

Esther 3

Verses 1- 6

After these events King Ahasuerus honored Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and promoted him and established his authority over all the officials who *were* with him. ² All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman; for so the king had commanded regarding him. But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage. ³ Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you violating the king's command?" ⁴ Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew. ⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage. ⁶ But he considered it beneath his dignity to kill Mordecai alone, for they had told him *who* the people of Mordecai *were*; so Haman sought to annihilate all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, who *were found* throughout the kingdom of Ahasuerus.

After these events King Ahasuerus honored Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and promoted him and established his authority over all the officials who *were* with him. ² All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman; for so the king had commanded regarding him. But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage.

Haman was a descendant of King Agag who was an enemy of Israel in the days of King Saul (1026 BC). See 1st Samuel 15 for further details. But this conflict originated when Israel had only been in the desert for a month (1446 BC). The Amalekites attacked the Israelites in a day long battle at Rephidim. This was when Moses held up his hands and Israel was winning as long as he held them up. When he grew tired Aaron and Hur supported his hands and Israel won their battle over Amalek and his people.

See Exodus 17:14-16

¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua that I will utterly wipe out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and named it The Lord is My Banner; ¹⁶ and he said, "Because the Lord has sworn, the Lord will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."

³ Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you violating the king's command?" ⁴ Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew.

Until the king's servants told him, Haman had not noticed that Mordecai did not bow down to him. They should have left well enough alone but they told Haman about Mordecai's objection to bow before him and that it was based on the fact that he was a Jew.

It is noteworthy that Herodotus relates the case of certain Spartans who visited Shushan (Susa) in the time of Xerxes, and, when ushered into the royal presence, refused to prostrate themselves and worship the king, on the ground that it was contrary to their customs to worship a man.

⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage. ⁶ But he considered it beneath his dignity to kill Mordecai alone, for they had told him *who* the people of Mordecai *were*; so Haman sought to annihilate all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, who *were found* throughout the kingdom of Ahasuerus.

When someone is angry with another person and decides that every member of that person's race should die they have reached a kind of thinking that goes way beyond human pride.

Verses 7 - 11

⁷ In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Pur, that is the lot, was cast before Haman from day to day and from month *to month*, until the twelfth month, that is the month Adar. ⁸ Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from *those* of all *other* people and they do not comply with the king's laws, so it is not in the king's interest to let them remain. ⁹ If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be eliminated, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who carry out the *king's* business, to put into the king's treasuries." ¹⁰ Then 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 silver is yours, and the people *also*, to do with them as you please."

⁷ **In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Pur, that is the lot, was cast before Haman from day to day and from month to month, until the twelfth month, that is the month Adar.**

Haman's diviners cast lots before him in order to determine a favorable day to carry out his vengeance on the Jews. On the first month they cast lots for each day of the month and for each month of the year. From this they decided which day was best for their planed attack which turned out to be the 13th day of the 12th month.

This took place in the 12th year of King Ahasuerus (471 BC) so Esther has been the queen of Persia for 5 years.

See chart 305

Esther Time Line			
Chapter	Events		Year
	Cyrus releases Jews	1st Return	538
	Second temple dedicated		516
	Book of Esther		483 - 469
	Reforms of Ezra	2nd return	458
1	King Ahasuerus	486-465	483
1	Queen Vashti deposed		483/482
	War with Greece	about 1 year	480 - 479
2	Mordecai the guardian of Esther		479
2	Esther becomes Queen	7th year	478
3	Haman's plot against the Jews	12th year	471
3	Letters sent to all the provinces	1st month	470

⁸ **Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of all other people and they do not comply with the king's laws, so it is not in the king's interest to let them remain.**

When telling a half-truth it is always best to generalize. Who exactly was this "certain people" he was referring to and what laws of theirs was different and how many of them were not complying with the king's laws. Let's see, it was one man, one law, and it just happened to be a Jew.

⁹ If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be eliminated, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who carry out the *king's* business, to put into the king's treasuries."

The lack of follow up by the king is disturbing given he is the king of a huge empire, and one can only hope that this was a momentary glitch in his decision making process. However, he was nearly outdone by Haman who made an offer to the king that no man in his right mind would make.

Verses 12 - 15

¹² Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written just as Haman commanded to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province and to the officials of each people, each province according to its script, each people according to its language, being written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.

¹³ Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to annihilate, kill, and destroy all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder. ¹⁴ A copy of the edict to be issued as law in every province was published to all the peoples so that they would be ready for this day. ¹⁵ The couriers went out, speeded by the king's order while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa; and while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was agitated.

¹² Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written just as Haman commanded to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province and to the officials of each people, each province according to its script, each people according to its language, being written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.

This gave the leaders of each state 11 months to get the word out to every district and town and so the people would have time to prepare for that day.

¹³ Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to annihilate, kill, and destroy all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder.

Haman had organized a plan to destroy all the Jews in one day but God had planned His response 5 years before this took place.

1. God had already elevated a Jewish woman to be queen of the kingdom.
2. He had also planted the name of Mordecai in the chronicles of the king as being a patriot that had saved the life of the king.

¹⁵ **The couriers went out, speeded by the king's order while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa; and while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was agitated.**

Haman was the kind of man who could condemn thousands of people to be murdered and then sit down to drink and enjoy himself.

The Jews certainly had enemies in Susa but the majority of the Persians were likely to sympathize with the Jews because there were many other national groups and they understood that their group might be next.