



# *Haman's Revenge*



Esther Chapter 3

## **HAMAN'S PROMOTION (VERSES 1-6)**

As we step into Chapter 3, we're introduced to the antagonist of our story, Haman. Elevated by King Xerxes above all the nobles, everyone at the king's gate was expected to bow in respect to him. And everyone did, except one—Mordecai.

There are several theories out there as to why Mordecai would not bow to Haman. One possible explanation is that Haman was a descendant of King Agag of the Amalekites. The Amalekites were the first army to attack the Israelites after their escape from Egypt, and in Exodus 17, the Lord swore that He would wage war with Amalek from generation to generation. Of course, another reason could be that as a Jew, he was fully aware that such reverence was solely for God. Either way, Mordecai's refusal wasn't spurred on by vanity or pride. He refused to bow down because he was standing up for what he believed in.

We need more believers who exhibit the unwavering conviction of Mordecai. Christians who fearlessly rise above the tide and stand firm in their faith, unyielding to the pressures of conformity.

They're steadfast in their devotion, unafraid to boldly proclaim the gospel. Individuals who courageously embrace their uniqueness, and are willing to say, "I'm different."



This thought takes me back several years to a youth group I hosted at my home. Nearly every child in the neighborhood came to our house on Wednesday nights for a Veggie Tales movie, munchies, and a heart-to-heart talk about Jesus. During one cozy October gathering, as the evening was winding down, the children started chattering about their Halloween costumes.

A little boy, hardly more than five at the time, chimed in, "We don't celebrate Halloween, our family doesn't participate in that."

Curious, they inquired, "Why? Why don't you do that?"

His reply was as pure as his heart, "Because we're different!" he said. There was no shame in his voice, just simple joy.

His sincerity got me thinking: Why don't we embrace our differences as eagerly as children do? To not just accept, but to revel in the joy of being unique?

You see, my friends, you and I, we're different. We're shaped for a purpose. And as believers, we tread a different path.

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)*

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## Did you know?

Haman was regarded as an Agagite, linking him to Agag, the Amalekite king who was defeated by King Saul in the Old Testament. On the other hand, Mordecai was a descendant of King Saul, marking a historic enmity between their families.

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Mordecai's refusal to bow down to Haman is a warm reminder that oftentimes we're called to stand up for our faith. Mordecai's unwavering devotion to the Lord led him to defy societal expectations as he refused to bow before a man whose pride had consumed him.

Notice that there was no immediate reward or recognition for his faithfulness; in fact, there rarely is in times like this. But here's the thing about God: Whether the choices to honor Him are big or seemingly insignificant, He takes note of our steadfast commitment and rewards those who faithfully seek Him.

*Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name. (Malachi 3:16)*

## HAMAN'S REVENGE (VERSES 7-15)

In Esther 3:7-15, we see the harmful effects of uncontrolled pride and self-centeredness. Haman is seething with rage because Mordecai refuses to bow down to him.

We all deal with pride to some degree, whether it's within the four walls of our home, with strangers on the internet, or with a group of friends at a coffee shop. Someone says or does something wrong, and it hits us the wrong way.

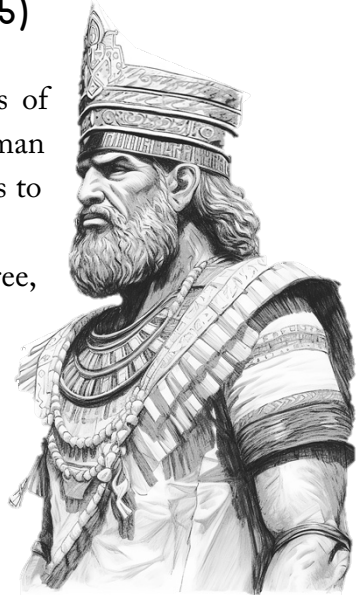
The problem is, that when we're angry and hurt, it's easier to argue than it is to step back.

It's easier to stew in our anger than it is to let go, but pride is destructive. It tells us that it's more important to be right than it is to do right. It makes us feel little, while it tempts us to grasp a false sense of importance. It's deceptive. It interferes with God's word by twisting the truth into a lie. It beckons us to hold on to anger and hate. It rejects the mere thought of humility.

Here's the thing about pride: it lurks in the shadows, waiting and hoping that you'll invite it back in. And when you do, it takes root.

