

“Our Ancient Foe”
Esther 3:1-6

Introduction:

1. Let’s Return To Our Study Of Esther This Morning:
 - And Turn With Me In Your Bibles To:
 - Esther Chapter 3:
 - Where In The First Verse We Are Now Introduced To One Of The Main Characters Of This Book:
 - And Even One Of The Main Reasons Why God Inspired This Book To Be Written!
 - 3:1 - “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!”
 - In This Verse - We Meet Haman!
 - That “Wicked Haman” - As Esther Will Describe Him Later In Chapter 7!
 - And As We Will Soon See - Haman Will Become The Next Instrument To Be Used To Destroy The People Of God From Off The Face Of The Earth!
 - An Instrument / Tool Of The Devil Himself!
 - Haman Wasn’t The First Person:
 - To Attempt To Destroy God’s People:
 - And He Certainly Won’t Be The Last!
 - But As We Come To This New Chapter:
 - We Must Never Forget What God Has Already Done:
 - In The Previous Chapter!
 - **IE**: Its Like A Divine Chess Match - With God Himself As The Grandmaster - Knowing The Moves Of His Opponent Even Before He Makes Them - And Setting Up His Own Moves Well In Advance - To Play Out In Time - For His Own Glory & For The Good Of His People!
 - In His Providence, God Has Already Prepared For The Deliverance Of His People:
 - Through A Man & His Adopted Daughter – Mordecai & Esther!
 - And Even Though Haman:
 - “Thought Evil Against” The Jews:
 - God Himself Will Use It For Good & To Accomplish His Own Perfect Will!
 - 2. And This Is What We Will See In:
 - 3:1-6 - “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. / 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. / 3 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. / 5 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!”
 - Now - Ever Since This Time:
 - In The History Of The God’s Elect - God’s Chosen People:
 - Both Jews & Christians Have Seen:
 - Haman As An Instrument & A Type Of The Devil Himself!
 - “That Old Serpent, Called The Devil, And Satan, Which Deceiveth The Whole World!” (Revelation 12:9)
 - And So - Through Haman:
 - We Can See For Ourselves:
 - 1. **The Spirit Of Our Ancient Foe!**
 - From The Very Beginning Of This Chapter:
 - We See The Kind Of Enemy:
 - That The Jews In Persia Were Up Against!
 - Haman Was:
 - A Very Powerful Enemy!

- In 3:1 - We Read How “King Ahasuerus” Promoted Haman:
 - And “Advanced Him, And Set His Seat Above All The Princes That Were With Him!”
 - Now - No Reason Is Given As To Why The King Did This!
- But The Three Words Used In This Verse:
 - Show Us Just How Powerful Haman’s New Position Was!
 - He Seems To Have Become The “Prime Minister” To The King - And Second Only To The King!
- And The Power Of Haman:
 - Reminds Us That We Too Have A Very Powerful Enemy In This World!
 - But Our Enemy Is Not “Flesh & Blood” Like Haman - Ephesians 6:12 - “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places!”
- Our Enemy Is Greater Than Haman:
 - And Darker - And Even More Wicked:
 - 1 Peter 5:8 - “Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour!”
- Our Ancient Foe Is A Very Powerful Enemy!
 - But He Is Also:
 - A Very Persistent Enemy!
- When Haman - In 3:1 - Is Described As:
 - “The Agagite!”
 - We Need To Remember That Esther Is Primarily A Jewish Book, Originally Written To A Jewish Audience!
- And So - Haman’s Identification As:
 - An “Agagite” Would Be Very Significant:
 - To The Jews!
 - See - The Name “Agag” Was The Title Given To The Kings Of The Ancient People Of The Amalekites!
- And It Is Very Likely That:
 - Haman Was A Descendent From That:
 - Noble & Royal Line!
 - So - Haman Was An Amalekite!
- Now - What Makes This So Significant To The Jews?
 - The Amalekites Where The First People:
 - To Attack God’s People - When They Had Left Egypt 1,000 Years Before - And Were Making Their Way To The Promised Land!
 - You Can Read About This In Exodus 17!
- But It Wasn’t Just A One Time Thing!
 - The Amalekites Became A Very Persistent Thorn In The Side Of God’s People!
 - They Continued To Harass & Attack The Jews All Throughout Their History!
 - And God Took Notice!
 - Remember - “He That Toucheth You Toucheth The Apple Of His Eye!” (Zechariah 2:8)
- In Exodus 17:14 - God Says What He Will Do:
 - To The Amalekites - “And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven!”
- And In Deuteronomy 25:17-19 - God Told His People:
 - What To Do With The Amalekites - “Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; / 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. / 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!”
- So - The Conflict Between The Amalekites & The Jews:
 - Was Not Just A Political Conflict:
 - It Was A Religions / Spiritual Conflict!
 - “He Feared Not God!”

