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Shalom Mishpochah (Family),

Esther, the Hidden One

We will celebrate the feast of Purim on March 14, 2006. This holiday, based on the biblical book of Esther, is an appointed time to remember the victory of the Jewish people in Persia over the wicked Haman during the Babylonian captivity. Haman was an Amalekite, a descendant of King Agag, who like his forefathers sought to exterminate the children of Israel. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob remains "hidden" throughout the entire Book of **Esther**, but arranges the circumstances so that His people prevail over their enemy. His name is never mentioned, but His presence is felt. Esther, the heroine of the Purim story, is a Jewish orphan who finds favor with a great king (King Ahasuerus) and is elevated to the position of Queen of Persia. She too is "hidden." Her cousin Mordecai, who raised Esther, told her to hide her Jewishness upon entering the palace. The time came, however, when Mordecai pleaded with Esther to come out of hiding since the annihilation of her people was at stake. Most of you are familiar with Mordecai's words: *"Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet, who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"* (Esther 4:13-14).

Esther's name in Hebrew is *Hadassah*, which means "I will be hidden." We have been impressed this month that many times "hiding" is according to the plan and perfect will of God. We usually think of hiding as "bad." Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God after they had sinned (Genesis 3:8-10). Moses hid an Egyptian in the sand after slaying him because he had been beating a Hebrew slave (Exodus 2:11-12). But not all hiding is "bad." Much hiding in the Holy Scriptures is purposefully good, with an ultimate intent of blessing. God hides people – including Himself – to be revealed at a later, auspicious moment. The following verse is found four times in the Brit Hadasha, indicating its great importance:

"For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light."
(See Mark 4:22, Matthew 10:26, Luke 12:2, and Luke 8:17).

Queen Esther hid her Jewish roots until the God-ordained time for them to be revealed. The revelation resulted in the salvation of the entire Jewish nation. Think about it! Many Bible commentators have compared the modern day Body of Believers (the Church) to Esther. We are the Bride of the King of Kings. What about our Jewish roots? Do we embrace them or do we hide them? We believe that the "Church," as a whole, has failed miserably in her God-given role of

provoking the Jew to jealousy (Romans 11:11) largely because she has denied (worse than hide?) her Jewish roots. And yet, the very salvation of Israel is at stake! When Esther revealed her true familial connection, she also entered into intercession for the Jewish people. Revelation brought redemption and God's people were spared.

As Chuck and Karen Cohen point out in their book **Roots of our Faith**, Israel is being threatened right now with extinction through satanic attacks in every area: spiritual, sociocultural and political. It is time for Messiah's Bride, like Queen Esther, to embrace the root (Israel) that supports her and plead with The King on Israel's behalf. We have come to the kingdom for such a time as this! Ministries such as Jewish Jewels have been called by God at this time in history to bring forth the hidden Jewish root, and reveal hidden treasure from the Hebrew Scriptures:

"I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the Lord, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel" (Isaiah 45:3).

Hidden Treasure

There are at least five words in Hebrew that translate into English as "treasure." All of them imply "hidden." One reason for this is cultural. In Bible times in the Middle East, there were no banks or safe deposit boxes. When people had great wealth, they also had a great problem. Where could they hide their possessions; i.e. silver, gold, jewelry, so that they would not be stolen? Sometimes treasures were hidden in secret closets in a house, or in vaults under a home. Often, they were buried in a field. No one but the owner knew the location. If war, death or other circumstances prevented the owner from returning for his treasure, it remained hidden until someone else happened to find it.

The parable of Yeshua in Matthew 13:44 illustrates this practice of hiding treasures: *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."* Surely this man's friends and neighbors could not understand why he would sell everything he had just for a piece of land that might not have been worth much. They did not know what he had found hidden in that piece of earth: TREASURE. He found something so wonderful, a source of such JOY, that he was willing to forsake everything else to have that TREASURE.

We personally relate to this parable because in 1973 we found THE GREATEST TREASURE OF ALL – Yeshua, the Messiah – and left home, family, ski house, N.Y. state, etc. to follow Him. We had found REAL JOY. What had been hidden was revealed to us. Thirty-three years later we rejoice as we see other Jewish people receive the same revelation. We have never regretted our decision and are so glad we "sold out" completely to the Messiah.

There was a time, however, early in our walk with Yeshua that we were tempted with treasure of another kind. Neil invested in silver coins and decided to hide them in a secret compartment in the wall of our laundry room. One day, following a church worship service (about 1 year before we began Temple Aron HaKodesh), the Ruach HaKodesh brought to Neil's remembrance a scripture that he had heard in a sermon: *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).*

Neil was devastated when God showed him that his heart was in the wall! Neil repented, and

has never repeated that sin. We try to store up treasure in heaven rather than hide it here on earth. We are very thankful for a special group of believers who feel the same way. They are our EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) donors. For some of them who have not yet been planted in a local congregation, EFT for them means "Easy for Tithing." For others, EFT is a safe, secure, convenient way to partner with us on a monthly basis. EFT is easier for our partners because there is no check to write, stamp to find or envelope to mail. EFT is easier for Jewish Jewels because our income is more predictable, allowing us to make solid commitments to new and current projects.

Please pray and ask Abba if His will is for **you** to become an EFT Sustaining Partner. Then let us know by marking the appropriate spot on the enclosed mail back card, or calling us for further information at 1-800-293-7482. God bless you for investing your treasure in reaching Jewish souls for the King of Kings and bringing increase to His Kingdom.

Hidden People

The Bible is filled with accounts of people whom God hid for a season, and later revealed for a special purpose. Consider Joseph: hidden in a pit by his brothers (Genesis 37:24), then hidden in Potiphar's house by slave traders (Genesis 39:5), then hidden in prison (Genesis 39:20), next hidden in Pharaoh's house (Genesis 41:46), and finally brought out of hiding (revealed to his brothers) just in time to preserve the life of his people (Genesis 45:5).

