

Esther 3:1–15 — *The Rise of Evil and the Call for Courage*

Haman's Rise and Mordecai's Stand

After these events, King Ahasuerus promoted **Haman**, the son of **Hammedatha the Agagite**, elevating him above all the other princes in the empire (Esther 3:1). By royal command, all the king's servants at the gate were to bow and show honor to Haman. Everyone obeyed—except one man: **Mordecai**. He refused to bow or pay homage (Esther 3:2).

When Mordecai's coworkers noticed his defiance, they asked him repeatedly why he broke the king's command. Mordecai simply stood firm, eventually revealing to them that he was a **Jew**—someone who would bow only to God and no one else (Esther 3:3-4).

When Haman himself saw that Mordecai would not bow, his rage boiled over. But instead of seeking revenge on Mordecai alone, Haman decided to destroy **all the Jews** throughout the empire (Esther 3:5-6).

Application:

Mordecai's courage teaches us that **true conviction often comes at a cost**. When we stand for God's truth in a culture that demands conformity, we may provoke anger or even hatred. *But compromise with evil is far more costly to our souls than suffering for righteousness (1 Peter 3:14).* Like Mordecai, we must ask ourselves: *Will I bow to the pressures of the world or stand for the Lord, even if I stand alone?*

The Plot Against God's People

To determine the best day to carry out the massacre, Haman cast **Pur** (lots) before his gods—a pagan method of seeking guidance. The lot fell on the **twelfth month**—the month of **Adar** (March)—giving almost a full year to prepare for the slaughter (Esther 3:7).

This long delay was **God's providential hand** at work: what Haman saw as time to plan destruction, **God would use to prepare deliverance**.

Application:

The world may scheme against God's people, but **God is never caught off guard**. *He can turn even the enemy's timetable into an opportunity for salvation (Romans 8:28).* Never mistake **God's patience** for absence. He is always working, even in the delays.

Haman's Deception and the King's Approval

Haman approached the king with a half-truth, saying, "There's a certain people scattered throughout your kingdom whose laws differ from everyone else's. They do not keep the king's laws, and it's not in your best interest to tolerate them" (Esther 3:8).

He proposed their extermination, offering the king **10,000 talents of silver**—a sum equal to millions of dollars today (Esther 3:9). He planned to fund this by plundering the Jews' possessions after their deaths.

Without much thought, King Ahasuerus took off his signet ring—an act of handing over legal authority—and gave it to Haman, empowering him to make the decree (Esther 3:10-11).

Application:

Satan often works through **deception** and **half-truths** to accomplish his plans. Haman didn't tell the king everything; he twisted the truth. *We must be discerning, testing everything against God's Word, because not all that sounds reasonable is righteous (1 John 4:1).*

The Decree of Death

On Haman's orders, royal scribes were summoned, and letters were sent out to every province—from India to Ethiopia—commanding that **all Jews—young and old, men, women, and children—be annihilated** on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. The decree also allowed anyone to seize Jewish property as spoil (Esther 3:12-13).

Messengers rushed out across the vast empire to announce the edict. Meanwhile, **the king and Haman sat down to drink**, seemingly indifferent to the death sentence they had unleashed. But the city of **Shushan was bewildered** (Esther 3:14-15).

Application:

How chilling it is that Haman and the king could sit and celebrate while innocent lives were marked for destruction! *Evil often disguises itself with casual indifference.*

We must remember: **God's people are always under spiritual attack**, but God raises up His deliverers at just the right time. *When the world seems to celebrate wickedness, trust that God's justice is not sleeping (2 Peter 3:9).*

Key Insights and Personal Application:

- **Partial obedience leads to future disaster.** Saul's failure to destroy Amalek centuries earlier allowed Haman, an Agagite, to rise up against Israel (see 1 Samuel 15). *If we don't deal fully with the "Amalekites" (sins of the flesh) in our lives today, they will rise up to destroy us later (Galatians 5:16-17).*
- **The flesh cannot be negotiated with; it must be crucified.** God's command to utterly destroy Amalek is a powerful picture: *our flesh cannot be reformed or controlled—it must die (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20).*
- **Spiritual courage means refusing to bow.** Mordecai stood when everyone else bowed. *Are we willing to risk our comfort, our reputation, or even our safety to stand for Christ (Ephesians 6:13)?*
- **Satan's attacks often seem unstoppable—but God is already working behind the scenes.** Haman cast lots, but *"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord" (Proverbs 16:33).*
God's hand guided the timing, buying His people time to prepare.
- **God can use delays to orchestrate deliverance.** What looked like a delay was divine strategy. *Don't lose heart when rescue seems slow; trust that God is working all things for good (Romans 8:28).*

Closing Reflection:

The world still casts lots against God's people, but God still holds the final say.

In the face of injustice, we are called not to fear but to **stand firm in faith**, trust God's unseen hand, and remember: **Deliverance is already in motion, even before we can see it.**