

Haman Sets Out to Destroy the Jews (April 5, 474 BC)

Esther 3:1–11

- 1 After these events King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and established his authority over all the princes who *were* with him.
- 2 All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman; for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage.
- 3 Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?"
- 4 Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew.
- 5 When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage.
- 6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him *who* the people of Mordecai *were*; therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, who *were* throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.
- 7 In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Pur, that is the lot, was cast before Haman from day to day and from month *to month*, until the twelfth month, that is the month Adar.
- 8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from *those* of all *other* people and they do not observe the king's laws, so it is not in the king's interest to let them remain.
- 9 If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who carry on the *king's* business, to put into the king's treasuries."
- 10 Then the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.
- 11 The king said to Haman, "The silver is yours, and the people *also*, to do with them as you please."

The Edict to Kill the Jews Is Sent Throughout the Kingdom (April 17, 474 BC)

Esther 3:12–15

- 12 Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written just as Haman commanded to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province and to the princes of each people, each province according to its script, each people according to its language, being written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.
- 13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder.
- 14 A copy of the edict to be issued as law in every province was published to all the peoples so that they should be ready for this day.
- 15 The couriers went out impelled by the king's command while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa; and while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was in confusion.

Mordecai Tells Esther the Terrible News (April/May 474 BC)

Esther 4:1–14

- 1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.
- 2 He went as far as the king's gate, for no one was to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth.

3 In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.

4 Then Esther's maidens and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen writhed in great anguish. And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might remove his sackcloth from him, but he did not accept *them*.

5 Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king's eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered him *to go* to Mordecai to learn what this *was* and why it *was*.

6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king's gate.

7 Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.

8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.

9 Hathach came back and related Mordecai's words to Esther.

10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai:

11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."

12 They related Esther's words to Mordecai.

13 Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.

14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"

Esther Asks for Three Days of Fasting (June 22–24, 474 BC)

Esther 4:15–17

15 Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai,

16 "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."

17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

Esther Invites Ahasuerus and Haman to a Banquet (June 24, 474 BC)

Esther 5

1 Now it came about on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace in front of the king's rooms, and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room, opposite the entrance to the palace.

2 When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favor in his sight; and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter which *was* in his hand. So Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter.

3 Then the king said to her, "What is *troubling* you, Queen Esther? And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you."

4 Esther said, "If it pleases the king, may the king and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

5 Then the king said, “Bring Haman quickly that we may do as Esther desires.” So the king and Haman came to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

6 As they drank their wine at the banquet, the king said to Esther, “What is your petition, for it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done.”

7 So Esther replied, “My petition and my request is:

8 if I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and do what I request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king says.”

9 Then Haman went out that day glad and pleased of heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king’s gate and that he did not stand up or tremble before him, Haman was filled with anger against Mordecai.

10 Haman controlled himself, however, went to his house and sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh.

11 Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, and the number of his sons, and every *instance* where the king had magnified him and how he had promoted him above the princes and servants of the king.

12 Haman also said, “Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king.

13 Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.”

14 Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, “Have a gallows fifty cubits high made and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it; then go joyfully with the king to the banquet.” And the advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made.

Ahasuerus Orders Haman to Honor Mordecai (June 25, 474 BC)

Esther 6

1 During that night the king could not sleep so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.

2 It was found written what Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s eunuchs who were doorkeepers, that they had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

3 The king said, “What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?” Then the king’s servants who attended him said, “Nothing has been done for him.”

4 So the king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king’s palace in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows which he had prepared for him.

5 The king’s servants said to him, “Behold, Haman is standing in the court.” And the king said, “Let him come in.”

6 So Haman came in and the king said to him, “What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?” And Haman said to himself, “Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?”

7 Then Haman said to the king, “For the man whom the king desires to honor,

8 let them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown has been placed;

9 and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king’s most noble princes and let them array the man whom the king desires to honor and lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, ‘Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.’”

10 Then the king said to Haman, “Take quickly the robes and the horse as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king’s gate; do not fall short in anything of all that you have said.”

11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and led him *on horseback* through the city square, and proclaimed before him, “Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.”

12 Then Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman hurried home, mourning, with *his* head covered.

13 Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him.”

14 While they were still talking with him, the king’s eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

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