

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Esther Chapter 3 — Haman's Plot Against the Jews

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Esther Chapter 3 marks a dramatic change in the story.

In Chapter 2, Esther became queen and Mordecai uncovered a plot against King Ahasuerus. Everything appeared to be moving in a positive direction.

But now a dangerous enemy rises.

Haman is promoted.

His pride becomes offended because Mordecai refuses to bow before him. Instead of dealing with Mordecai personally, Haman decides to destroy the entire Jewish population throughout the Persian Empire.

Haman's hatred grows from **personal pride into national hatred**, and eventually into a plan of genocide.

Yet even though God's name is not mentioned in this chapter, the reader knows something Haman does not know:

Esther is already in the palace.

God has already positioned the person who will eventually stand between Haman's plan and the destruction of God's people.

I. HAMAN IS PROMOTED

Esther 3:1 — Haman Receives a Position of Honor

Verse 1

“After these events, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite and elevated him, giving him a seat of honor higher than all the other officials.”

Haman suddenly rises to a position of tremendous authority.

The king places him above the other officials.

This is important because Haman is not simply an angry man anymore.

He now possesses **political power**.

His pride has been given authority.

Cross References

1 Samuel 15:8

“He captured Agag, the king of the Amalekites, alive, but completely destroyed all the people with the sword.”

Agag was the king of the Amalekites.

Haman is identified as an **Agagite**, connecting him to the historical enemies of Israel.

Exodus 17:14

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely erase the memory of Amalek from under heaven.’”

The Amalekites had attacked Israel and became longtime enemies of God's people.

Proverbs 29:2

“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, the people groan.”

Leadership has consequences.

When righteous people lead, people benefit.

When wicked people gain power, people suffer.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's promotion demonstrates an uncomfortable truth:

Position does not automatically equal character.

A person can have tremendous authority and still have a corrupt heart.

Spiritual Principle

Never assume that because someone has been given authority, that person has been given righteousness.

II. MORDECAI REFUSES TO BOW

Esther 3:2 — Mordecai Will Not Honor Haman

Verse 2

“All the king's servants at the king's gate bowed down and honored Haman, as the king had commanded. But Mordecai refused to bow down or show him honor.”

Everyone else obeyed the king's command.

Mordecai refused.

This becomes the central conflict of the chapter.

Cross References

Exodus 20:5

“You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.”

God forbids His people from worshiping idols.

Daniel 3:18

“But even if He does not save us, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image even under threat of death.

Exodus 17:16

“Moses said, ‘Raise your hands toward the Lord's throne. The Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.’”

The Amalekites had a long history of hostility toward Israel.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai's refusal is not presented as casual disrespect.

His Jewish identity is specifically mentioned in the surrounding verses.

He would not give Haman the honor Haman demanded.

The conflict therefore becomes a matter of **conscience and conviction**.

Spiritual Principle

There are times when obedience to God requires refusing to follow human demands.

III. MORDECAI IS QUESTIONED

Esther 3:3 — Why Will You Not Obey?

Verse 3

“Then the king's servants at the gate asked Mordecai, ‘Why do you disobey the king's command?’”

Mordecai's refusal did not go unnoticed.

The people around him wanted an explanation.

Cross References

Daniel 3:14

“Nebuchadnezzar said to them, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you refuse to serve my gods or worship the gold statue I have set up?’”

The three Hebrew men were questioned because of their refusal to obey a command that violated their convictions.

Acts 5:29

“Peter and the other apostles replied, ‘We must obey God rather than human beings!’”

The apostles made their priority clear.

God's authority comes before human authority when the two directly conflict.

Daniel 6:13

“Then they said to the king, ‘Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah has ignored you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day.’”

Daniel continued his practice of prayer even when the king issued a law against it.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai was being pressured to conform.

The question was simple:

Why won't you do what everyone else is doing?

That is often how compromise begins.

People may ask why you cannot simply go along with everyone else.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness sometimes means standing alone.

IV. MORDECAI WILL NOT CHANGE

Esther 3:4 — Day After Day

Verse 4

“Day after day they spoke to him, but he refused to comply. So they reported it to Haman to see if Mordecai's explanation would stand, because he had told them he was a Jew.”

Mordecai was repeatedly pressured.

But he remained firm.

He did not change his position simply because people kept asking.

Cross References

Daniel 3:12

“But there are some Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”

These men were also accused because of their refusal to compromise.

