

February 16, 2020 - Esther 2: 21- 3:11 - “Haman’s’ Begins his Evil Plot”

## Introduction

January 27<sup>th</sup> was the seventy-fifth year after the liberation of Auschwitz. A dwindling number of elderly Holocaust survivors gathered at the former German Nazi death camp on that Monday in January. They came to honor the 1.1 million Jewish victims amid renewed concerns over anti-Semitism in Europe. “We want the next generation to know what we went through and that it should never happen again,” Auschwitz survivor David Marks, 93, told reporters.

The history of mankind is filled with various attempts to destroy the people of Israel. For 4,000 years the Jewish people have faced relentless persecution, opposition, and attempts to annihilate and destroy them. In the future, the struggle against Israel will unfortunately continue. Some of the attempts are well known and some not so well know. Such as in 1492 Fernand and Isabelle of Spain, supported Columbus voyages to the New World but not so well known is that the same year as Columbus discovery they issued a decree calling for the expulsion of the Jews from Spain known as the Alhambra decree. Today’s text records one such attempt to destroy all the Jews residing in the kingdom of Persia.

### I. Mordecai Saved the King (2:21-23)

1. Mordecai hears of an assassination plot against the king and informs his cousin Queen Esther who told the king, saving the king's life. Mordecai's attitude wasn't "I'm a Jewish man in exile under a pagan king, so I do not care if the king is killed." Mordecai as a Jew understood God’s higher commission to pray... **For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. I Timothy 2:1-3**

#### Application:

We need to be mindful as God’s people we are to be different from the world. Seeking evil upon others is not God’s way or wishing calamity upon them. ---Proverbs 20:22

2. This threat of assassination was real. In 465 BC, Xerxes was assassinated by Artabanus the commander of the royal bodyguard possibly on the order of his younger son who managed to claim the throne. It was the beginning of the end of the Empire, bankrupted by war and extravagant projects and now destabilized through assassination.

### II. The Promotion of Haman. (3:1-6)

1. These events occur four years after Esther becomes queen. We are introduced to a new character named Haman who should be called “Haman the Hateful.” The designation that Haman was an “Agagite” in verse one reveals he was a direct descendant of Agag the king and native of that country an Amalekite. These are descendants of Esau (Edom) principally make up the Arabs of our day. The descendants of Edom don’t appear again in the Bible until Herod an Idumean is mentioned as the king who tried to kill baby Jesus by having all the children around Bethlehem killed. They hated the Jews and did them harm even in Moses time.

2. The king promoted Haman to the second highest official in the land, second only to the king. Mordecai was the one who discovered the plot and saved the king’s life. So why isn’t Mordecai

promoted but passed for Haman. Folk life is not always fair... To make matters worst part of this promotion was that everyone was to bow and pay homage to Haman. That is everyone except Mordecai, he refused to bow. Haman was not satisfied to just get even with Mordecai but attempted to destroy all the Jews throughout the Persian Empire.

This was an evil executed by Satan; think of it the genocide of an entire people because he dislikes one man? Haman had been raised among a people who hated the Jews and he was taught that from childhood. We see the same thing in the Arab world today when children are taught to hate the Jews and to seek the destruction of Israel.

3. Verse three seems to indicate that Mordecai had come as far as he could and he could go no further. Mordecai's strength lay in the fact that, although in exile far from home, he never forgot who he was or disregarded his bond with the Jewish people scattered among the 127 provinces of the sprawling Persian Empire. We note that in vv. 3 he is persistence and won't compromise. In verse 4 they report him to Haman mainly to see if Jewish people did not need to obey. Haman was angry because he refused to bow to such an evil man as Haman.

4. Haman brought with him a deep-seated hatred of the Jewish people that is perhaps explained by his descent from Agag, the king of the Amalekites, who were entrenched enemies of Israel as far back as the days of Moses, Joshua, Saul, and King David. Looking at verse vv. 6, Haman's wrath was not limited to Mordecai alone, who refused to bow before him in the king's gate. Haman hated all Jews, and his intense feelings prompted him to fashion a decree of genocide that would have destroyed world Jewry because all Jewish people in that day lived within the Persian Empire.

### III. Haman reveals his evil plot to the king. 3:7-11

1. In Verses 7-9 of this chapter Haman is determined to gain full control of the king and yet he must do this without making the king suspicious of what he's up to. *They cast Pur* is to say, "the lot was cast on the first month (v.7) and landed upon a date exactly eleven months later (v.13) allowing plenty of time for Haman's plot to be overcome and a counter measures ordered. This has to be seen as confirmation of God's assurance that He will preserve His people. The book of Proverbs states, **the lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.** 16:33)

Haman's charge was the most dangerous because it was a half-truth. Yes, the Jews were a certain people scattered and dispersed; and yes they had their own laws. But their own laws, to this point, did not prevent them from keeping the king's laws as loyal subjects. God does commend us to obey civil government as Paul taught in Romans 13:1-5 and Peter who declares **Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.**

2. Haman's plea to Xerxes to slaughter all of Persia's Jews had been granted and was sealed in a document that could not be overturned. As an added incentive, the executioners received permission to steal their victims' goods: "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*” (3:13, emphasis added).

3. Haman determined that he would ask the king to exterminate all the Jews in the kingdom, but because he was superstitious he kept throwing the lot to determine the best day to ask the king for permission for the determination to happen. When the day finally arrived the edict was approved and signed with the king’s signet ring. God’s hand of providence is seen in that the lot did not fall on an immediate day but gave Mordecai and Esther time to act to avert this destruction.

4. When the king gives Haman his signet ring it was the equivalent of the king’s signature (v. 10) and therefore his approval of the plan. So why did Xerxes allow this decree to be enacted? He did not care enough to ask what group was to be destroyed. Not only did the king pass over Mordecai and promote Haman, he passed a law that is designed not only to result in his death but also of the queen that he professes to love so much.

5. Haman’s suggests that Mordecai's people are really unprofitable to the king, but that he, is ready to make King Xerxes magnificently rich. He offers ten thousand talents to the king (v.9) which according to the Greek historian Herodotus was a remarkable amount equal to 2/3 of the annual income of the entire kingdom. This was essentially the promise of a bribe. This money would not come from Haman's own pocket; it would be obtained from the property of slaughtered Jews.

When you talk about a threat to a king's throne you are touching something that is very close to his heart. Then in addition, you infer that you have a plan that will make him wealthier than ever before, you got his attention. Haman like Satan appeals to the depravity of the human flesh and the pride of this arrogant king.

#### Application:

Folks, has Satan tempted you in these fleshly ways? Has he whispered to you that honesty is not really the best policy, at least when it comes to filling out your income tax? After all, what the government doesn't know won't hurt them. There must come a point when we are revolted at our own vileness.

#### Conclusion:

Life is not always fair it is at this point God wants the Christian to resolve to "go all the way with God's way." Our Father is always good, just and fair.