua in the *Olam Haba*, the world to come. But in this world, the *Olam Haze*, we are called to make a difference in ADONAI's kingdom.

Near the beginning of Israel as a nation, ADONAI said, *14 ... "I will utterly blot out the memory of the Amalekites from under heaven."* (Exodus 17:14b TLV). It will happen, but it has not yet. Only when Yeshua returns as Messiah and King to destroy His enemies will the memory of the Amalekites be blotted out from the earth. And *HaSatan* and all his evil agents will also be destroyed. The Nation of Israel is the entity to which Yeshua will return to rule and reign as *Melekh Yisra'el*, the King of Israel. He chose the people of Israel, the Jews, to be His priests to the nations, and they will fulfill that calling. And Yeshua will reign over the people of ADONAI's Israel, Jews and Gentiles who are in covenant with Him for eternity.

But not everything is always serious. A part of the *Purim* tradition is to have fun, and we will have a lot of fun tonight. But may we never forget that as *talmidim* of Yeshua, we are called to action. *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim!* Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May those who love Jerusalem, the city of our great King, Yeshua, prosper! *Chag Purim Sameach* and *Shabbat shalom!*