Daniel 6:5

“Finally, these men said, ‘We will never find any reason to accuse Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.’”

Daniel's enemies knew that his relationship with God was the area where he would refuse to compromise.

Genesis 39:14

“She called her household servants and said, ‘Look! This Hebrew has been brought here to make fun of us! He came into my room to sleep with me, but I screamed.’”

Joseph's faithfulness also brought false accusations against him.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai's faithfulness made him different.

And being different can attract opposition.

Spiritual Principle

If your convictions are real, pressure should not automatically change them.

V. HAMAN'S FURY

Esther 3:5 — Haman Becomes Furious

Verse 5

“When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed nor paid him homage, he was furious.”

Haman's reaction reveals the condition of his heart.

Mordecai's refusal should have been a minor personal offense.

Instead, Haman becomes enraged.

Cross References

Daniel 3:19

“Then Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face became distorted with anger. He ordered that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual.”

Pride can produce extreme anger when challenged.

Proverbs 27:4

“Anger is cruel, and fury is overwhelming, but jealousy is even more dangerous.”

Unchecked anger can become destructive.

Genesis 4:5

“But He did not accept Cain and his offering. This made Cain very angry, and he was very upset.”

Cain's anger eventually led to violence against his brother.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's anger was not simply about an act of disrespect.

It exposed his pride.

He could not tolerate one person refusing to honor him.

Spiritual Principle

Pride becomes dangerous when personal honor becomes more important than righteousness.

VI. PERSONAL OFFENSE BECOMES NATIONAL HATRED

Esther 3:6 — Haman Wants to Destroy All the Jews

Verse 6

“But he thought it was too small a thing to punish only Mordecai. Since he had learned Mordecai's people were Jews, Haman looked for a way to destroy all the Jews throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.”

This is one of the darkest verses in the chapter.

Haman moves from:

offense → anger → hatred → genocide.

He does not want merely to punish Mordecai.

He wants to destroy an entire people.

Cross References

Psalm 83:4

“They say, ‘Come, let us wipe out Israel as a nation; we will destroy the very memory of its existence.’”

The desire to eliminate Israel had appeared repeatedly among Israel's enemies.

Exodus 1:16

“He said, ‘When you help the Hebrew women during childbirth and you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.’”

Pharaoh attempted to destroy Hebrew male children.

Exodus 1:22

“Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: ‘Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River, but you may let all the girls live.’”

Pharaoh's policy became an attempt to eliminate Israel's future.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's hatred is now larger than the original disagreement.

This is an important warning about the progression of hatred.

A personal offense can become something much more destructive when pride refuses to forgive.

Spiritual Principle

Uncontrolled hatred can grow far beyond the original offense.

VII. HAMAN CASTS THE LOT

Esther 3:7 — Pur, or the Lot

Verse 7

“In the first month, the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Haman had the ‘Pur’—that is, the lot—cast to determine the best day and month for the attack. The lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.”

Haman attempts to determine the date for his attack by casting lots.

The date selected was many months away.

From Haman's perspective, this provided time to prepare.

But from God's perspective, it provided time for the events of Esther 4–9 to unfold.

Cross References

Proverbs 16:33

“People may cast lots into their lap, but every decision comes from the Lord.”

Human beings may make plans, but God's sovereignty remains greater.

Jonah 1:7

“The sailors said to each other, ‘Come, let's cast lots to find out who is responsible for this trouble.’ So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.”

The sailors used lots to determine responsibility for the storm.

Leviticus 16:8

“Aaron is to cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat.”

Lots were used in certain Old Testament practices.

Crawford Commentary

Haman believed the lot would determine the future.

But the future was ultimately in God's hands.

The date he selected would become the date on which his own plans would be overturned.

Spiritual Principle

Human beings may make plans, but God remains sovereign over the outcome.

VIII. HAMAN DECEIVES THE KING

Esther 3:8 — Haman Accuses the Jews

Verse 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 every other people, and they do not observe the king's laws. It is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them.’”

Notice what Haman does not tell the king.

He does not explain that his hatred began because one Jewish man refused to bow before him.

Instead, he creates a political argument.

He presents the Jews as a threat to the empire.

Cross References

Ezra 4:13

“Now let it be known to the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are restored, the people will no longer pay taxes, tribute, or other duties, and eventually it will damage the royal treasury.”

