

# HAMAN'S CONSPIRACY AND DOWNFALL

BIBLE TEXT : Esther 3:1-15; 4:1-17; 5:1-14; 6:1-14; 7:1-6, 9, 10.

LESSON 430 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).**

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### **Esther 3:1-15**

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did *him* reverence.

<sup>3</sup> Then the king's servants, which *were* in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws *are* diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it *is* not for the king's profit to suffer them.

<sup>9</sup> If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring *it* into the king's treasuries.

<sup>10</sup> And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

<sup>11</sup> And the king said unto Haman, The silver *is* given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

<sup>12</sup> Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that *were* over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and *to* every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### **I Haman's Promotion, His Malice, and His Plot to Kill the Jews**

1. Haman is promoted and revered by the king's subjects, Esther 3:1, 2.
2. Mordecai refused to bow down because he was a Jew and had been commanded to worship God only, Esther 3:3, 4;

#### **Exodus 20:3**

<sup>3</sup> Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

3. Haman's wrath and purpose to destroy all the Jews, Esther 3:5, 6.
4. He accused the Jews and secured permission to destroy them, Esther 3 :8-12.
5. The death sentence for the Jews, Esther 3:13-15.

### **II Queen Esther's Purpose to Appeal to the King**

1. The Jews wept and wailed because of the king's decree, Esther 4:1-3.
2. Mordecai charged Esther to intercede with the king, Esther 4:4-9.
3. Esther's reply and her natural fear, Esther 4:10-12.
4. Mordecai persuaded her to try, at the peril of her life, Esther 4:13-17.

### **III Esther's Success and Haman's Revenge**

1. Esther approached the king and found favour with him, Esther 5:1-5.
2. She deferred her request at the first banquet and invited the king and Haman to another, Esther 5:6-9.
3. Haman boasts of his being the only person with the king at Esther's banquet, Esther 5:10-12.
4. Haman's joy was marred by Mordecai's actions, and Haman prepared a gallows for Mordecai, Esther 5:13, 14.

### **IV The King's Plan to Honour Mordecai**

1. Mordecai's good deed to the king, Esther 6:1-3.
2. Haman assumed he was the man to be honoured, but was ordered to honour Mordecai, Esther 6:4-14.

### **V Haman's Guilt**

1. Esther made known the fate of her people and revealed that Haman was responsible for it, Esther 7:1-6.
2. Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai, Esther 7:9, 10.

## NOTES:

### **Haman's Malice**

The events of this lesson happened during the reign of Ahasuerus, the Persian king known in secular history as Xerxes. The Babylonian captivity had ended, but only fifty thousand Jews had returned. Many thousands were still living in the Persian provinces, among whom were Mordecai and Esther, his cousin, whom he had adopted and reared because her parents were dead.

Esther was a very beautiful woman and had been chosen by Ahasuerus as his wife, and had been crowned queen. Mordecai had been appointed to sit with the servants in the king's gate.

Haman, a descendant of Agag, had been elevated to a high position, which would be comparable to the office of prime

it written, and sealed with the king's ring.

<sup>13</sup> And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, *even* upon the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and *to take* the spoil of them for a prey.

<sup>14</sup> The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

<sup>15</sup> The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

#### **Esther 4:1-17**

<sup>1</sup> When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

<sup>2</sup> And came even before the king's gate: for none *might* enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

<sup>3</sup> And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

<sup>4</sup> So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told *it* her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received *it* not.

<sup>5</sup> Then called Esther for Hatach, *one* of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it *was*, and why it *was*.

<sup>6</sup> So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which *was* before the king's gate.

<sup>7</sup> And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.

<sup>8</sup> Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew *it* unto Esther, and to declare *it* unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.

<sup>9</sup> And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

<sup>10</sup> Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;

<sup>11</sup> All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, *there is* one law of his to put *him* to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

minister in many countries today. He was over all the princes and was next to the king in authority. Because of his position the people bowed to him as he came and went through the gate, but there was one man who bowed not. This one man's refusal to pay Haman this reverence was a sore point to him. The pride of his heart demanded that all the king's subjects bow to him.

