

Trouble is Brewing

Esther 3: 1-7

It is likely that Mordecai and the Jews within Persia were feeling confident about their current situation. Although they remained a captive people within the land, one of their own had been crowned queen over the kingdom. This surely increased their outlook for the future and created a sense of hopeful anticipation within their hearts.

The situation may have looked promising on the surface; but little did they know, a storm was brewing and it would soon impact their lives. Some changes were made within the palace, leading to a chain of events that would strike fear in the heart of every Jew.

This is but one scene in the providential story of Esther. They faced many challenges and persecutions, and yet God preserved them for His glory. While our story is much different, the character of God never changes. Regardless of what we face, and no matter how frightening it may be, the saved by grace are secure in the hand of our Lord. Let's consider the [incidents](#) that led up to this frightening time for the Jews as we think on: [Trouble is Brewing](#).

I. The Promotion of Haman (1-3) – Here we are introduced to a man who plays a major role in the events recorded in Esther. He is promoted to a place of prominence in the kingdom. Notice:

A. The Details (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.](#) Haman's father, Hammedatha, is referred to as an Agagite. Most agree he was a descendant of Agag, king of the Amalekites. The Amalekites descended from Esau, brother of Jacob, and held great animosity toward the Jews in regard to the birthright of their father, Esau. They mercilessly attacked the Israelites as they made their way out of Egypt, killing the helpless, aged, young, and frail. It is apparent that this animosity and prejudice had been passed down through the generations. As we will discover, Haman possessed a deep hatred for the Jews.

- Prejudice and anti-Semitism remains prevalent in modern society. This is another tool of the enemy to create division and hatred among men. Christ came to provide salvation for whosoever, including all races and all people. We cannot honor the Lord while harboring prejudice and animosity toward a particular group of people.

B. The Dominance (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.](#)

It appears that Haman was elevated to a position, second only to the king. He was the highest ranking among the princes within the empire. His authority would only be usurped by the king.

- We face an adversary who possesses great power and influence, but his abilities are limited. He may be the god of this world, but he is not the living God. While he has much power and resources to afflict the believer, we need not fear him. Our King is sovereign over all.

C. The Declaration (2a) – *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.* Following his promotion, Ahasuerus commanded that all within the king's gate bow in reverence to Haman. If there was any doubt concerning the king's approval of Haman, this should have settled the doubt. Submission to Haman would also reveal submission to the king.

- This likely served to inflate the already oversized egos of Ahasuerus and Haman. They viewed themselves as invincible and accountable to no man. Satan likes to dominate the lives of men. He loves to force their submission to his sinful ways.

D. The Defiance (2b-3) – *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?* It appears that obedience reigned supreme concerning the king's commandment with the exception of Mordecai. He refused to bow before Haman or offer him reverence. Even when questioned publicly by other Persians within the king's gate, Mordecai continued to refuse.

- What prompted the defiance of Mordecai? We know nothing of anything personal between Haman and Mordecai to this point. Jews often bowed in the presence of others as a show of respect. However, in the cultures of Babylon and Persia, bowing related to worship of the one bowed before. The people were expected to worship their king as a god. Mordecai may not have been very vocal about his lineage up to this point, but this is where he drew the line. He would not bow in worship of anyone or anything other than Jehovah.

- This reminds me of three men who refused to bend or bow, and they did not burn. We need the commitment of Mordecai in our day. May we always make Jesus the priority in our lives and worship Him alone.

II. The Indignation of Haman (4-6) – Here we read of the indignation Haman had toward Mordecai and the Jews. Consider:

A. The Appeal (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*. After confronting Mordecai repeatedly for his refusal to bow before Haman, these men took their concerns unto Haman. They wanted to find out if there was any just reason for Mordecai's refusal and if Haman would let such behavior stand. Apparently Mordecai had confessed his lineage unto those who questioned him, and they were quick to tell Haman that Mordecai was a Jew.

- This reveals the relentless nature of the enemy. Mordecai's refusal was none of their business and yet they pressed him every day about his refusal to bow. I believe they hoped to see if they could break his will and eventually coerce him into abandoning his convictions. The enemy will be relentless in his pursuits. He may leave you for a season, but he will never give up. He will see to it that the pressure remains and the means to forsake your faith while engaging in sin is readily available.

B. The Anger (5) – And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. This is the response one would expect. All of the other servants and princes bowed in the presence of Haman, and yet there was a Jewish slave who refused to bow. "Who does Mordecai think he is, refusing the king's command to bow in reverence to me?" Haman was infuriated, filled with wrath toward Mordecai.

- If you are committed to standing for Christ, in opposition to Satan and his desires, you might as well expect his anger. He will likely increase his attacks in an effort to break your will and cause you to lose focus. Regardless of what we face, we must remain faithful to Christ!

C. The Ambition (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*. It is apparent that the prejudice ideology that Haman had been instilled with rose to the surface. Upon hearing that Mordecai was a Jew, just dealing with his defiance was not enough. Haman sought to destroy every Jew living within the kingdom. His hatred for the Jews was revealed in his ambitious plan.

- Prejudice does not abide by reason. People, identities, accomplishments, and innocence are swallowed up by hatred and not even considered. The holocaust stands as a somber reminder of what prejudice hatred can accomplish. The enemy uses the same philosophy. Every believer is hated and targeted solely because of their affiliation with Christ. He would like nothing more than to destroy every Christian life, home, and church throughout the world.

III. The Divination of Haman (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. This reveals the sorcery and witchcraft employed by Haman to devise a plan to eradicate the Jews. Consider:

A. The Process Involved – The Persians were very superstitious and committed to following the direction of spirits, demons, and astrology. In the first month, Nisan, Haman consulted the spirits and stars to reveal the appropriate time to carry out his diabolical scheme. He was very committed, but he refused to get in a hurry. He was steeped in the heathen religious practices and he refused to move apart from feeling satisfied with a response.

- I rejoice to know my fate and future are not dependent upon demonic spirits or with the stars and planets. I serve a risen Lord who is very much in charge of my life. I am not living by luck, chance, or coincidence. My steps are ordered and directed from above!

B. The Providence Involved – Haman and his advisors settled on the twelfth month to carry out their plan. The decree was signed in the first month, but that afforded almost an entire year before the holocaust would begin. I know that God is sovereign, and He could easily have defended and sustained His people that day, but He allowed almost a year for them to prepare for the coming assault. He was working through the lives of people to preserve the Jews, and He was even in control of Haman's diabolical plan to exterminate them. While Haman was preparing to rid the kingdom of the Jews, God was preparing Esther and Mordecai to work out their preservation.

- Life is often difficult and frequently uncertain, but we are never alone. Our lives are not left to chance. God is control of what we face today, and He has already made provision for our tomorrow. He may use us or others to bring about His desired will, but we can rest assured that His divine plan for our lives will be accomplished. Christ didn't offer Himself on the cross, for our sin, to lose us along the way. We are secure in His mighty hand.

Conclusion: Although great trouble was brewing for Mordecai and the Jews, God was not taken by surprise; nor was He unable to meet their needs. Through it all, He was in control.

That ought to comfort our hearts today. Jesus promised when He went away that He would come again and receive us unto Himself. Our lives are secure in Him. If you are troubled, trust Him by faith. If you are unsaved, apart from Him, come to Him and be saved.