False or misleading accusations could be used to influence Persian rulers.

Acts 16:21

“They are teaching customs that are illegal for us Romans to accept or practice.”

Paul and Silas were also accused of promoting practices their accusers claimed were unlawful.

Deuteronomy 4:8

“And what nation is so great that it has such righteous laws and regulations as this body of laws I am giving you today?”

Israel's laws were distinct because God had given them His covenant law.

Crawford Commentary

Haman manipulates the king by presenting a distorted picture.

He takes a personal grievance and turns it into a supposed national security issue.

Spiritual Principle

Hatred often looks for justification after the heart has already decided what it wants to do.

IX. HAMAN OFFERS MONEY

Esther 3:9 — Ten Thousand Talents of Silver

Verse 9

“If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will contribute ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out the business.”

Haman attempts to make the proposal attractive financially.

He combines:

- deception,
- political influence,
- hatred,
- and money.

Cross References

Matthew 26:15

“He asked them, ‘How much will you pay me to betray Jesus to you?’ And they gave him thirty pieces of silver.”

Judas also allowed money to become part of a betrayal.

Exodus 21:32

“But if the ox kills a slave, the owner must pay the slave's master thirty pieces of silver, and the ox must be stoned.”

Silver could function as compensation in the ancient legal system.

Ezekiel 22:12

“There are people among you who take bribes to shed blood. You charge interest and make profits from others. You take advantage of your neighbors for your own gain. And you have forgotten Me, says the Sovereign Lord.”

Money can become an instrument of corruption.

Crawford Commentary

Haman is willing to finance the destruction of an entire people.

His wealth and influence have become tools of evil.

Spiritual Principle

Money is a tool; the heart determines whether it is used for good or evil.

X. THE KING GIVES HAMAN HIS SIGNET RING

Esther 3:10 — Authority Is Transferred

Verse 10

“So the king removed his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.”

The signet ring represented royal authority.

Haman now possesses the authority to issue decrees in the king's name.

Cross References

Genesis 41:42

“Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his hand and placed it on Joseph's finger. He dressed Joseph in fine linen clothing and put a gold chain around his neck.”

Joseph received authority from Pharaoh.

Esther 8:2

“The king removed his signet ring, which he had taken back from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. Esther appointed Mordecai over Haman's property.”

The same symbol of authority will later be transferred from Haman to Mordecai.

Luke 15:22

“But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet.’”

The ring symbolized authority, status, and restored position.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's authority is real.

But it is temporary.

This is an important theme throughout Scripture.

People can receive tremendous power and then lose it.

Spiritual Principle

Earthly authority is temporary; God's sovereignty is permanent.

XI. THE KING GIVES HAMAN PERMISSION

Esther 3:11 — “Do With Them as You See Fit”

Verse 11

“The king said to Haman, ‘The money and the people are given to you—do with them as you see fit.’”

The king gives Haman enormous freedom.

He does not appear to investigate Haman's claims carefully.

Cross References

Matthew 27:24

“Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was developing. So he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. He said, ‘I am innocent of this man's blood. The responsibility is yours!’”

Pilate failed to administer justice properly despite having authority.

Mark 15:15

“Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. Then he had Jesus beaten with a whip and handed Him over to be crucified.”

Pilate surrendered justice to political pressure.

Daniel 6:9

“So King Darius signed the written law.”

The Persian kings could issue laws that carried enormous authority.

Crawford Commentary

A ruler who does not investigate truth carefully can become an instrument through which evil operates.

Spiritual Principle

Authority without discernment can become dangerous.

XII. THE DECREE IS WRITTEN

Esther 3:12 — The Royal Scribes Are Summoned

Verse 12

“On the thirteenth day of the first month, the royal scribes were summoned. They wrote out Haman's orders to the king's governors, administrators, and officials of each province, in every script and every language of the empire. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.”

The evil plan now becomes official government policy.

The decree is translated into every language.

It is sealed with royal authority.

Cross References

1 Kings 21:8

“So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and nobles living in Naboth's city.”

Royal authority could be used to carry out unjust plans.

Daniel 6:17

“A stone was brought and placed over the opening of the den. The king sealed it with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles so that no one could rescue Daniel.”

A royal seal represented official authority.

Esther 8:8

“Now go ahead and send a message in my name in the way you think best, and seal it with the king's signet ring. A decree written in the king's name and sealed with his ring cannot be revoked.”

