

Safe Harbor Baptist Church

11-16-2022 Wednesday night

Esther Sermon 3 "The God who works behind the scenes"

"The Commitment of Mordecai"

Esther 1- The Character of Vashti.

Esther 2- The Choosing of Esther.

Esther 3

Vs 1- After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

The little phrase "After these things" takes us back 5 years to Esther 2 and the events that occurred within that chapter.

In Esther 2 we recall that Esther was chosen to be the next Queen over Persia. Through a series of miraculous events God allowed Esther to be brought to a place of prominence and power.

It was truly the hand of God working that allowed Esther to be promoted to this position.

Psalm 75:6-7 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

Now after 5 years the King promotes a very wicked man to a place of leadership within his "cabinet".

His name is Haman, the Agagite.

Haman means Magnificent or Illustrious. He was the picture of pride!

He was the leader behind the plot to destroy all the Jews.

"He was a despicable man who was practically an incarnation of the devil. He is still, and justifiably so, despised greatly by the Jews. This is especially evident each year during the celebration of Purim when the book of Esther is read in the synagogue services. Whenever the name "Haman" is mentioned in

the reading in the synagogue, the people at the synagogue service, to show their great scorn of the man, stomp their feet on the floor and shout out, "May his name be blotted out!"- John Butler

Quickly I want us to note the pedigree of this man, Haman.

We learn from the descriptive title "Agagite" that he was an Amalekite. These Amalekites were the sworn enemy of the Jew.

They were descendants of Esau according to Genesis 36:12 *And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau's wife.*

Esau of course is a type and picture of the flesh.

God did not think much of the Amalekites!

Deuteronomy 25:17-19

Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;

18 How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.

19 Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.

The children of Israel were to destroy the Amalekites once they entered the land of Canaan, but they did not!

Haman would not have existed had the children of Israel obeyed this command!

But we also note that Haman would have never existed had Saul obeyed God back in I Samuel 15

I Samuel 15:1-3

Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord.

2 Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

The LORD stated that he remembered what Amalek did to the Children of Israel when they came out of bondage and thus he wanted them to be destroyed for their wickedness.

But we know the story, Saul disobeyed the LORD.

1 Samuel 15:7-9 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.

8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

Because Saul disobeyed God, Agag produced a son, that led on down the line to Haman.

What you don't deal with, will soon deal with you!

We also note from this verse that the King promoted Haman to a high position within his reign.

This made Haman next to the king. He was, therefore, the second ruler of the empire.

Vs 2- And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

All were bowing and giving reverence to Haman, all but Mordecai, he would not bow!

Now God did not prohibit bowing to others as a sign of cultural respect.

Abraham bowed in courtesy to others (Genesis 18 and 23);

Jacob's family bowed before Jacob's elder brother Esau (Genesis 33);

Joseph did not stop his brothers from bowing to him in Egypt (Genesis 42);

Ruth bowed before Boaz (Ruth 2:10);

David bowed down before Saul (1 Samuel 24); and the woman of Tekoa bowed before David (2 Samuel 14).

But none of these bowings involved worship. However, the bowing before Haman involved worship, and the Jews (as well as all mankind) are plainly instructed in Scripture not to worship anyone but God (Exodus 20:5; 34:14; Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20; cp. Matthew 4:10). Mordecai followed this command in not giving Divine worship to Haman. -John Butler

What is interesting about this text and this story is we have the grand children of Saul and Agag once again at opposition against one another.

You will recall that we learned back in Esther 2:5 of the lineage of Mordecai.

Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

Haman was the descendant of Agag and Mordecai was the descendant of Saul.

Thank God for Mordecai, even though his ancestor Saul had not dealt with Agag properly.

Saul had “bowed down” in disobedience to Agag by not obey the command of God!

But there was another generation that was tired of “bowing down” to the flesh and Mordecai made up his mind that he would not bow and submit to this wicked man!

Point: You don't have to bow to the flesh, you can have victory!

1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Vs 3-4 Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?

4 Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

This certainly caused a stirring within the palace when Mordecai took his stand.

Perhaps there would those that tried to persuade Mordecai to bow physically but inside not bow, just go through the motions. But Mordecai refused and stood tall!

Why would he not bow?

In Babylon and Persia, bowing was a sign of worship.

Mordecai stood for his convictions and what he believed in!

These people keep on asking Mordecai why he would not bow on a daily basis, but he would not answer!

Please note that this was not a “one day” occurrence where Mordecai did not bow, but rather each day he refused to bow!

Point: We need a daily determination that we are not going to bow down to the will and the desires of the flesh!

Finally after constant questioning Mordecai revealed that the reason he would not bow was because he was a Jew!

In other words he was stating that there were just some things that God's people did not do and did not participate in!

This is still a good practice today!