Consider Moses: hidden by his mother until he was three months old to save his life (Exodus 2:2), then hidden in a basket (Exodus 2:3), then hidden in Pharaoh's house (Exodus 2:10), next hidden in the land of Midian (Exodus 2:15), and finally brought out of hiding through the sovereign call of God at the burning bush. The time to deliver God's people from Egyptian bondage had come.

We have already considered Esther, another great deliverer. The greatest deliverer of all, the Messiah, was hidden as well. He is hidden in the Torah as the "Angel of the Lord." He is hidden in the Prophets as the Suffering Servant (see chapter 53). He is not seen, but His voice is heard over and over in such verses as Psalm 40:7-8: *"Then I said, 'Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart'."* He is hidden as the Rock that followed the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings (1 Corinthians 10:4). When Yeshua came to dwell among men in the form of a Jewish baby, he was hidden in Egypt for a time to avoid being murdered by Herod (Matthew 2:13). His identity was revealed to the tzadik Simeon by the Ruach Ha Kodesh at the time of His brit milah (circumcision) (Luke 2:30-32). His identity was hidden during His childhood in Nazareth, but selected people glimpsed His extraordinary nature at times. Such was the case during Passover in Jerusalem when Yeshua was twelve years old and His parents found Him in the Temple debating with the rabbis (Luke 2:46). The Lord God introduced His son to the world at the Jordan River when He came to be immersed by John: *"And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' "* (Matthew 3:17). Yeshua was no longer hidden. However, His talmidim really didn't understand His mission until after He was risen from the dead. There are still treasures hidden in Yeshua that are yet to be revealed. Referring to Messiah, Colossians 2:3 says, *"...in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* May the Lord give us all more revelation of this hidden treasure during 2006!

Does God Hide?

Yes, God definitely hides. Sometimes He hides from men because of their sin (Isaiah 54:8,

Isaiah 59:2, Isaiah 64:7, Ezekiel 39:23, Ezekiel 39:24) but He also hides from us to cause us to seek Him more diligently. *"Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior!"* (Isaiah 45:15).

Traditional Jews see God as hiding Himself behind the Kotel (Western Wall). This is based on Song of Songs 2:9, *"...he standeth behind our wall..."* It is believed that God's presence is only perceived as He is actively sought (Deuteronomy 4:29).

In chapter 3 of the Song of Songs we find God hiding. The Shulamite (believer) experiences separation from her Beloved (Messiah). She seeks Him but doesn't find Him. She loves Him but He eludes her. A sense of His presence is missing in her life. Has He intentionally withdrawn? Yes. It has been said that when God hides, our hunger for Him increases, and our faith is forced to grow. The Lord is **silent** in His love (Zephaniah 3:17). Oswald Chambers made a cogent observation: "God sometimes withdraws His conscious blessings in order to teach us to walk by faith. We are worth far more to Him now (as older believers) than we were in our early days of sweetness and light, conscious delight and thrilling testimony." While verses such as Isaiah 8:17, Job 34:29, and Psalm 44:24 show us that God hides Himself, there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed — even God!! (Matthew 16:17).

The Hidden Bride

The Bride of Messiah is in many ways called to be "hidden." Colossians 3:3 tells us that we died, and our life is hidden with Messiah in God. If we stay hidden, the devil can't find us! We are to be like the doves hidden in the clefts of the rocks of the Western Wall (Song of Songs 2:14). "Clefts of the Rock" is a reference to our crucified Lord. A Bride was taken from His side, just as a bride was taken from Adam's side. When we tuck back under His arm, we find our rightful position in Him. Safe. Secure. Sheltered. Hidden...in Yeshua, the Rock of our salvation.

God hides us in Himself as we cry out to be sheltered in His love. *"Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings..."* (Psalm 17:8). *"For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle He shall hide me..."* (Psalm 27:5). *"You are my hiding place and my shield: I hope in Your word"* (Psalm 119:114).

Years ago, when Jamie first began studying the **Song of Songs** she found a book written in 1899 by Jessie Penn-Lewis called **Thy Hidden Ones**. She recently re-read the book and was very blessed by its words of life. The "virgins" of Song of Songs 1:3, representing those of us who have been cleansed and purified, made new by the blood of the Lamb, are called *alamot* (pronounced a-la-MOAT) in Hebrew. Jessie points out that the Hebrew word translated virgin, *almah* is derived from the root word *MLE*, meaning to "veil from sight." The "virgins" are the "hidden ones" spoken of throughout her book. By the way, this book briefly covers all 8 chapters of the Song of Songs. (Jamie's only covered chapters 1 and 2!) Order a copy if your heart yearns for more of the Beloved!

Intercessors: God's Hidden Jewels

There are millions of people the world over who are part of the Bride of Messiah who are "hidden" – no one knows who they are. God knows – especially the intercessors, those hidden jewels that one day will be revealed as the ones responsible for the advancement of the Kingdom of God on the earth. Then there are those of you who have been hidden, like Joseph

and Moses, Esther and Yeshua until the fullness of time. God has a plan for each one of His children. 2006 could be the year that He takes YOU out of hiding, to share you with the world, and use you to advance the Kingdom of God. Remember there is NOTHING hidden that shall not be known! Although our ministry is very public, our highest goal is to stay HIDDEN IN YESHUA!

Love in Him,

Neil and Jamie

P.S. Some funding did come in for Sky Angel One, but they had already sold our time slot. God knows! Why not be a website watcher? Jewish Jewels can be viewed 24 hours a day at www.jewishjewels.org.

P.P.S. Watch for our new 24 page Jewish Jewels catalog with items direct from Israel to you!