

Praise Bills here  
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Eyes

what events?

**Esther 3:1-15 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> After these events King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and established his authority over all the princes who were with him.

<sup>2</sup> All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman; for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage. why

<sup>3</sup> Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?"

<sup>4</sup> Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew.

<sup>5</sup> When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage.

<sup>6</sup> But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him who the people of Mordecai were; therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

<sup>7</sup> In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Pur, that is the lot, was cast before Haman from day to day and from month to month, until the twelfth month, that is the month Adar.

<sup>8</sup> Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of all other people and they do not observe the king's laws, so it is not in the king's interest to let them remain.

<sup>9</sup> "If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who carry on the king's business, to put into the king's treasuries."

<sup>10</sup> Then the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

<sup>11</sup> The king said to Haman, "The silver is yours, and the people also, to do with them as you please."

<sup>12</sup> Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written just as Haman commanded to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province and to the princes of each people, each province according to its script, each people according to its language, being written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.

<sup>13</sup> Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder.

<sup>14</sup> A copy of the edict to be issued as law in every province was published to all the peoples so that they should be ready for this day.

<sup>15</sup> The couriers went out impelled by the king's command while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa; and while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was in confusion.

**2. HAMAN PROMOTED (3:1-6)**

[3:1](#). **Haman** was promoted to the highest position by **Xerxes**. This occurred **after these events** (i.e., after Mordecai saved the king from the assassination and the two men were executed). It is reasonable to suppose that Mordecai expected a reward for his work on behalf of the king. But no reward was given then, possibly because of some bureaucratic bungle. Later this neglect appalled and surprised the king (cf. [6:1-3](#)).

Because Haman was an **Agagite**, some have supposed that he was descended from Agag, king of the Amalekites ([1 Sam. 15:8](#)). However, it seems unlikely that a high-ranking Persian official would be related to a west Semite who lived 600 years earlier. Archeologists have uncovered an inscription which indicates that Agag was also the name of a province in the Persian Empire. This probably explains why Haman was called an Agagite.

[3:2-4](#). **Haman's promotion meant that the other nobles had to kneel down to him**, that is, they had to pay him special respect. This was not an act of worship, such as that commanded of the three Hebrew young men in [Daniel 3:8-15](#). Since the **officials at the king's gate** had to kneel before **Haman**, the people probably also had to bow before the king himself. **Mordecai** said he would not bow to **Haman** (cf. Es. [5:9](#)) because **he** (Mordecai) **was a Jew**. Probably this persistent (**day after day**) refusal stemmed more from pride than from religious scruples. For several years **Mordecai** had not let Esther tell the king she was a Jewess ([2:10](#), [20](#)), but now Mordecai was using their national heritage as an excuse for not giving honor to a high Persian official.

[3:5-6](#). **Haman... enraged** by Mordecai's refusal (cf. [5:9](#)), **set out to find a way to kill all... the Jews, not just Mordecai**. This was an early case of anti-Semitism. In this literary plot, a climax is now reached in the tension. (Later a second climax was reached when Haman was revealed to be the plotter against the Jews; [7:6](#).) If the Jews were killed **throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes**, this would include those in the land of Palestine. These latter Jews were faithful to the Lord, worshiping in the rebuilt temple and living according to the stipulations of the Law (cf. [comments](#) on [Ezra 1-6](#)). A massive execution of thousands of Jews would thwart God's program. However, God cannot be thwarted ([Job 42:2](#)). He can overturn man's diabolical efforts, sometimes by miraculous acts, and sometimes through seeming acts of happenstance as in the following sequence. God is always working on behalf of His people.

## **B. King persuaded by Haman to destroy the Jews ([3:7-15](#))**

### **1. LOT CAST BY HAMAN ([3:7-9](#))**

[3:7](#). The author included a seemingly obscure part of the account by recording that Haman used a *pur*, a Babylonian word for **the lot**, to decide when the Jews should be killed. The original readers of this book would have understood that God was working to protect His people even in the timing of events. As things worked out, the Jews had almost a year in which to prepare themselves for the conflict with their enemies.

