

Haman's Plot

September 9, 2012

ESTHER 2:21-3:15

Vol. 2 Num. 36

Core Competency:

Personal God- I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

I lift my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1-2)

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

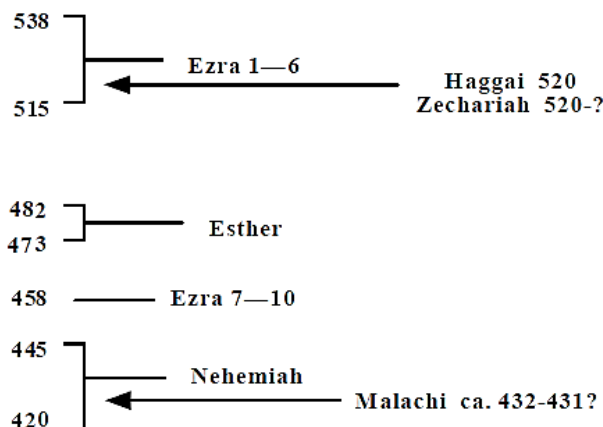
❸ LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFEGROUP.

Introduction

The Book of Esther is one of five Old Testament books that the Jews call "The Writings" or "The Five Megilloth." (The word megilloth means "scrolls" in Hebrew.) The other books are Ruth, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, and Lamentations. Each year on the Feast of Purim, the Book of Esther is read publicly in the synagogue; and whenever the reader mentions Haman's name, the people stamp their feet and exclaim, "May his name be blotted out!" To Jews everywhere, Haman personifies everybody who has tried to exterminate the people of Israel.

Chronology of the Restoration Period



This Week

This section explains to us why Haman was such a dangerous man. For four years, things have been peaceful in Susa. Esther has reigned as queen, and Mordecai has tended to the king's business at the gate. Then everything changed, and all the Jews in the empire found themselves in danger of being killed—just to satisfy the hatred of a man named Haman.

How will God get glory in such a pagan environment? How will God's people survive the hostility of their captors? Most important, what will happen to God's promises to Israel?

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage:

Esther 2:21-3:15

21 During those days while Mordecai was sitting at the King's Gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two eunuchs who guarded the king's entrance, became infuriated and planned to assassinate King Ahasuerus.

22 When Mordecai learned of the plot, he reported it to Queen Esther, and she told the king on Mordecai's behalf.

23 When the report was investigated and verified, both men were hanged on the gallows. This event was recorded in the Historical Record in the king's presence.

1 After all this took place, King Ahasuerus honored Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite. He promoted him in rank and gave him a higher position than all the other officials.

2 The entire royal staff at the King's Gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, because the king had commanded this to be done for him. But Mordecai would not bow down or pay homage.

3 The members of the royal staff at the King's Gate asked Mordecai, "Why are you disobeying the king's command?"

4 When they had warned him day after day and he still would not listen to them, they told Haman to see if Mordecai's actions would be tolerated, since he had told them he was a Jew.

5 When Haman saw that Mordecai was not bowing down or paying him homage, he was filled with rage.

6 And when he learned of Mordecai's ethnic identity, Haman decided not to do away with Mordecai alone. He planned to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout Ahasuerus's kingdom.

7 In the first month, the month of Nisan, in King Ahasuerus's twelfth year, Pur (that is, the lot) was cast before Haman for each day in each month, and it fell on the twelfth month, the month Adar.

8 Then Haman informed King Ahasuerus, "There is one ethnic group, scattered throughout the peoples in every province of your kingdom, yet living in isolation. Their laws are different from everyone else's and they do not obey the king's laws. It is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them.

9 If the king approves, let an order be drawn up authorizing their destruction, and I will pay 375 tons of silver to the accountants for deposit in the royal treasury."

10 The king removed his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jewish people.

11 Then the king told Haman, "The money and people are given to you to do with as you see fit."

12 The royal scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and the order was written exactly as Haman commanded. It was intended for the royal satraps, the governors of each of the provinces, and the officials of each ethnic group and written for each province in its own script and to each ethnic group in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the royal signet ring.

13 Letters were sent by couriers to each of the royal provinces telling the officials to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jewish people—young and old, women and children—and plunder their possessions on a single day, the thirteenth day of Adar, the twelfth month.

14 A copy of the text, issued as law throughout every province, was distributed to all the peoples so that they might get ready for that day.

15 The couriers left, spurred on by royal command, and the law was issued in the fortress of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, while the city of Susa was in confusion.

Notes

the king's gate (2:21)—indicates the strong possibility that Mordecai held a position of prominence (see 3:2)

hanged on a gallows (v. 23)—the Persian execution consisted of being impaled; it is likely that they were the inventors of crucifixion.

would not bow (v. 2)—There is a question as to whether Esther and Mordecai were inclined to obey the Mosaic law. This refusal may be more likely grounded in the family feud between the Benjamites and the Agagites than in Mordecai's allegiance to the second commandment.

the people of Mordecai (v. 6)—Haman was being satanically used to target the entire Jewish race in an unsuccessful attempt to change the

course of redemptive history and God's plans for Israel.

ten thousand talents (v. 9)—The exact amount in dollars is uncertain, but reportedly it would have weighed 375 tons and equaled almost 70 percent of the king's annual revenue. Since this sum would have been derived from the plunder of the Jews, it indicates that they had grown prosperous.

to destroy (v. 13)—an ambitious plot to annihilate the Jews in just one day; historians have calculated the date to be March 7, 473 b.c.; the king had unwittingly approved this provision that would kill his own queen.

DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the following questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

1. Compare Mordecai's actions in 2:21-23 and 3:1-2. What do you think was his attitude toward those in authority? How do you explain such different responses?

2. Read Acts 4:13–22 and 5:17–29. Why is it common for those in positions of power to try to muzzle or control the people of God?

3. In what specific ways have you been pressured to compromise your faith?

4. List the three deceitful manipulations Haman uses to draw Ahasuerus into his plan (vv. 8, 9)
 - a) Exaggerations which distort the truth:

 - b) A bold-faced lie:

 - c) A bribe:

5. What title does the author award Haman for his success in manipulating the king? (v. 10) Read Proverbs 6:16–19 and list the ways Haman has also shown himself an enemy of God.

6. Notice how Haman determined the date upon which to carry out his murderous plot (cf. Nehemiah 10:34; Proverbs 16:33; Acts 1:26).
 - a) How do you see God’s sovereign hand at work through this process?

 - b) Why don’t we use this method for making decisions today?

 - c) What resources has God given us to help us make decisions?

Sermon Notes:

③LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God’s word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFEGROUP.

This desire to know the “will of the cosmos” is not new to our time, for we see in the culture of the Medo-Persians the elements of a religious system known as Zoroastrianism. This system is the pre-cursor to the full-blown New Age Movement of which we are familiar today. Among other things, certain statements “like if it was meant to be, it will happen”, and “you get what is coming to you” , (Karma) reflect this type of fatalistic view of life.

Discuss ways Christians today have adopted this and other eastern mystic philosophies of life. Is it a problem? Why?

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away God's Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away God's money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.