

Esther

Part 2

Up to this point:

1. Israel is exiled into Persia, this takes place around 100 years after the Babylonian exile.
2. Xerxes is the King of Persia and rules over 127 provinces that cover nearly all of what we currently know as the middle east.
3. As a result of failed request from King Xerxes, Vashti has been removed as queen and a search was made for a new queen.
4. Esther, a Jewish girl who conceals her nationality, was chosen as one of between 400-1400 girls to be considered for the position of queen. At this time it is believed that there were 40-50 million people living in Persia.
5. Esther finds favor in the eyes of everyone including the king and is chosen from among all the girls as queen.

Esther 3

1 After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. **2** All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

3 Then the royal officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's command?" **4** Day after day they spoke to him but he refused to comply. Therefore they told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai's behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew.

5 When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. **6** Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman

looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

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Enmity between Haman and Mordecai

- Understanding who Haman was is important in understanding the tension between him and Mordecai.
- The text tells us Haman was an Agagite this means he was a direct descendent of Agage the King of the Amalekites.
- The story of the Amalekites goes back to Exodus 17 after Israel crossed the Red Sea, then God provides Manna and Quail, then water from the rock for the Israelites. When Israel was weak from the journey the Amalekites attacked Israel. As a result Joshua lead Israel in fighting against the Amalekites and as long as Moses hands were raised Israel was victorious.
- Amalek was the father of the Amalekites; Amalek was the grandson of Esau who became an arch enemy to Israel.

Exodus 17:14,15

14 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven."

15 Moses built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner. **16** He said, “Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the Lord, the Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.”

- These same Amalekites reappear in Scripture during the time of King Saul. It was during Saul’s time, that God told Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites, but Saul was disobedient. Not only did he not completely destroy the Amalekites but he brought back their king, Agag as a prisoner.

1 Samuel 15

32 Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag king of the Amalekites.”

Agag came to him in chains. And he thought, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.”

33 But Samuel said,

“As your sword has made women childless,
so will your mother be childless among women.”

And Samuel put Agag to death before the Lord at Gilgal.

From our text:

Vs. 2 All the royal officials at the king’s gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

- Now we have some understanding as to why Mordecai was unwilling to bow and honor Haman. As a God fearing man, he carried the same heart towards Agage and the Amalekites as the Lord.

Vs. 5-11

5 When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. **6** Yet having learned who Mordecai’s people

were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

7 In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, the *pur* (that is, the lot) was cast in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

8 Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. **9** If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury."

10 So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. **11** "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

What Haman did here was very dangerous by giving the King misleading information.

- **Haman claims:** "*There are a certain people dispersed among the people*"
 - Haman leads the king to believe this is a small group of rebels, while it would have affected a population of over 1 million Jews.
- **Haman claims:** "*Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws.*"
 - The Jews did have their own laws. But their laws, did not interfere, rather they made them a better citizen. Mordecai's refusal to bow

before Haman was not based on the law of God, but his own personal integrity.

- **Humans claims:** *“it is not in the king’s best interest to tolerate them.”*
 - There is one major problem here, the queen is one of them.
- **Haman claims:** *“If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them.”*
 - If this decree had been carried out not only would the King have lost over 1 million faithful subjects, but the king would have suffered the loss of his queen to another foolish decision made in haste.

Proverbs 14:8

“...the folly of fools is deception.”

Vs. 12-15

12 Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman’s orders to the king’s satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring. **13** Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. **14** A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they would be ready for that day.

15 The couriers went out, spurred on by the king’s command, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

Jewish Calendar

13th day of 1st Month, Nisan - March 31st

13th day of 12th Month, Adar - March 2nd

- It wasn't enough for Haman to take vengeance against just Mordecai instead he sets a decree to destroy every Jew (young and old, women and children) on one single day.
- By setting such a decree Haman overplays his hand. By doing this his plan will ultimately backfire.
- This seems to be a watermark of the Devil. He has a way of overplaying his hand. Even today in our country the work of the Devil has become more obvious. Even people who don't claim to be Christians will tell you they sense the times are crazy and evil.
- When certain politicians endorse policies that say the government has more right to your children than you do as a parent, friend the devil has overplayed his hand...
- When the government says they have the right to transition children without the parents involvement or permission, the devil has overplayed his hand...
- When the government says they have the right to disregard the law and the constitution of our country, you know somethings up...

Isaiah 5:20

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

- Lord help us as Christians and as American Citizens to learn from history and what our Bibles teach us.

Esther 4

1 When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. **2** But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. **3** In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 When Esther's eunuchs and female attendants came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. **5** Then Esther summoned Hathak, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why.

6 So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. **7** Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. **8** He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

9 Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. **10** Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, **11** "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

12 When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, **13** he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. **14** For if you remain silent at this

time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

- When Mordecai received word of the decree he didn't change his mind and fall at Haman's feet. He didn't rethink his position. The Bible says **Vs. 1** he "put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly."
- In fact: **Vs. 3** "In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes."
- When a people turn to God in this way can God not hear their cry? Can he not hear their earnest prayers? God heard the prayers of his people as he heard their cry in Egypt and delivered them from Pharaoh.

Mordecai petitions Esther about what's going on and says these famous words.

Vs. 14

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

- Mordecai recognizes that this is Esther's time...
- She has risen to this special place for this time...
- She was made for this moment...
- Even as a timely word spoken in due season is good... So is it when we recognize the moments that God has especially arranged for us...

- Mordecai says is even if you and I perish, I know God will deliver his people. But perhaps God has put you in this place for this reason.

“Mordecai knew that God had promoted Esther, an orphan in exile for a reason – and Esther must have the courage and wisdom to see that reason and fulfill it.” (Guzik)

- How important is it for Christians to have courage today?
- How important is it for Christians to engage in our world today, for the sake of righteousness and the future?
- How important is it today for Christians, with grace and wisdom, to speak up and stand for the Lord and his purpose?

“This principle applies to us also. God promotes us or puts us in a place for a reason, and we need the courage and wisdom to see that reason and to walk in it.” (Guzik)

Vs. 15-17

15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: **16** “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

17 So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther’s instructions.

- Esther carried a bold attitude towards her mission. She was determined to honor God in her position, even if it cost her everything.

Joshua 1

7 “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. **8** Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may

be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. **9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”