#### **Mordecai's Fidelity**

Mordecai, being a Jew, knew that the law of God commanded him to worship no man, but that he should worship God only. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). Whatever the reason for Mordecai's and Esther's staying behind when many of the Israelites returned to Jerusalem, it is evident that they had the principles of the Law laid in their hearts. Mordecai would not bow even though he might have guessed that the consequences would be dire indeed, for the man Haman was a great power in the land. Mordecai did as every child of God must do today. He put principle above expediency, his God before the whims of mortal man. How easy it is to give in "a little" or to "bow a little" because of the pressure of the worldly-minded, but God wants us to have the same spirit within us that Mordecai had that we will "bow not."

#### **Satanic Obsession**

When pride takes hold of a man the devil pushes him onward and gives him every opportunity to push himself to his own destruction. Many a person with God-bestowed gifts and talents has become exalted and proud, and as a consequence his life has been ruined. God can use only the humble in His service; and often in secular affairs of men the arrogant, self-exalted one is soon found out and despised. It is always right to do right, and good to be good.

Haman's hatred of Mordecai became his only interest and his desires were all wrapped up in that one desire to kill Mordecai and all his people. Somewhere in the heart of this man there must have been condemnation, and in hoping to kill all the Jews he would do away with the witness for God and His law in this country. Even though it was said that the law of the Medes and Persians changed not, there was the overriding fact that these Jews put the law of God above that of the Medes and Persians. So long as that teaching was in the land there was always the possibility of its showing its head. That was what Haman saw in Mordecai -- a reminder of the fact that he ought to honour and serve the same God.

#### **Queen Esther's Opportunity**

The providence of God can be seen in all the details of this lesson. After all, it was no accident that Esther was queen at this time. Within her heart were the same principles that her cousin Mordecai had. When she realised that all her people were in jeopardy she readily decided to hazard her own life that the truth might be revealed. There is a principle that truth will prevail; God will have the glory. Even the wrath of man is made to praise the Lord.

She declared a fast and asked Mordecai and his people to fast, and said that she and her maidens would do likewise. That must have been a time of praying and calling on God for His help. This had been preceded by her abandon to God and His mercy by saying that she would go in before the king to ask his intervention, and that "if I perish, I perish." Mordecai's resounding challenge to her, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" stirred her very heart and she saw her opportunity to be used of God for their deliverance. The awareness of this opportunity did not take away the natural fear, and many times this is true in the heart of God's people today.

<sup>12</sup> And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

<sup>13</sup> Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

<sup>14</sup> For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?

<sup>15</sup> Then Esther bade *them* return Mordecai *this answer*,

<sup>16</sup> Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which *is* not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

<sup>17</sup> So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

#### **Esther 5:1-14**

<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on *her* royal *apparel*, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.

<sup>2</sup> And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, *that* she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that *was* in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

<sup>3</sup> Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what *is* thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

<sup>4</sup> And Esther answered, If *it seem* good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

<sup>5</sup> Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

<sup>6</sup> And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

<sup>7</sup> Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request *is*,

<sup>8</sup> If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to morrow as the king hath said.

<sup>9</sup> Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.

<sup>11</sup> And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and

But the thing for us to do is to bury our fears in the confidence that we have in God. The Bible says that "perfect love casteth out fear." That does not mean that there is no fear; but that our confidence, our trust in God, our love for Him and our prayer to Him overcome the fear, and we rest in faith.

We can see the mercy of God in prompting the king to extend his sceptre to Esther. She had not been invited, and it was within the power of the king to have her put to death for coming without the invitation; but God was moving to put down the evil devices of Haman. This king and many other people have been used of God to bring about His designs even without their knowledge of what was happening.

#### **God-Given Wisdom**

God gave Esther wisdom in making her appeal. By her asking that the king and Haman attend another banquet the next day, time was gained to allow Haman to further elevate himself in his own opinion. This was permitted by God, for in the intervening night the king failed to sleep, and when the records of the chronicles were read to him, he heard the account of how Mordecai had saved his life when two of his servants had plotted to kill him. When he found that nothing had been done to honour Mordecai, the king desired to do so. At this very instant Haman appeared, showing again that God was ordering the affairs of these people's lives at this moment.