Seething with rage, Haman hatches a treacherous plan that goes far beyond seeking revenge on one man. His wounded pride drives him to plot the annihilation of an entire race.

Haman's hatred and prejudice are truly gut-wrenching as we see him employ the casting of lots, known as "Pur," to determine the unfortunate day when the Jews will face their destruction. It's chilling to witness his cunning deceit unfold as he skillfully manipulates King Xerxes, exploiting his position in the court and coaxing the king into approving his abhorrent scheme.



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## Did you know?

The lots, known as "Pur," that Haman cast in this chapter functioned as a method of decision-making. Similar to throwing dice, the casting of lots involved the use of objects or marked tokens to determine a course of action or reveal an outcome.

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In the midst of this disheartening chapter, don't lose sight of hope. The Bible tells us,

*The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.  
(Proverbs 16:33)*

These events occur within the grand tapestry of God's sovereign plan, which serves to remind us that even in the darkest moments, we're not without hope.

### THE JEWS' LAMENTATION (VERSES 15)

Chapter 3 ends with the city of Susa thrown into confusion as the king's decree is made known. My heart aches thinking of the despair and hopelessness that must have filled the hearts of Mordecai and his fellow Jews.

In moments like these, we've got to hold on to this truth: God's presence is unwavering, even in our deepest struggles. We have to remember that we're not walking alone.

Let's hold on to this hope that shines through the darkness: when our hearts ache and our souls tremble, we can be sure that His love



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What can this chapter teach us about leaning on our own understanding when God's wisdom doesn't feel right or seem to make sense?

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What was the order that was sent out to all of the king's provinces?

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What three reasons did Haman give the king for his plan to destroy the Jews?

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How might the timing of the events in the narrative, particularly Haman's plot and its downfall, resonate with the themes of Passover?

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## AS WE CLOSE THIS CHAPTER

Let's remember the potential that pride holds to take root in our hearts and the destructive path it leaves in its wake. Let's humbly seek to live our lives with a spirit of humility, relying on the guidance of God's unchanging truth.

Let's also remember that even in the face of hostility and the prominence of pride, we're called to stand firm in our faith. Amidst the storms of life, let us take heart, knowing that in our brokenness, we're not alone. For God is near, whispering words of hope and embracing us with His unwavering love.

## Esther Chapter 3

**Esther 3:1** tells us that Haman was an Agagite (a descendant of King Agag). What do we know about King Agag from 1 Samuel 15:1-9?

King Agag, according to 1 Samuel 15:1-9, was the king of the Amalekites. God commanded Saul, the king of Israel, to destroy the Amalekites as a punishment for their opposition to the Israelites when they were coming out of Egypt. Saul defeated the Amalekites but spared King Agag and the best of their livestock, which was in direct disobedience to God's command.

**What did Moses say in Exodus 17:16?**

He said, "Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the LORD, the LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

**What can this chapter teach us about leaning on our own understanding when God's wisdom doesn't feel right or seem to make sense?**

That God's wisdom doesn't always align with human understanding. It underscores the need for trust in God even when circumstances seem to be unfavorable. God's wisdom and plan often unfold over time, and what seems wrong to us may be part of a larger divine plan.

**What was the order that was sent out to all of the king's provinces?**

The order sent out to all of the king's provinces was to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and to plunder their goods (Esther 3:13).

**What three reasons did Haman give the king for his plan to destroy the Jews?**

1. Their laws were different from those of every other people.
2. They did not keep the king's laws.
3. It was not in the king's interest to tolerate them.  
(Esther 3:8).

**How might the timing of the events in the narrative, particularly Haman's plot and its downfall, resonate with the themes of Passover?**

The timing of the narrative in Esther, particularly Haman's plot and its downfall, directly resonates with the themes of Passover. Interestingly, Haman's plot to annihilate the Jews was solidified with the casting of lots (or "purim") on the 13th of Nisan (Esther 3:12), which falls within the week of Passover, a significant Jewish holiday. Passover commemorates the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt, a deliverance orchestrated by God against seemingly insurmountable odds. Just as God delivered the Israelites during the time of Exodus, He works behind the scenes in Esther to save the Jews from Haman's plot. This parallel strengthens the theme of deliverance from oppression that is central to both Passover and the story of Esther. This timing serves as a poignant reminder of God's enduring commitment to the deliverance of His people.