

## ESTHER 3

## HAMAN'S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS

In this chapter, a very black and mournful scene opens and threatens the ruin of all the people of God! But if there were not some such dark nights, the light of the morning would not be so welcome. A wicked man named Haman was promoted by Ahasuerus to the position of grand vizier, which was second only to the king himself. The king's servants were commanded to bow before this man and do him reverence, and most of them did. But Mordecai adhered to the principles of his faith in Jehovah with a bold and daring resolution, and refused to bow to Haman as his fellow-servants did. He was a Jew, and he could not bow to Haman in good conscience; for his fear of the Lord forbade him to give any mortal man such extravagant honors as those which Haman required. But Mordecai also knew that it would be especially unjust to his own people to give such honor to this proud and haughty Amalekite – a member of that accursed nation with which God had sworn that He would have perpetual war (Ex. 17:16).

Some of Mordecai's fellow-servants, in order to secure the favor of Haman toward themselves, called his attention to Mordecai's conduct – waiting to see whether the pious Jew would then bend or break. Haman grew full of wrath; his proud spirit raged and fretted and boiled inside of him! So he resolved that Mordecai must die. But Haman also decided that even the taking of Mordecai's life was nothing toward a satisfaction for his affront to him. No! Thousands of innocent and upright lives must be sacrificed to this haughty man's indignation! He vowed the destruction of all the people of Mordecai for his sake, because his being a Jew was the reason which he gave for not reverencing him. He intended to destroy all the Jews throughout the whole realm of Ahasuerus – which would even include those who had returned to Jerusalem, for that city lay in a province of his kingdom. "Come and let us cut them off from being a nation," was wicked Haman's thought (Ps. 83:4).

Haman was pleased with himself upon the formulation of his murderous plot, which he imagined to be very fitting for his great spirit – an undertaking which would certainly perpetuate his memory. In order to effect his hateful scheme, he began by making a false and malicious representation of the Jews and their character to Ahasuerus. He would not directly mention their name, but he made the king believe that they were a despicable people, and that it was not in his best interest to harbor them in his kingdom. He indicated that they were a dangerous people, and that it was not safe to let them live; for they did not conform to the laws of the kingdom, and they might infect others with their singu-

**Outline of the chapter:**

- ❖ Haman is promoted to the position of Ahasuerus' grand vizier – verse 1
- ❖ Mordecai refuses to give Haman the honor that he demands – verses 2-4
- ❖ Haman vows vengeance on all the Jews because of Mordecai – verses 5-6
- ❖ He obtains an order from the king to have the Jews murdered – verses 7-15

larities – which could end in a rebellion. Haman placed a high bid for permission to destroy all these unnamed people. He knew that there were many who hated the Jews, and they would willingly slaughter them if they only had a commission to do so. Haman asked the king for orders commanding a general massacre of all the Jews; and he himself promised that if the king would gratify him in this matter, he was willing to make him a present of 300 tons (272,000 kg) of silver – worth about \$226 million\* – which would be paid into the royal treasury. This

would be a powerful inducement to the king to consent; and it would satisfy the strongest objection that he might raise, which was that

the government would sustain loss in its revenues by the the destruction of so many of its subjects. Yet no doubt Haman assured himself that this enormous amount of money would be reimbursed to him out of the property and possessions of the Jews.



Haman obtained what he desired – namely, a full commission to do what he wished with the Jews. The king was so inattentive to business, and he was so bewitched with Haman, that he took no time to examine the truth of the matter that was presented to him. He gave this evil man his royal ring to use as a seal to confirm whatever edict he pleased to draw up for this purpose. Haman also consulted with his soothsayers to find out a “lucky day” for the intended massacre. He flattered himself that heaven itself would favor his wicked scheme, so he referred the matter to the casting of lots to choose the day for him; but the Lord ordained that the lot fell upon the twelfth month, so that Mordecai and Esther had eleven months to take measures for the defeating of Haman’s plot – which would have been harder to do if they had only had a few weeks or days before the awful plan was to be carried out. The bloody edict was drawn up, signed, and published. It gave orders to the militia of every province to be prepared for the thirteenth day of the twelfth month; and on that day, they were to murder all the Jews – men, women, and children – and seize their property. Postmen were sent out, with all speed, to carry copies of the cruel decree to all the provinces of the kingdom.

After the decree had been given, the court was very merry; the king and Haman sat down to drink together. But the whole city of Shushan was perplexed at the awful news – not only the Jews themselves, but also all their neighbors who had any principles of justice and compassion.

Never was there a more deadly blow aimed by any wretch than that which Haman leveled at the Jews. But the rest of the narrative will show us that his plot came back upon his own head! And such will be the outcome of all the stratagems and schemes of Satan, in his various attacks upon Jesus and His Church!

*Lord, we thank You that even the schemes of the enemy of our souls work for our own good, because they cause us to flee out of ourselves to the throne of grace, and to seek our refuge in Jesus! Amen.*