- And Yet - This Conflict Continued To Persist!
- There Came A Time When:
 - King Saul Was Commanded To:
 - “Remember That Which Amalek Did To Israel” And To Finally Defeat & Destroy Them! (1 Samuel 15)
 - But - Saul Did Not Obey!
 - His Disobedience By Keeping Agag - The King Of The Amalekites Alive:
 - Led To His Own Downfall As The King Of Israel!
 - Remember God’s Words To Saul? “Behold, To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice!” (1 Samuel 15:22)
- And Even Though Samuel:
 - Eventually Obeyed God & Struck Down Agag:
 - The Amalekites - The Ancient Foe Of God’s People - Still Persisted!
 - And Now - In Persia - “Haman The Agagite” Has Some Power Again!
- This Reminds Us Of The Persistence:
 - Of Our Own Enemy - The Devil!
 - He Will Never Give Up & He Will Never Give In - Until His Own Final Defeat By God Himself!
 - He Is “As A Roaring Lion, Walking About!”
 - He Is Patient – But He Is Persistent!
 - He Is Also:
- A Very Proud Enemy!
 - See This In 3:2 - “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!”
 - Now - When We Read This - We Wonder:
 - What Is Wrong With “Bowing & Reverencing” Someone In Haman’s Position? Especially If It Was Commanded By The King Himself!
 - Even Mordecai Was A Loyal Subject To The King!
 - Was This Primarily A Political Honor:
 - That Was Being Demanded?
 - Or Was There Something More To It?
 - It Definitely Seems Like There Is More To This Than Just “Bowing” To A Superior - Which Is Still Done In Some Cultures!
 - If You Look Through The Old Testament:
 - There Are Only 6 Places (That I Found) Where These Two Words Are Found Together:
 - To “Bow & Reverence” Someone!
 - And In All Of The Cases, Except Here In Esther:
 - It Is Refers To The Honor That Only God Is Due!
 - Psalm 95:6 - Is One Of Those Cases - “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. / For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice!”
 - It Appears As If Haman Was Demanding:
 - Even By The Command Of The King - An Honor & Worship That Only Belonged To The True & Living God!
 - And That Is The Essence Of Pride!
 - Thinking Of Yourself & Putting Yourself Higher Than Others & Even God Himself!
 - And Mordecai - “Bowed Not, Nor Did Him Reverence!”
 - Our Ancient Foe Is A Very Proud Enemy!
 - Remember When The Devil Met Jesus:
 - In The Wilderness To Tempt Him?
 - What Was The Last Temptation?
 - Matthew 4:8-10 - “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; / And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. / Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve!”
 - The Devil Is Always Trying - In His Pride - To Take What Only Belongs To The Lord!

- But The Devil Is Also:
- A Very Persuasive Enemy!
 - 3:3-4 - “Then the king’s servants, which were in the king’s gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king’s commandment? / 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!”
 - There Were Several Who Worked With Mordecai:
 - There At The King’s Gate:
 - And They Noticed That Mordecai Was Not Bowing / Reverencing Haman As They Were Told!
 - At First - They Seem To Have Approached:
 - Mordecai As Friends:
 - To Persuade Him To Comply & Obey The King’s Command!
 - Everyone Knew What Could Happen If He Didn’t!
 - And This Disobedience:
 - Seemed So “Out Of Character” For Mordecai!
 - But - As They “Spake Daily Unto Him, And He Hearkened Not Unto Them” Then:
 - They Approached Haman:
 - As Mordecai’s Foes!
 - They Showed Their True Character - Especially When Mordecai “Told Them That He Was A Jew!”
 - They Had More In Common With Haman:
 - Than With Mordecai:
 - And Were Very Much Like:
 - The Constant Ally Of Our Own Ancient Foe:
 - The World!
 - The World In Which We Live Is No True Friend To God & His People!
 - The World - Those Who Are Not Believers & Followers Of Jesus Christ - Can Turn From Friend To Foe Very Quickly!
 - All A Christian Has To Do:
 - Is Take A Stand On God’s Truth & Righteousness!
 - And Don’t We See This Going On All The Time Today?
 - If You Are A Christian Baker Or Florist:
 - Everything Will Go OK For You - Until You Take A Stand On God’s Truth About Marriage! And Then - Those Same Customers Who Seemed To Be Your Friends - Will Show Their True Colors - As Your Foe - And As Allies Of The Devil Himself - Trying To Persuade You To Compromise / To Disobey / To “Bow The Knee” To Anyone / Anything Other Than The Lord Who Saved You!
 - We Have Very Persuasive Enemy:
 - Very Crafty & Deceptive - So - We Must Not Be “Ignorant Of His Devices!”
 - But Even Further - Through Haman We See That We Have:
 - A Very Pitiless Enemy!
 - 3:5-6 - “And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. / 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!”
 - So When Haman Heard & Finally Saw For Himself:
 - The Disobedience Of Mordecai:
 - He Was “Full Of Wrath!”
 - He Was Mad!
 - Now - I Wonder Why Haman Hadn’t Noticed Before?
 - With Everyone Else Bowing & Reverencing Him:
 - On The Ground At His Feet!
 - It Seems As If Mordecai Did Not Make A Big Show If It! He Was Not Doing It Defiantly To Haman’s Face! He Was Likely Just Quietly In The Background, Still Doing His Duty At The King’s Gate!