The authority represented by the signet ring becomes important again.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's private hatred has now become public law.

That is how dangerous evil can become when it gains political authority.

XIII. THE ORDER TO DESTROY THE JEWS

Esther 3:13 — An Order of Annihilation

Verse 13

“Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, instructing them to destroy, kill, and annihilate all Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day: the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. Their property was to be taken as plunder.”

The decree is horrifying.

It targets everyone:

- men,
- women,
- children,
- young,
- old.

The goal is complete destruction.

Cross References

Psalm 37:32

“The wicked lie in wait for the righteous, looking for an opportunity to kill them.”

The righteous can face deliberate attacks from wicked people.

Esther 9:1

“On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the day the king's command was to be carried out, the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them. But just the opposite happened—the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them.”

This cross-reference reveals what eventually happens.

The day intended for destruction becomes a day of victory.

Psalm 94:21

“They band together against the righteous and condemn the innocent to death.”

The wicked may unite against innocent people.

Crawford Commentary

The decree appears final.

But the reader knows that the story is not over.

Haman has selected a date.

He has issued a decree.

He has mobilized the empire.

But he has not accounted for God.

Spiritual Principle

A human decree can appear final without being the final word.

XIV. THE DECREE IS MADE PUBLIC

Esther 3:14 — Everyone Is Told to Prepare

Verse 14

“A copy of the decree was issued and made public in every province, giving instructions for the people to be ready for that day.”

The entire empire receives the order.

The danger is now public.

Cross References

Daniel 6:15

“Then the men went as a group to the king and said, ‘Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians, no decree or law that the king establishes can be changed.’”

The Persian legal system treated royal decrees as binding.

Esther 8:13

“A copy of the decree was to be issued as law in every province and made public to all the people. The Jews were to be ready on that day to take revenge on their enemies.”

The later decree will provide the Jews with a means of defending themselves.

Habakkuk 2:2

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Write My answer plainly on tablets so that a runner can carry the correct message to others.’”

God also commanded that important messages be written clearly and publicly.

Crawford Commentary

Written words can carry tremendous power.

A written decree can affect nations.

But God's purposes remain greater than human documents.

XV. HAMAN DRINKS WHILE SUSA IS CONFUSED

Esther 3:15 — Haman Celebrates While Others Suffer

Verse 15

“The couriers set out, hurried by the king's command, and the decree was proclaimed in the citadel of Susa. Then the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was in confusion.”

This is one of the most striking contrasts in the chapter.

Haman is drinking.

The king is drinking.

But the city is confused and distressed.

Cross References

Amos 6:6

“You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not care about the ruin of Joseph's descendants.”

This describes people enjoying luxury while ignoring suffering.

Proverbs 29:2

“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. But when the wicked are in power, the people groan.”

The condition of a nation can reveal the character of its leadership.

Esther 4:1

“When Mordecai learned about everything that had happened, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went into the city, crying loudly and bitterly.”

Mordecai's reaction contrasts sharply with Haman's celebration.

Crawford Commentary

Haman celebrates while others suffer.

That reveals the depth of his corruption.

He is not merely indifferent to suffering.

He is celebrating the suffering his own hatred has produced.

Spiritual Principle

A hardened heart can celebrate what a compassionate heart would mourn.

XVI. THE GREAT CONTRAST OF ESTHER CHAPTER 3

Esther Chapter 3 presents two very different men.

HAMAN

Haman is:

- proud,
- ambitious,
- easily offended,
- hateful,
- deceptive,
- manipulative,
- willing to destroy innocent people.

MORDECAI

Mordecai is:

- convicted,
- courageous,
- faithful,
- unwilling to compromise,
- willing to stand alone.

The conflict between them becomes much larger than a disagreement between two individuals.

It becomes a conflict between **pride and conviction**.

XVII. THE PROGRESSION OF HAMAN'S PRIDE

Haman's behavior follows a dangerous progression.

1. Haman receives honor.

He is promoted.

2. Haman demands honor.

Everyone is commanded to bow.

3. Mordecai refuses.

Haman becomes angry.

4. Haman becomes obsessed.

He cannot let the matter go.

5. Haman expands the conflict.

He moves from Mordecai to all Jews.

6. Haman manipulates authority.

He convinces the king to approve his plan.

7. Haman turns hatred into law.

The decree is issued throughout the empire.

8. Haman celebrates.

He drinks while the city is confused.