When Haman had returned from the first banquet, he had erected a gallows on which to hang Mordecai because he still refused to bow. This one gnawing issue just ruined all Haman's successes. Mordecai bowed not nor paid him reverence.

When Haman appeared as the king finished the reading of the chronicles, he was asked what should be done to a man that the king delighted to honour. Haman supposed that he would be the man, for after all, had not he attended a private banquet with the king only yesterday with the beautiful Queen Esther as hostess? So Haman said he should let him ride one of the king's horses, be attired in the royal apparel of the king, with the crown royal on his head. Let one of the chief princes lead the horse through the city and proclaim before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." The king said that it should be done even as Haman had said. Mordecai was to be thus honoured and Haman, the chief prince, was to lead the horse. This experience was the worst of humiliations for this Jew-hating Haman. God was intervening to spare the Jews who had not returned to Israel after the captivity.

#### **Reckoning Time**

At the second banquet the king asked again what it was that Esther would like to request and promised her that he would give it, even to the half of the kingdom. She asked for her own life and that of her people, pointing out that they were all doomed to perish. He asked who it was who dared to do such a thing, and she said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman." The king was angry with Haman for planning such a thing.

A servant pointed out the gallows that Haman had built for Mordecai, and the king said, "Hang him thereon." So Haman was hanged on his own gallows, a victim of his own hatred and wrath that he had carried in his heart because one man failed to bow when he walked by.

#### **Open Doors for All**

We realise that Esther was a person raised up of God to be used in the deliverance of her people, but to every one of us comes the opportunity to do something that no one else can do. It will take consecration and dedication to the task at hand if we are going to step into the doors that open before us. One need

all *the things* wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

<sup>12</sup> Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.

<sup>13</sup> Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

<sup>14</sup> Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

#### **Esther 6:1-14**

<sup>1</sup> On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

<sup>2</sup> And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

<sup>3</sup> And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

<sup>4</sup> And the king said, Who *is* in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

<sup>5</sup> And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.

<sup>6</sup> So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?

<sup>7</sup> And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour,

<sup>8</sup> Let the royal apparel be brought which the king *useth* to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:

<sup>9</sup> And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man *withal* whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

<sup>10</sup> Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, *and* take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

<sup>11</sup> Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

not be in a foreign land to have these opportunities, for they are around us every day. Personal comfort and the pursuit of our own ways must be forgotten in the quest for the route that God would have us to follow.

Even in the giving of our testimony, who is to tell but that on any particular occasion God may use the account of our conversion to encourage some soul to seek the Lord and be saved. If we had not been in the meeting or at the place where there was opportunity to give a testimony, ours would not have been given. Someone else might have filled the gap but there is no surety that that testimony would have had the same effect that ours would have had on that particular day. Even if we think that our testimony is not spectacular or outstanding, there is a time and place for it.

Perhaps most of the people who need to be saved are just about like you were before you were saved, and to such people your witness will have an effect. Neither can personal fear be allowed to stop us. We must take the attitude that Esther did that we will do whatever God asks of us, and if we perish we perish. One minister has said that: "we must consecrate to be a failure if our failure will glorify God." The failure would be only in our own estimation, for anything that glorifies God is most certainly a success.

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. Why was it that Mordecai refused to bow to Haman?
2. Why would Haman desire to kill all the Jews when only Mordecai offended him?
3. What was Esther's answer when she was charged to appeal to the king?
4. How do you account for the fact that the king extended the sceptre?
5. Why was Haman so much elated over his invitation to the banquet?
6. What one point ruined his feeling of exaltation as he came home?
7. What honour did Haman expect that fell to another?
8. What did Esther request at the first banquet? At the second?
9. What good deed had Mordecai done that had gone unrewarded?
10. What was Haman's end?

<sup>12</sup> And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hastened to his house mourning, and having his head covered.

<sup>13</sup> And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every *thing* that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai *be* of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.

<sup>14</sup> And while they *were* yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

#### **Esther 7:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen.

<sup>2</sup> And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? and it shall be performed, *even* to the half of the kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request:

<sup>4</sup> For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

<sup>5</sup> Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

<sup>6</sup> And Esther said, The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

#### **Esther 7:9**

<sup>9</sup> And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon.

#### **Esther 7:10**

<sup>10</sup> So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.