

Remnant Life Church

April 28, 2021

Esther

Pt 4

Esther 3:1-11

“Haman”

King Xerxes and Queen Vashti

- Xerxes, also known as Ahasuerus, was the 4th king of the Persian Achaemenid Empire
- He ruled in the middle of the 5th century BC
- The son of Darius the Great

- After a week of eating and drinking, he sent for his queen Vashti
 - No other reason than to show her off
 - Not in a way to honor her but as a lecherous sideshow
 - She refused and he banished her

The King and Queen, I believe, can be seen as a type of person who is lost in the world but longing for something more

- Xerxes was known to be a fairly benevolent ruler regarding other people's religions and gods
- The queen had a true sense of duty and even modesty, holding to her convictions

What do we learn from these two?

- All people are subject to the will of God
- All people can and will be used to accomplish His will

But every story with a hero needs, what in literary terms, is known as a antagonist

- In the story of Esther, that antagonist is a man by the name of Haman

READ – Esther 3:1-11

Haman

- Haman is not found anywhere else in the Scriptures except in the account of Esther
 - His first appearance is in the first verse of the third chapter
 - But he is then prominent from the third through the ninth chapters mentioned a total of 44 times
- He was obviously a man of accomplishment
 - His skills would have been evident for Xerxes to promote him to the highest position among his other nobles and royal officials
 - His position might be comparable today to that of a prime minister
 - Whatever the official title was, it required that wherever he went, the royal officials and people were to bow or kneel down to him (**Esth 3:2**)
 - He was a man who embraced his authority to the point of tremendous ego
 - Only the king was above him

- But he has a problem
 - One that, if he does not address it, will undermine his authority in the eyes of the people
 - Mordecai is a Jew and a worshipper of Yahweh, the one true God
 - This means that Mordecai would have read and known the writings of the Pentateuch, the books of Moses
 - He would have also known that the first three of the 10 commandments found in **Ex 20** are about the place of God in the life of a Jew
 - This is **Ex 20:3-6**
 - *“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.*
 - In other words, there was NEVER a situation when a Jew would ever bow down before anything or anyone else
 - And because of that unshakable conviction and refusal to bow, Haman, we read, becomes enraged (**Esth 3:5**)
 - Not only does Haman want Mordecai punished (put to death) but he wants all of the Jews throughout the 127 provinces of the entire kingdom put to death as well
- I wonder if you have ever considered Haman’s reaction
 - I can understand his anger toward Mordechai
 - It was a question of standing, position, authority, saving face, etc...
 - He could have been seen as weak if he did not deal with it
 - But to want to wipe out the entire Jewish race because one man showed him disrespect?
 - Why would he react in such a strong and murderous way?

Well to understand Haman’s seemingly over-the-top reaction to Mordechai and the Jews is to know where he came from and his ancestral history

- Admittedly there is not much but it is enough
- **Esther 3:1** tells us that Haman is the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite
 - The first contact between the Agagites and the Jews is found back in **I Sam 15**
 - King Saul waged war against the Amalekites who were under the reign of King Agag
 - We know that the Amalekites were a common and persistent enemy of Israel throughout their OT history
 - The Agagites were descendants of their king who was defeated by Saul
 - Haman was from that line of people not of Persian descent
- There are many examples throughout history of those in positions of great power and leadership who were not a part of the nation or people they were ruling

- For instance: Napoleon was not a Frenchman, he was an Italian Corsican (although it was under French military control at the time)
- Hitler was not German, he was an Austrian
- Stalin was not a Russian, he was from the neighboring country of Georgia
- Even those who served God – Neither Moses nor Joseph was Egyptian, they were of the Hebrew people
- And Haman was not Persian, he was an Amalekite – a sworn enemy of the Jewish people
 - They were the first nation recorded in the Bible to attack the Israelites following their Exodus from Egypt
 - Not long after they crossed the Red Sea (Ex 17:8)
- Why did Haman want to wipe out the Jews?
 - Because he was from a race of people who had hated them for thousands of years
 - They were yet another people group that Satan tried to use to extinguish the people of God
- What do you see, though, today about all those who tried to do that?
 - The power of the Babylonians, Amalekites, Hittites, Assyrians, Nazi Germany, Russia, Arab nations have all risen and fallen in their attempt at domination
 - But the people of God remain, and they always be protected by God
- It appeared that the people of God were about to be wiped out
 - But God's presence assured, not only their survival, but their continuing to grow because they would one day welcome the Son of God as one of their own
 - At least for a time
 - But even that was all according to the perfect plan of God

God is always in control

His providential care is always right on time

Next week – Mordechai: the man God used as a powerful instrument to guide Esther into her place of authority to save God's people