Crawford Principle

Pride that is not controlled can eventually become destructive to everyone around it.

XVIII. THE DANGER OF HATRED

Haman's hatred provides a serious warning.

He begins with one person.

But eventually he hates an entire people.

This teaches us that hatred does not naturally remain small.

If hatred is continually fed, it can grow.

Biblical Principle

James 1:20

“Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.”

Anger must be brought under God's authority.

Crawford Commentary

Mordecai's refusal was personal to Haman.

But Haman turned the issue into a racial and national attack against every Jew in the empire.

The proper response to personal offense is not collective hatred.

XIX. GOD'S PROVIDENCE IS ALREADY WORKING

God's name is not mentioned directly in Esther Chapter 3.

Yet God's providence can be seen.

Consider what has already happened:

Esther is queen.

Mordecai is near the royal court.

Mordecai has a relationship with Esther.

The king knows Esther.

The assassination plot has already been recorded.

Haman has selected a date many months in the future.

Everything necessary for the next stage of the story is already being positioned.

Crawford Principle

God can be working powerfully even when His activity is not immediately visible.

XX. KEY LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 3

1. PRIDE CAN LEAD TO DESTRUCTION

Haman could not tolerate one man refusing to bow.

His wounded pride eventually produced a plan to destroy an entire nation.

Lesson

Never allow pride to control your response to personal offense.

2. RIGHTEOUS CONVICTION MAY BRING CONFLICT

Mordecai refused to compromise.

His conviction brought opposition.

Lesson

Doing what is right does not guarantee that everyone will approve of you.

3. EVIL CAN GAIN POWER THROUGH DECEPTION

Haman did not tell the king the real reason he wanted the Jews destroyed.

He manipulated the king by presenting them as a political threat.

Lesson

Truth must be examined carefully before decisions are made.

4. POWER DOES NOT MAKE EVIL RIGHT

Haman had the king's authority behind him.

But the decree was still wicked.

Lesson

Human authority is never higher than God's moral authority.

5. GOD'S PEOPLE MAY FACE PERIL

The Jewish people faced a genuine threat.

Their danger was not imaginary.

Lesson

Faith does not mean believers will never experience danger.

Faith means trusting God in the middle of danger.

XXI. PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 — Why did Haman become so angry with Mordecai?

Answer:

Mordecai refused to bow down and honor Haman as the king had commanded.

Haman's pride could not tolerate Mordecai's refusal.

His anger became so extreme that he decided to destroy not only Mordecai but the entire Jewish population.

Application

A person who cannot control anger can allow a small offense to become a major destructive conflict.

Question 2 — What does Mordecai's refusal to bow teach us?

Answer:

Mordecai demonstrated strong conviction.

He would not compromise his Jewish identity and convictions simply because everyone else was doing what Haman demanded.

Application

Christians should develop convictions strong enough to withstand social pressure.

Question 3 — What is the difference between Mordecai and Haman?

Answer:

Mordecai was willing to suffer rather than compromise.

Haman was willing to destroy others because his pride had been wounded.

Mordecai's conviction produced courage.

Haman's pride produced hatred.

Question 4 — How did Haman turn a personal problem into a national crisis?

Answer:

Instead of limiting his anger to Mordecai, Haman learned that Mordecai was Jewish and decided to destroy all Jews throughout the empire.

He then presented the Jews to the king as a political threat.

Application

Hatred often expands when people stop seeing individuals as individuals and begin treating entire groups as enemies.

Question 5 — How did Haman manipulate the king?

Answer:

Haman did not tell the king that his plan began because Mordecai would not bow to him.

Instead, he described the Jews as a scattered people with different laws who supposedly refused to obey the king.

He then offered money to support the operation.

Application

We should carefully investigate claims before making major decisions.

Question 6 — What does Haman's use of money teach us?

Answer:

Haman was willing to spend enormous wealth to accomplish an evil purpose.

Money itself is not morally good or evil.

The heart determines how it is used.

Application

Christians should ask not only, “Can I afford this?” but also, “**Is this right before God?**”

Question 7 — What does the signet ring represent?

Answer:

The signet ring represented the king's authority.

By giving Haman his ring, the king authorized Haman to issue the decree in the king's name.

Application

Authority can accomplish tremendous good or tremendous harm depending upon the character of the person using it.

Question 8 — Why is the date chosen by Haman important?

Answer:

Haman cast lots and selected the twelfth month, Adar.

