

Esther 3

Introduction:

1. Review of ch.1-2:
 - a. (ch.1) Ahasuerus, king of Persia, removed Vashti from being queen.
 - b. (ch.2) Esther, a beautiful young Jewish woman, was chosen to be the new queen.
2. In ch.3, a new character, Haman, devised a plot to destroy Mordecai and his people.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.1-6) HAMAN SOUGHT TO DESTROY THE JEWS
 - A. (vs.1) Haman was promoted to a high position [similar to prime minister].
 - B. (vs.2) The king commanded his other officials to bow before Haman and to reverence him, but Mordecai refused to do so.
 - C. (vs.3) Mordecai was asked why he did not reverence Haman.
 - D. (vs.4) The king's servants spoke to Mordecai about this daily, but he still did not reverence Haman.
 1. Mordecai had informed them that he was a Jew.
 - a. The Jews showed respect to kings (2 Samuel 14:4; 18:28).
 - b. However, the Jews were forbidden to give to any man or image the reverence that belonged only to God (Exodus 20:3-5).
 - c. It seems that Haman desired more than respect.
 2. Haman was told about Mordecai's refusal to reverence him.
 - E. (vs.5) Haman became very angry when Mordecai did not bow before him.
 - F. (vs.6) Haman wanted to kill Mordecai and his people, the Jews.
- II. (vs.7) A TIME WAS SET FOR DESTROYING THE JEWS
 - A. In the first month, the lot was cast to determine the time for killing Mordecai and his people.
 - B. (vs.13) The 13th day of the 12th month was selected.
- III. (vs.8-15) HAMAN CONVINCED THE KING THAT THE JEWS SHOULD BE DESTROYED
 - A. (vs.8) Haman informed the king that "*certain people*" in his kingdom were bad.
 - B. (vs.9) Haman suggested that the king enact a law to destroy these people.
 1. If the king enacted a law, it could not be altered (1:19).
 2. Haman offered to pay the expenses involved.
 - C. (vs.10) To make this law official, the king gave his ring to Haman.
 - D. (vs.11) The king provided the money and the people to Haman to do as he pleased.
 - E. (vs.12) Haman's request became an official written law.
 - F. (vs.13-14) Letters were sent throughout the empire stating that all Jews were to be destroyed on the selected day.
 - G. (vs.15) The king and Haman were happy, but the people were confused.
- IV. OBSERVATIONS
 - A. The king demonstrated his weakness as a leader again by allowing Haman to manipulate and use him.
 1. The king did not seek to learn the identity of this "*certain people*."
 2. The king did not analyze the situation to determine if Haman's accusations were accurate.
 3. The king did not know it, but Esther would be among those to be destroyed.
 - B. The king made a foolish choice when he appointed Haman to his position.
 1. Haman was a manipulator.
 2. Haman was proud and vain (Proverbs 8:13; 16:18).
 3. Haman's heart was filled with hatred (Proverbs 26:24-26).