A little more than four years had gone by since Esther had become queen, in 478 B.C. ([2:16](#)). On the first day of the year, in **Nisan** (April-May) 474 B.C., at the beginning of Xerxes' **12th year**, the *pur* was cast **to select a day and month**. *Pur* is the basis of the name of the Feast of Purim ([9:26](#)). Presumably the day selected was when the execution of the Jews was to begin. **Haman**,

along with many people in the Persian Empire, was extremely superstitious (cf. [6:13](#)). The Persian religious system stressed fate and chance. Haman was allowing fate, by the casting of the lot, to dictate his move against the Jewish nation. Little did he then realize that the God who created all things and controls all events was in control of that situation, the lot-casting ([Prov. 16:33](#); cf. comments on [Acts 1:26](#)). God had already prepared a means of delivering His people from Haman's plot. The month chosen by the lot was **the 12th month** (February-March)—almost a year later. The day, stated later (Es. [3:13](#)), was the 13th of the month (cf. [8:12](#); [9:1](#)).

[3:8-9](#). Haman went in to the **king** to present his plan. **Falsely accusing all Jews of refusing to obey the king's laws**, he suggested that **the king** would be better off if the Jews, **scattered** throughout the empire, were exterminated. Haman said he himself was willing to bear the costs involved in carrying out this **decree**. Haman must have been a man of immense wealth. As the highest official he undoubtedly had many opportunities to add to his personal fortune. **Ten thousand talents of silver** weighed about 750,000 pounds, an enormous amount worth millions of dollars in present-day currency. That was the staggering sum which Haman was willing to pay. Possibly this huge sum made the king suspicious of Haman. Surely he could not have acquired so much money without being crooked. (Interestingly, however, the king did not make him pay the money; [v. 11](#).) At that time Persia used silver as its monetary standard.

## 2. KING'S PERMISSION GIVEN ([3:10-11](#))

[3:10-11](#). Xerxes, as before, was easily influenced by his officials (cf. [1:16-22](#); [2:2-4](#)). He accepted Haman's advice and acquiesced. By giving his **signet ring** to **Haman**, Xerxes was allowing **the enemy of the Jews**, as Haman was now called, to send out a proclamation to the empire in the king's name. Five times in the Book of Esther, **Haman** is called the Jews' enemy (cf. [7:6](#); [8:1](#); [9:10](#), [24](#)). The signet ring, when impressed on clay, made a special imprint, which, like a signature, represented the king's authority (cf. [3:12](#); [8:2](#), [8](#); [Gen. 41:42](#); [Dan 6:17](#); [Hag. 2:23](#)). The king noted that Haman could **do with the people as he pleased**. Little did **the king** realize that his queen, Esther, was a Jewess and would be included in this hideous plan.

## 3. PROCLAMATIONS SENT OUT ([3:12-15](#))

[3:12-15](#). **Haman's** proclamation, sent out under **the king's** name to all the **provinces** and in various languages (cf. [1:22](#)), called for the death of **all Jewish people including women and little children**. Haman intended to rid the world of God's covenant people. Also the executioners were ordered to confiscate property owned by **Jews**. The day the decree was dispatched was in March 474 B.C. (On the quick dispatching of this edict see [comments](#) on [1:22](#).)

**The edict... bewildered** the people in **the city of Susa** (cf. [8:15](#)). Apparently such a decree had never before come from the royal court. Haman's bloodthirstiness, along with Xerxes' seeming indifference to such atrocities, was incredible even to a sophisticated society which was used to cruel behavior. Perhaps other minority populations wondered if they would be the next to be annihilated.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

### **Open it**

1. When have you ever felt unfairly treated?

**When duties get piled on that are unwanted, and no gets ignored**

### **Explore it**

2. In what way did Mordecai disobey the king's order? ([3:2](#))

**Mordecai did not bow or pay homage to Haman**

3. Why did Haman want to kill all of the Jews? ([3:5-6](#))

**To punish not only Mordecai but his people as well**

4. Which parts of Haman's speech to the king were true, and which were false? ([3:8-9](#))

**There was a certain people scattered and dispersed among the kingdom, with different laws, but they did observe the king's laws and it wasn't in the king's interest to destroy them**

5. How did Mordecai's behavior affect the whole kingdom? ([3:12-15](#))

**Haman had a letter sent throughout the kingdom, instructing the governors and princes to kill the Jews. Haman's retaliation for Mordecai's behavior**

### **Get it**

6. Why do you think Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman?

**Haman was neither king or prince to Haman, nor a great official**

7. How can Christians guard against the temptations of pride and greed?

**Follow God's words carefully and study the bible**

8. What blinded the king from seeing the truth of the situation?

**He did not realize who Haman was talking of**

### **Apply it**

9. For what problem or challenge do you need to ask God and other Christians for wisdom and discernment?

**Many that I deal with, family, friends, church**