There are somethings that God's people have no business being involved with!

Vs 5-6- And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

6 And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

When Haman realizes who and what Mordecai is as a person, he was filled with wrath and anger!

He could not stand the fact that someone had the backbone to stand against him and not compromise their beliefs!

This led to Haman desiring to kill Mordecai, but not him alone but all the Jews that were living in Persia!

John 15:18-19

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

I John 5:13 *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

Many times the world despises us not because of what we don't believe but rather because of what we do believe!

Haman feared that because Mordecai stood, that others would follow suit and stand against him!

Vs 7- In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar.

From what I have studied and read concerning this verse, they tell us that this refers to the occultic matters and that Haman was waiting on directions from the devil on what to do with these Jews.

The casting of lots here was Haman trying to determine what date to have all the Jews killed.

It fell that one year from that very day, that the Jews would be killed.

Do you see the hand of God in this?

God allowed those "lots" cast by these God deny astrologers set the date one year from that date which allowed Mordecai and Esther one entire year to prepare and try to overthrow the plan and desire of Haman.

God is working behind the Scenes!!!!

Vs 8- And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

Notice Haman's reasoning for wanting the Jews killed. It was because the Jews law was different from Persia's law and they did not keep the king's laws.

These "laws" that Haman was referring to was in fact law of Moses.

Apparently, the Law affected how the people lived their lives!

Of course, we understand that these people were in captivity because of their rebellion, but even during this time God remained faithful to his people and indeed there was remnant that remained faithful to the LORD!

Point: God's word should have such a priority and prominence in our lives that even the world can see the difference!

Vs 9- If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

Haman continues to present his plot to the king stating that he wants a written "warrant" to go after these Jews and destroy them.

And to add further icing on the cake for this deal Haman offers Ten thousand talents to pay those who would be rounding up the Jews and executing them.

Offering a huge sum of money to Ahasuerus to be permitted to slaughter the Jews suggests very strongly that another great sum of money got Haman his high post in government. Men like Haman who have money often use their money to gain position and power. Some men with much money give large gifts to schools in order to get themselves on the trustee board of the school. Some rich men use their money to gain special privileges at various clubs and organizations. Some wealthy folk use their money to obtain an influential church office and get their way in church policy. And some rich people, like Haman, use their money to gain high places politically. King Ahasuerus had depleted his treasuries in fighting Greece and needed extra income.- John

Butler

Haman shows us how far anger, hatred and sin can take someone!

Vs 10-11- *And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.*

11 And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

The King liked what he heard and authorized Haman to go and make preparations for this wicked deed.

By giving him the ring from his hand, that gave Haman the authority to act on the king's behalf. He now had royal authority and approval.

It seems as all hope is gone for the Jew, but God is working behind the scenes!

Vs 12- *Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.*

Scribe- *a person who copies out documents, especially one employed to do this before printing was invented.*

These Scribes were employed to write out the warrant against the Jews, stating their guilt and declaring their punishment by the means of execution.

They transcribed it into every language and sealed with the king's ring thus signifying the authenticity of the document.

Vs 13- *And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.*

The insight of Vs 13 reminds us of the cruelty of this deed.

The "posts" mentioned in this verse speaks of the postal service of that day.

They would have a literal "Post" in the middle of the village, community, province etc. and news and laws would be posted to this post to inform all of what the king had decreed.

Not only would Jewish Men and Women be slain, but even their children would be killed and it would all take place in the space of one day!

The spoil referred to in this verse was the property and the possessions of the Jews.

Those that gathered up these Jews would also take their earthly possessions as a reward.

This is exactly what Adolf Hitler and the Nazi's did during World War II. They would arrest these Jews and take all their possessions and property for their own!

Vs 14- The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

The decree would go into every town and all people would know what the declaration was, including the Jews.

Can you imagine the fear, the dread and the anxiety that filled the heart of the Jews?

Here they are learning that they will all be killed, including both the young and the old!

Vs 15- The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

As we conclude this chapter, we note that decree was sent forth and all would soon learn of its contents and meaning.

The King sits down to do his usual drinking, but the city is in distress!

This speaks of the callousness of the Kings heart.

He has just sentenced thousands of men, women and children to die and all he can think about is getting drunk!

But sadly millions are dying without Jesus Christ and majority of the church is content with pleasing their flesh and being comfortable!

Conclusion:

Practical lessons for application from Esther 3

1. You can stand against what has held your family down.

Esther 3:1-2

For years the Amalekites had held authority over the tribe of Benjamin dating back to the days of Saul. But Mordecai stood for what was right!

2. Have consistency in your convictions.

Esther 3:4

Mordecai did not just stand one time against Haman, but rather he was consistent in his convictions!

3. Remember when it seems that the enemy is prevailing, God has a plan!

Esther 3:7