

"Haman Hopes for Holocaust" - Esther 3:1-15
Wednesday 9/26/18

I. A Kingdom Principle Revealed in a Wicked Man (1-2a)

A. Incomplete obedience haunts us (1a) - "After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha..."

B. Sometimes the wicked prosper (1b) - and advanced him and set his throne above all the officials who were with him."

C. Humanity tends to worship humanity (2a) - "And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him..."

More than five centuries before this scene in Esther, King Saul, an ancestor of Mordecai, failed to exterminate the Agagites as Samuel had commanded him. His failure to do so leaves opportunity for Haman to later be born as an Agagite who will now seek to exterminate the Jews. Saul's incomplete obedience set the table for all that is about to come upon the Jews in Esther's day. Sometimes, the commands of God make little sense to us. We might be tempted to lean upon our own understanding and fail to fully comply with the direction of the Lord. We must remember that His ways are higher than our own. He may give direction to us today because He, in perfect wisdom, sees how our obedience will generate a ripple effect that will bless those coming behind us. The Kingdom principle here is to fully trust the direction of God and never second-guess His directives. We must obey the commands of God for His glory, for our good and for the benefit of those who come behind us.

II. A Steadfast Loyalty Displayed in a Holy Refusal (2b-5)

A. Mordecai possessed deep convictions (2b) - "But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage..."

B. Mordecai withstood the temptation to compromise (3-4a) - "Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" 4a And when they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them..."

C. Loyalty to God will cost you in the world (4b-5) - "...they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's words would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew. 5 And when Haman saw that

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Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury.

Scripture here thrusts Mordecai more fully onto the center of the stage in the Book of Esther. After having been made a fixture in the king's gate, Mordecai is now a public figure. His commitments to the God of the Jews are about to be challenged by the ways of the culture in which he was living. When the mandate was given that all the men at the city gate should physically bow to Haman, Mordecai could not do so. His faith required him to only display that kind of allegiance to his God. While there may have been a technical ability for Mordecai to bow his body without bowing his heart, his conscience would not allow him to do so. Day after day he refused the commands of those who represented Haman. Though it is not specified, Mordecai clearly explained that his loyalty to God would not permit him to bow to Haman. The servants of Haman eventually communicated what was happening to him, stipulating that, as a Jew, Mordecai would never be able to bow to Haman. This provoked Haman to fury and a demonic strategy against all Jews was soon to be launched all throughout the empire.

III. A Deadly Decree Sourced in a Satanic Hatred (6-11)

A. From evil men come evil plans (6-7) - "But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So, as they had made known to him the people of Mordecai, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus..."

B. The clash between faith and culture (8) - "Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's profit to tolerate them."

C. Hatred and indifference fuel the fires (9-11) - "If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, that they may put it into the king's treasuries." 10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. 11 And the king said to Haman, "The money is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you."

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The unbridled fury of a self-consumed, powerful man birthed a plan of death against the people of Mordecai. While, on the surface, this looks merely like a man whose pride and ego have been violated. While it is true that Haman was the human instrument, the real puppeteer in this wicked plan for holocaust is none other than Satan himself. Hell knew that the Messiah would come through the descendants of Abraham. The core of Satan's strategy prior to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was to exterminate Israel so that their Messiah might never be born. Four hundred years of slavery in Egypt could not accomplish this. The extermination of male Hebrew babies by Pharaoh could not stop God's plan of redemption. Captivity in Babylon did not destroy the promise of God. Herod butchered countless Hebrew boys in an effort to destroy the Messiah - he failed. When Jesus of Nazareth emerged as the Redeemer of Israel, all the forces of religion, politics and the demonic realm came against Him. They all thought that Golgotha sealed their evil victory, yet when Jesus rose from the dead, the provision of God was secured. The Lamb had overcome. While Haman's plans were being enacted, God's plans would remain in effect and victorious. The Jews continue to this day in spite of all the plans of wicked men and the fury of Satan against them. God is not yet finished with the people of Abraham.

IV. A National Law Decreed by an Ignorant King (12-15)

A. The laws of men challenge the ways of God (12) - "Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring."

B. A truly deadly deadline emerges (13) - "Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods."

C. An atmosphere of helplessness threatens the Jews (14) - "A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day. 15 The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was

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issued in Susa the citadel. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion."

Throughout human history, rulers and governments have enacted human laws which run completely counter to the ways, works and wisdom of God. Whether it be laws that legalized slavery, oppressed minorities, allowed for sanctioned infanticide through legalized abortion or refused equality to women, history proves that, apart from the direction of Holy Spirit, humans will create abominable legislation that defies the character of God. For ancient Israel, there was no human effort that would rescue them. They were defenseless against the laws of the empire. Couriers ran to each region and declared that they would be slaughtered. The dates were given, and the entire Persian Empire was informed that every single Jew was to be mercilessly executed. While terror was filling the Jews living in the empire, King Xerxes and Haman shared drinks together, completely satisfied in their irresistible power and security. What they did not know is that God was already engaged and had the pieces in play that would put a dramatic end to Haman and his plans for holocaust against the Jews.