

Esther 3

1 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, and advanced him and set his throne above all the officials who were with him. 2 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. But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage. 3 Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" 4 And when they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, 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 Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury. 6 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.

7 In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman day after day; and they cast it month after month till the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. 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. 9 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."

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

Alright, so at this point in the book of Esther, we're starting to see some diverging storylines begin to come together. We're introduced to a man named Haman, an Agagite that found favor with King Ahaseurus and was brought up to a high standing amongst the King's officials. Now, this alone would not be too significant, if it weren't for the fact that Haman was a wicked man. And we see this, when Mordecai, the older cousin of the new Queen Esther, refuses to bow down to Haman or pay homage to him.

This happens for some time, where Mordecai refuses to bend the knee or genuflect, and when Haman notices this act of protest, we're told that "he was filled with fury". But not only does Haman grow to hate Mordecai, but because of the actions of one man Haman grows to hate all the Jews. He sought to destroy all of Mordecai's people, all because Mordecai would not bow down to him.

There were ways for Haman to respond and correct Mordecai's defiance that would have been reasonable or at the very least equal in magnitude. But Haman, unreasonable and emotional, embarks on this genocidal revenge plot against the Jews that would bring him to deceive King Ahaseurus and abuse his position of authority to do harm to the inhabitants of his own kingdom.

Now, Haman is an extreme example of a wicked, deceitful, unjust person, but throughout history and even in our own lives, we can think of other people who seek to do what is sinful out of their own self-interest. We see people act in greed, act in anger, act in pride, all of which leads to bad things happening to others. We see “good” people suffer due to the actions of the wicked, and we might be tempted to think, “Why does God let these things happen?”.

And this isn’t limited to people. Even in our lives, we might find ourselves suffering through hardship, facing streaks of bad luck (so to speak), and otherwise be hit with seemingly unnecessary tribulations. And even then, we might be tempted to think, “Why does God let these things happen to me?”. All my life, I’ve suffered from semi-frequent headaches that would take me out of commission for the day. And it seems so trivial right now when I’m fine, but every single time I’m in bed with the lights out pressing hard on my temples, I half-jokingly half-seriously cry out to God, “Why do You let this happen to me!?”.

More often than we might like, we find ourselves puzzled at God’s seeming lack of action in response to bad things happening, or bad people doing what they want. Perhaps that’s our response, when we read through Haman’s wicked plotting against God’s people.

But we need to remember that our God’s ways are higher than our ways, and that He always has greater things in store. God had all the power to simply smite Haman on the spot, as soon as he and King Ahasuerus signed that deal. After all, He would effectively remove the source of the threat to the Jews, to God’s own people, ensuring that they would live to see another day.

But God had greater things in store. Even though Haman was a wicked man that opposed God, God would work what was meant for evil and turn it into good. And so for the time being, He lets Haman’s plan go through, because down the road there will be greater things that God will do. I won’t spoil the story, we have about 7 chapters left after all, but know that

Mordecai lives, that Esther lives, and that the Jews live, and God is glorified greatly through this story.

A simple takeaway for us today is to trust in our God and be patient in seeing His plan come to pass in your life. Whatever questions or uncertainties or frustrations may be giving you pause today, lay them down before the Lord. And find peace in the fact that our God is a God who always has greater things in store for us. The path ahead may not seem promising, or lead to where we think it'll lead, but our all-knowing, all-powerful God will lead us by the hand all the way through to greater things.