

Book Study on Esther

Introduction to Haman

Esther 3:1-5

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Introduction

- Review books of the Bible: Genesis – Esther
- Esther made Queen

Let's pick up here in chapter 3 and verse 1

Bible

Est 3:1 After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

Est 3:2 And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

Est 3:3 Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?

Est 3:4 Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

Est 3:5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

Lets look a little deeper into these verses:

Est 3:1 After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

- Between the 7th and 12th year of Ahasuerus reign. ¹
- Haman's name has been held to be another form of Humman or Humban, an Elamite deity, ¹
- Hammedatha is perhaps the same as "Madata" or "Mahadata", an old Persian name signifying "given by (or to) the moon." ²
- The Agagite — Perhaps a descendant of Agag, the Amalekite. 1 Samuel 15:9; 1 Samuel 15:32. It was no impossible thing for a descendant of the royal family of Amalek to become an officer in the court of Persia. Some, however, suggest that the Agagite is an epithet which Jewish hatred has applied to Haman, with the design of associating him with the hated Amalekite. ³
- In one of the Greek Apocryphal additions to Esther (after Esther 9:24) Haman is called a Macedonian. ⁴
- The reverence' which the king had commanded his servants to show to Haman was not simply a sign of respect, but an act of worship. Eastern adulation regarded a monarch as in some sense a god, and we know that divine honours were in later times paid to Roman emperors, and many Christians martyred for refusing to render them. The command indicates that Ahasuerus desired Haman to be regarded as his representative, and possessing at least some reflection of godhead from him. ⁵
- Gave him the first place and seat which was next the king. ⁶
- and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him; erected a throne for him, higher than the rest, either of his own princes and nobles, or such as were his captives, see 2 Kings 25:28. It was the custom of the kings of Persia, which it is probable was derived from Cyrus, to advance those to the highest seats they thought best deserved it: says he to his nobles, let there be seats with you as with me, and let the best be honoured before others;--and again, let all the best of those present be honoured with seats above others. ⁷

¹ The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. Used by Permission.

² Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on Esther 3:1". "Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible".

³ Whedon, Daniel. "Commentary on Esther 3:1". "Whedon's Commentary on the Bible".

⁴ Ellicott, Charles John. "Commentary on Esther 3:1". "Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers".

⁵ Expositions Of Holy Scripture, Alexander MacLaren, Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. Used by Permission.

⁶ Benson Commentary on the Old and New Testaments, Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. Used by Permission.

⁷ Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 41.

Est 3:2 And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

- Large mansions in the East are entered by a spacious vestibule, or gateway, along the sides of which visitors sit, and are received by the master of the house; for none, except the nearest relatives or special friends, are admitted farther. There the officers of the ancient king of Persia waited till they were called, and did obeisance to the all-powerful minister of the day.⁸
- bowed. Hebrew. kara", Kara", used of idols (1 Kings 19:18. 2 Chronicles 29:29). Shahah is the word used of bowing to kings and others.⁹
- Yichrâ welo yishtachaweh, "bowed not down, nor prostrated himself," or worshipped him. Had this meant only civil reverence the king would not have needed to command it; nor would Mordecai have refused it; there was, therefore, some kind of divine honour intended, such as was paid to the Persian kings, and which even the Greeks refused, as express adoration.¹⁰

Est 3:3 Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?

- Why transgressest thou the king's commandment? Right or wrong, it matters not with many, if the king or state have commanded a thing, done it must be. But what said that martyr to the Popish bishop, pressing him with this argument, and affirming that the king's laws must be obeyed, whether they agree with the word of God or not, yea, though the king were an infidel? If Shadrach, Mesheeh, and Abednego had been of your mind, my lord (said Roger Coe, martyr), Nebuchadnezzar had not confessed the living God. True it is that we must give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. But in addition, we must see to it that we give unto God the things that are God's, Matthew 22:21¹¹
 - *Mat 22:21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.*
- *Mordecai refused to reverence Haman. The religion of a Jew forbade him to give honours to any mortal man which savoured of idolatry, especially to so wicked a man as Haman. By nature all are idolaters; self is our favourite idol, we are pleased to be treated as if every thing were at our disposal. Though religion by no means destroys good manners, but teaches us to render honour to whom honour is due, yet by a citizen of Zion, not only in his heart, but in his eyes, such a vile person as Haman was, is contemned, Ps 15:4. The true believer cannot obey edicts, or conform to fashions, which break the law of God. He must obey God rather than man, and leave the consequences to him.*¹²

Est 3:4 Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

- **Daily, - Receiving pressure daily to give into the world**
- whether his statement that he belonged to a nation who might only pay such reverence to God, would hold good.⁴
- therefore did not deny this reverence to Haman out of pride, or any personal grudge against him, much less out of a rebellious mind and contempt of the king's authority and command; but merely out of conscience, because he was a Jew, who was obliged to give this honour to none but to God only.¹³

Est 3:5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

- Stirred up by these pestilent flatterer, he took special notice of Mordecai's irreverence,¹¹
- Josephus tells us, that Haman, taking notice of this singularity in Mordecai, asked him what countryman he was; and, finding him to be a Jew, broke out into a violent exclamation at his insolence; and in his rage formed the desperate resolution, not only to be revenged of Mordecai, but to destroy the whole race of the Jews;¹⁴

We must understand the spiritual battles that we face in this world are **daily**. When you live a life devoted to God that is not done in piety or pride but contrition and a heart of servanthood for the Father, You will face daily attacks from sin and sinners. You may even face ridicule by those you worship with through wagging tongues or petulant behavior. We must always remember it is God that we serve, expect no less from fallen man but that what the sinful nature cultivates in their life. **Daily!**

⁸ Jamieson, Robert, D.D.; Fausset, A. R.; Brown, David. "Commentary on Esther 3:2".

⁹ Bullinger, Ethelbert William. "Commentary on Esther 3:2". "E.W. Bullinger's Companion bible Notes".

¹⁰ Torrey, R. A. "Commentary on Esther 3:2". "The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge".

¹¹ Trapp, John. "Commentary on Esther 3:3". John Trapp Complete Commentary.

¹² Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible by Matthew Henry

¹³ Matthew Poole's Commentary, Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com.

¹⁴ Coke, Thomas. "Commentary on Esther 3:2". Thomas Coke Commentary on the Holy Bible.