- But Haman Didn't Care About That!
 - His Greedy Pride Turned Into Greedy Rage!
 - And After Hearing That The Defiant Mordecai Was A Jew:
 - He - "Thought Scorn To Lay Hands On Mordecai Alone!"
 - He Wanted To Finish:
 - What His Ancestors Had Started There In The Wilderness 1,000 Years Before!
 - "Haman Sought To Destroy All The Jews!"
 - Every Jew / Every Place!
 - Even Those Back In The Land Of Israel!
- All Of These Things:
 - Describe Our Own "Ancient Foe!"
 - The Devil Himself!
 - Like Haman - He Is A Very:
 - Powerful Enemy!
 - Persistent Enemy!
 - Proud Enemy!
 - Persuasive Enemy!
 - Pitiless Enemy!
 - With Such An Enemy:
 - Can Anyone Stand Against Him?

Conclusion:

1. There Is Only One Way!
 - 1 John 4:4 Tells Us - "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world!"
 - Out Of All Of The Servants At The King's Gate:
 - We Find Only 1 Who Did Not:
 - Comply With The King's Commandment!
 - Only 1:
 - Who Would Not & Could Not:
 - Bow Down Nor Reverence:
 - Haman!
 - It Was Mordecai!
 - Now - Why Would Mordecai Refuse?
 - How Could Mordecai Resist?
 - 2. The Reason Is Clear:
 - 3:4 - "For He Had Told Them That He Was A Jew!"
 - This Was Not Merely:
 - The National & Political Identity:
 - Of Mordecai!
 - This Was:
 - His Spiritual Identity!
 - He Would Not & Could Not "Bow & Reverence" Haman:
 - Because That Kind Of Honor Belonged Only To The Lord!
 - And He Knew That He:
 - "Ought To Obey God Rather Than Men!"
 - Perhaps The Words Of God That Were Spoken To King Saul - An Ancient Ancestor Of His - Were Still Ringing In His Ears:
 - "To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice!"
 - The Only Reason He Could Resist This Ancient Foe Was Because:
 - He Remembered *Who* He Was! And:
 - He Remembered *Whose* He Was!
 - 1 John 5:4 - "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith!"
 - 3. This Morning - You Need To See That:
 - You Too Have An Ancient Foe!
 - Not One Of Flesh & Blood!
 - But The Devil Himself!

- Who Still - “Desires To Have You!” (Luke 22:31)
- And - In And Of Yourself:
 - You Are No Match For Him!
 - As Martin Luther Once Wrote - “For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; / His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate, / On earth is not his equal!”
- When You Are Taken By The Devil:
 - As One Of His Own - By Remaining In Your Sin:
 - You Are No Match For Him!
- When You Are Tried Or Tempted By The Devil:
 - And You Think You Can Take It:
 - You Are No Match For Him!
- He Is Too:
 - Powerful & Persistent / Proud & Persuasive / And Pitiless:
 - He “Takes No Prisoners!”
 - His One Goal To Destroy Your Soul!
- 4. What Can You Do?
 - Only One Thing:
 - You Must Turn To & Run To:
 - Jesus Christ!
 - He Is The Only One Who Can Deliver You From Our Ancient Foe!
 - Again - As Martin Luther Wrote - “Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing; / Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God’s own choosing: / Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; / Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same, / And He must win the battle!”
 - Jesus Christ Is The Only One Who Could Ever Say:
 - “I Have Overcome The World!” (John 16:33)
 - Our Ancient Foe Is No Match For The Ancient Of Days!
- 5. Have You Turned To & Trusted In:
 - Jesus - To Be Your Savior:
 - From Your Sin & From Your Ancient Foe?
 - It Is The Only Way You Can Ever Be Free From His Grasp!
 - Won’t You Do So Today?
 - If You Have:
 - Jesus Says - You Can “Be Of Good Cheer!”
 - Why? - “And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, / We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us: / The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; / His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure, / One little word shall fell him!”
- 6. It Was Only Through The Power Of The Lord:
 - That Mordecai Could Stand Against:
 - His Ancient Foe With:
 - Courage & Conviction & Commitment!
 - And It Is Only Through The Power Of The Lord Jesus Christ:
 - That You Can “Stand Against The Wiles Of The Devil!” (Ephesians 6:11)
- 7. And Never Forget:
 - “That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth; / The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth: / Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; / The body they may kill: God’s truth abideth still, / His kingdom is forever!”
 - 1 Corintians 15:57 - “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

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