

# For Such a Time as This

## A study in the book of Esther

### Lesson Three

## “Haman’s Conspiracy, Or Satan’s?”

Prayerfully read through Esther, chapter three.

Here we are introduced to another of the main characters in the Book of Esther; a man by the name of Haman. Haman was a descendant of King Agag of Amalek, the ruler of the Amalekites. The Amalekites had been enemies of the Jews for generations, after they first attacked the Israelites as they were leaving Egypt (Exodus 17:8-16). Because of this, God had commanded the Children of Israel in Deuteronomy 25:17-19 to blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. In 1 Samuel 15:18-23, God had commanded that King Saul go and “utterly destroy” the Amalekites, and to fight against them until they were consumed. Saul did not obey those orders. He killed some of the Amalekites, but left some alive, and because of his disobedience the Lord rejected him from being king. Thus, the hatred between the Jews and the Amalekites remained, from generation to generation. If King Saul had obeyed the Lord’s command to completely destroy the Amalekites, Haman would have never been born.

- 1) Looking at **verse 1 of Esther, chapter three**, record the details of Haman’s promotion by King Ahasuerus.
  
- 2) What more did King Ahasuerus add to Haman’s promotion according to **verse two**, and what was Mordecai’s response?

**Note:** It wasn’t against God’s command to bow in respect before a person of authority. All throughout Scripture we read of examples of God’s people showing respect by bowing down before them (see Genesis 43:26, Exodus 18:7 & 2 Samuel 16:4). The Case in Daniel, when his companions, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego refused to bow down, it was because they were being asked to worship a golden image King Nebuchadnezzar had made.



- 8) In **verse 8**, we find Haman presenting his case before the king for the destruction of “a certain people.” Write down the reasons and the details he lays out before the king.
- 9) Why do you think he failed to clearly identify the people he was talking about?
- 10) How does Haman use bribery in **verse 9** to get the king to go along with his plan?
- 11) The king quickly swallows the bait and agrees to Haman’s plan. Again, instead of thinking through what was being requested of him, in a moment of rash decision we find him in **verse 10** handing his signet ring to Haman, giving him free reign to put forth a proclamation that cannot be reversed. Looking at **verse 11**, what do you think was the “deciding factor” the king was focused on?

12) It's hard for us to imagine the hatred being perpetrated towards the Jewish nation. Yet, this hatred towards Israel goes back to the beginning of time and continues on today. In our time, we still see the nation of Israel as the subject of hate, with many nations trying to wipe it off the map. How is it that this tiny little nation is the subject of so much strife? We also see, added along with the Jewish nation, a growing hatred of all God's people, with Christians becoming more each day a target of ridicule and persecution in many different forms. Why do you think there is so much hatred for the Jews and for Christians? What do these Scriptures tell us about the force behind this hatred? Look up the following Scriptures and share your thoughts. **Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Revelation 12:1-17.**

13) In **verses 12 through 14**, we read of the horrific decree Haman has written. From **verse 12**, record who this decree goes out to.

14) We read in **verse 13** that this letter was sent out by couriers to all the king's provinces. What exactly did this decree tell the citizens of those provinces that they were to do?

15) What significant thing does **verse 14** tell us about this document being published for all the people? What does it say about how it was issued?

16) In **verse 15** we read that the couriers went out in haste, according to the king's command, and the decree is proclaimed in Shushan, the citadel. What do Haman and the king do after this proclamation has been made?

17) What does this verse tell us about the people's response?

18) At this point, we have no evidence that foolish King Ahasuerus is even aware that the Jews are the people Haman is trying to annihilate. Remember, Haman didn't tell him who "this certain people" were, and we don't read that Ahasuerus bothered to ask him any questions or to investigate the matter further. He handed over his signet ring to him and gave him the authority to write an irreversible decree without any oversight on the king's part at all. Haman was well pleased, and the king went right along with him without any real understanding of what he had done. What do the following verses tell us about making a decision without all the facts? As you read these verses, jot down what King Ahasuerus **should have done** and **failed to do**.

**Verse**

**Should have done**

**Failed to do**

**Proverbs 1:5 -**

**Proverbs 11:14 -**

**Proverbs 13:16 -**

**Proverbs 18:13 -**

**Proverbs 18:15 -**

**Proverbs 19:20 -**

19) We may look at King Ahasuerus and shake our heads at his foolishness, but when we look at Haman we see a man who knew exactly what he was doing. What do the following verses say concerning Israel?

**Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 27:29; Numbers 24:5-9; Zechariah 2:8.**

20) What do these Scriptures tell us about the future of the wicked?

**Proverbs 11:7 -**

**Proverbs 24:15-16 -**

**Proverbs 24:19-20 -**

21) As we look at this scenario, we see that this decree is going out many months, at least ten to twelve, in advance of the proclaimed day of destruction. What the citizens are being asked to do reminds us of the holocaust during World War II, under the tyranny of the Nazi regime and Hitler's reign. Like the Jews in Shushan, the Jews in Germany had been living side by side with their neighbors for many generations. They must have felt as perplexed as the citizens in King Ahasuerus' provinces as they watched their neighbors being sought out by the secret police, loaded onto trains and taken away from their homes to a horrible, unknown fate. As crazy as it may seem to us, so far removed from such cruelty and injustice, there is still much persecution going on around the world towards the Jewish people and towards Christians. That day may come when these things are occurring in our own country. Take a moment to lift up a prayer for the persecuted church around the world. If you desire, write your prayer below.

22) During World War II there were a number of individuals and families under the Nazi regime who chose not to obey the authorities concerning the Jewish people. Many like Anne Frank's and Cory Ten Boom's families risked their lives in order to protect their Jewish friends and neighbors. Have you ever wondered what you might do in the same situation? As we prepare to dig into our next chapter, consider the following Scriptures and make them your personal prayer. For each of these Scriptures, **list the reason(s)** they give us to take courage.

**Deuteronomy 31:6 -**

**Joshua 1:9 -**

**Psalms 27:14 -**

**Psalms 56:9 -11-**

**Proverbs 3:25-26-**

23) What was your greatest take-away from our lesson in chapter three?