

Theme: Haman’s plan fails not simply because he has offended Xerxes, but because his attack on the people of God was an attack on the living God. Esther’s plan will succeed, not just because of her careful strategy, but because the sovereign LORD is faithful to His covenant promise – both to preserve His people and destroy their enemies.

Background: Banquets and the book of Esther

Introduction: Hide and Seek – You can’t stay hidden forever.

I. A Dangerous Situation

A. Esther’s dilemma

1. How to expose her identity– delicately.
 - *Identification* and deliverance are tied together
 - Before a dangerous king
2. How to accuse Haman – but exonerate the king.

B. The king’s dilemma

1. It was Xerxes’ decree.
2. He would lose the “revenue”.

II. A Delicate Plan

A. Her preparations.

1. Initial approach
2. At the party
 - Come to another party.
3. The 2nd party
 - **3rd time.** “What is your petition?”

B. Her moment of truth

1. Her “wish/petition”? *Spare my life!*
2. Her “request”? *Spare my people!*
3. *She is identified completely with the Jews.*

C. Her plea vv.3,4

1. Sold to be “destroyed, killed, annihilated”. Language of the decree!
Aside: Haman’s Dilemma!
2. If only into slavery – “I would not mention it.”

D. Her cunning (2 Samuel 12?)

III. Dramatic Consequences

- A. The king's reaction?
 - "Who? Where? Who has dared?"
 - "*A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!*"
- B. Haman's Despair
 - 1. Consequences of his pride and arrogance
 - 2. Esther – his only hope
 - 3. Accused of assaulting the queen
 - 4. Evidence of treason?
- C. Haman's fate was sealed
 - Not by Esther
 - By God!

IV. The Divine Strategy

- A. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility go hand in hand
 - 1. Haman, *the Agagite*
 - a. God's sovereign decree
 - b. Haman's *responsibility*
 - 2. Esther, the Jew
 - An *instrument* for deliverance
 - 3. What about us? Keeping our balance.
 - Justification? God's *Act*.
 - Sanctification? God's *Work* in which we participate.
- B. Covenant faithfulness
 - 1. To His people still under the threat of destruction.
 - 2. To His church - which will prevail.
 - 3. To us in our sin.
- C. A truly righteous King – intimate identification with His people!!
 - 1. Christ *identifies* Himself with His own.
 - 2. To live, we must identify ourselves *with Him*.