

Esther 3-4 – Thursday, December 14th, 2017

Esther 3 -- 1 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him.

- The chapter begins by introducing us to a very evil man by the name of Haman, and we're also given a very important detail.
- Namely, that of Haman being a descendant of Agag, the king of the Amalekites who were the enemies of the children of Israel.
- So much so, God, through the prophet Samuel commanded king Saul to destroy every Amalekite before they destroyed Israel.

1 Samuel 15:20 And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

- Sadly, Saul, in his disobedience to the command of God, would ultimately do so to his own peril, such that it cost him his life.
- It's rather ironic that Saul would ultimately be put to death; by the very Amalekite that he was commanded to put to death first.
- The lesson here becomes quite clear, the Amalekite is a type of the flesh, and if we don't put it to death, it will put us to death.

2 And all the king's servants who were within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage. 3 Then the king's servants who were within the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" 4 Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told it to Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew. 5 When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. 6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.

- Here we're told that Haman is filled with wrath because this one Jew, Mordecai, refuses to bow down and pay homage to him.
- As such, he seeks to now destroy all the Jews and as we'll see next makes a plan to carry out his demonic and satanic evil.
- But God, as only He can and does, won't allow any weapon or plan to succeed and in fact takes the evil and brings about good.

7 In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. 8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. 9 If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king's treasuries." 10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 11 And the king said to Haman, "The money and the people are given to you, to do with them as seems good to you."

- At first read, one can come away with the impression that the fate of the Jews, at the hand of the enemy of the Jews is sealed.
- However, nothing can be further from the truth. Actually, it's the opposite that's true, in that, Haman has now just sealed his fate.
- This because, those who curse Israel will themselves be cursed and those who bless Israel will be blessed. (Genesis 12:2-3)

- Before we move on to verse twelve, I would like to point out a couple of interesting details that the narrative provides us with.
- First, notice in verse seven how that they cast lots before Haman in order that he might determine the day and month to do it.
- The reason I point that out is because God is the one who ultimately determined the outcome in His providential sovereignty.

Proverbs 16:33 (NKJV) — 33 The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

- The second detail has to do with how cunning Haman is in presenting his plan by way of providing information for manipulation.
- This is textbook when it comes to those who have an agenda with ulterior motives, in the sense they always seem to be noble.
- Unbeknownst to Haman, the trap he has so deceptively set for God's people will be the very trap he himself will be caught in.

Proverbs 26:27 (NKJV) — 27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.

- To me, this speaks to how it is that no matter how perilous our circumstances can appear to be initially, God has the final word.
- Like Haman, the enemy can plan our destruction, but God, over rules all, and rules over all, even when it looks like we're done.
- God can turn things around in an instant even though we will go through a long period of time where nothing makes any sense.

12 Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and a decree was written according to all that Haman commanded—to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring. 13 And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions. 14 A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province, being published for all people, that they should be ready for that day. 15 The couriers went out, hastened by the king's command; and the decree was proclaimed in Shushan the citadel. So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

- We shouldn't be surprised that the city of Shushan was so confused by this decree, given that Satan is the author of confusion.
- The truth of the matter is, we have a three-pronged litmus test of sorts when it comes to this, and all three of them are present.
- Accusation, lies, and confusion. Haman, falsely accused the Jews, and in so doing lied to the king, which led to the confusion.

- Be that as it may, I'd like to draw your attention to verse thirteen where we're told that they could plunder the Jews possessions.
- The reason I mention this is because of what we're told back in verse nine about Haman offering to pay 10,000 talents of silver.
- It's believed that this would be about thirty million dollars, and the question becomes one of where Haman would get this from.

- Here's where I'm going with this, in order for Haman to plunder that much from the Jews, presupposes that they possessed it.
- While I realize that this may be a firm grasp of the obvious, it may also be that this prosperity is why they remained in Babylon.
- The point being is sometimes being too comfortable in prosperity can lead to remaining in Babylon, and not go to Jerusalem.

Esther 4 -- 1 When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. 2 He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. 3 And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

- The chapter begins with Mordecai learning of the king's irrevocable decree to completely annihilate all of the Jewish people.
- One has to wonder what is going through Mordecai's mind as he weeps, fasts and mourns, as this is because of what he did.
- In other words, Mordecai and all of his people are in this predicament because he was willing to take a stand for righteousness.

4 So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept them. 5 Then Esther called Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this was. 6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that was in front of the king's gate. 7 And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews.

- For Esther to learn of this from her maids and eunuchs indicates that she was both insulated and isolated from inner workings.
- It's interesting to note that her maids and eunuchs only informed her of what Mordecai was doing and not what Haman did.
- She has to learn of that from Mordecai instead. I point this out because of how the enemy's tactics are often times very covert.

8 He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. 9 So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai. 10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: 11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days."

- Here, Esther is responding to Mordecai's appeal telling him that approaching the king uninvited could be punishable by death.
- While I'm certain that Mordecai knew this, what he may not have known is that Esther hasn't been invited for over one month.
- Also, I don't believe that Esther is rejecting Mordecai's command out of fear; rather, she's apprising him of the situation she's in.

12 So they told Mordecai Esther's words. 13 And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 14 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?"

- I find it rather interesting that Mordecai would tell Esther that deliverance would come from someone else if she remains silent.
- The reason I find this interesting is because Mordecai knows that God will deliver His people and He will use anyone to do it.
- It's for this reason that he says what he says about whether Esther knows that she has been positioned for such a time as this.

15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: 16 "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" 17 So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.

- What Esther says in verse sixteen about, "if I perish, I perish," is why I believe it is she was not rejecting Mordecai's command.
- Clearly, she is willing to lay her life on the line for her people, knowing that God had positioned her as queen for this very day.
- This is the secret to success in our Christian lives. We must be willing to lose our lives by picking up our cross and dying to self.

Matthew 10:38-39 — 38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

- I want to bring our bible study to a close with one final thought concerning the odds of Esther becoming queen in the first place.
- Against all odds, really with what would arguably be impossible odds, a young Jewish woman becomes the queen of Persia.
- Certainly, this would be considered odd in and of itself, which is why I believe, when it seems really odd, it must be that it's God.