The delay gave time for Esther and Mordecai to respond.

What Haman considered favorable timing ultimately gave God's purposes time to unfold.

Application

What appears to be a delay may actually provide time for God to work.

Question 9 — Why is it important that the decree was written in every language?

Answer:

Because the decree applied throughout the entire Persian Empire.

The order was intended to be understood by everyone in every province.

Application

Words backed by authority can have enormous consequences.

Therefore, leaders must use their words carefully.

Question 10 — Why were the king and Haman drinking while Susa was confused?

Answer:

Their response reveals their lack of compassion.

They were celebrating and drinking while the people were confused by the decree.

Application

A godly leader should care about how decisions affect ordinary people.

Question 11 — What is the greatest warning from Haman's life in this chapter?

Answer:

The greatest warning is that **unchecked pride can become destructive hatred.**

Haman's problem began with one man's refusal to honor him.

It eventually became an attempt to destroy an entire people.

Application

Deal with pride and anger before they grow.

Question 12 — Where do we see God's providence in this chapter?

Answer:

God's providence can be seen in the fact that Esther is already queen and Mordecai is already positioned near the royal court before Haman's decree is issued.

Although God's name is not mentioned, the events are moving toward the deliverance that will come later.

Application

God may already be preparing your deliverance before you even recognize that you are in a crisis.

XXII. ESTHER CHAPTER 3 AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

This chapter teaches Christians several important lessons.

When someone mistreats you:

Do not become Haman.

When everyone pressures you to compromise:

Learn from Mordecai.

When evil seems to be winning:

Remember that God is still sovereign.

When an authority figure makes a wrong decision:

Remember that human authority is not absolute.

When circumstances look hopeless:

Remember that Esther is already in the palace.

When God's presence seems hidden:

Remember that the book of Esther demonstrates God's providence without repeatedly naming Him.

XXIII. FIVE GREAT TRUTHS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 3

1. PRIDE CAN TURN A SMALL OFFENSE INTO A GREAT EVIL

Haman could not tolerate being denied personal honor.

2. CONVICTION REQUIRES COURAGE

Mordecai stood firm even when pressured.

3. DECEPTION CAN INFLUENCE POWERFUL PEOPLE

Haman manipulated the king through misleading information.

4. WICKED PLANS ARE NOT THE FINAL WORD

The decree looked final, but God's providence was already moving.

5. GOD MAY PREPARE DELIVERANCE BEFORE THE CRISIS ARRIVES

Esther was already queen before Haman's decree was issued.

XXIV. A CRAWFORD COMMENTARY PRINCIPLE

“The Enemy May See the Problem, But He Does Not See God's Plan”

Haman saw Mordecai.

Haman saw his own wounded pride.

Haman saw the Jewish people.

Haman saw the power of the Persian Empire.

But Haman did not see:

Esther.

He did not see what God had already positioned.

He did not know what was coming.

This is one of the great lessons of Esther.

The enemy may make plans based upon what he can see, but God is working through what the enemy cannot see.

XXV. CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the lessons found in Esther Chapter 3.

Help us guard our hearts against pride, anger, bitterness, and hatred.

Keep us from becoming like Haman, who allowed a personal offense to grow into destructive hatred.

Give us the courage of Mordecai when we are pressured to compromise our convictions.

Help us obey You even when obedience is difficult.

Give us wisdom to recognize deception and discernment to examine the claims of those who seek authority.

Help our leaders make decisions based upon truth and justice rather than manipulation and personal ambition.

When circumstances appear hopeless, remind us that You are still sovereign.

When we cannot see Your hand, help us trust Your providence.

When evil appears to have the upper hand, remind us that evil never has the final word.

Thank You that Esther was already in the palace before the crisis arrived.

Help us trust that You can prepare the way before we even understand what You are preparing us for.

Give us courage to stand, wisdom to act, and faith to trust You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

XXVI. CENTRAL TRUTH OF ESTHER

CHAPTER 3

Haman's pride created a plan for destruction, but God's providence had already placed Esther in the palace and Mordecai near the king's court.

Esther Chapter 3 looks like a chapter about **Haman's victory**.

But it is actually a chapter about **God preparing for Haman's defeat**.

Haman has the king's authority.

Haman has money.

Haman has a written decree.

Haman has the date.

Haman appears to have the advantage.

But Haman does not have the final word.

God does.