


## Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

*Haman Plots to Destroy the Jews*


<sup>1</sup> After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman [Hay-man] son of Hammedatha [Häm-mëd-ä-thä], the Agagite [A-gäh-gîte; 'gîte' rhymes with sight], elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. <sup>2a</sup> All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him.


Q1. The king had promoted Haman to be his second-in-command and directed all his subjects to genuflect before him. How might this honor affect a person's attitude?

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 gen·u·flect (jën'yə-flëkt') [© 2003-2023 Farlex, Inc. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/genuflection>]

1. To bend the knee or touch one knee to the floor or ground, as in worship.
2. To be servilely respectful or deferential; grovel.

 Please keep in mind Mordecai's involvement in saving the king's life from the murderous plot of the two king's officers Bigthana and Teresh (previous lesson, Esther 2:21-23).

 "Mordecai refused to reverence Haman. The religion of a Jew forbade him to give honours to any mortal man which savoured of idolatry, especially to so wicked a man as Haman. By nature, all [people] are idolaters; self is our favourite idol, we are pleased to be treated as if everything were at our disposal. Though religion by no means destroys good manners, [it] teaches us to render honour to whom honour is due, yet by a citizen of Zion, not only in his heart, but in his eyes, such a vile person as Haman was, is condemned, Psalm 15:4 [↓]. The true believer cannot obey edicts, or conform to fashions, which break the law of God. He must obey God rather than man, and leave the consequences to Him. Haman was full of wrath. His device was inspired by that wicked spirit, who has been a murderer from the beginning; whose enmity to Christ and his church, [and] governs all his children." [©1706, *Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible* by Matthew Henry; <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/esther/3-1.htm>]

**Psalm 15:4** [The Message (MSG)]

<sup>3-4</sup> "Don't hurt your friend, don't blame your neighbor; despise the despicable.

## Lesson 3: Esther 3:1-15

<sup>2b</sup> But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

Q2. If Haman was considered a deity (god-like), why would Mordecai refuse to genuflect before him?

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**Exodus 20:3-4** [NIV-1984] [The first two of the Ten Commandments:]

"You shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself an idol 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 . . ."

Q3. How might a person with a 'big head' (an egomaniac, a narcissist) such as Haman treat someone who refuses to honor the person in the way he believes he should be honored?

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Q4. Present-day: How should we honor celebrities or politicians who we may meet?

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**James 2:1-4** [NIV-1984] [The New Testament has something to say about 'celebrity' and how we should act:]

<sup>1</sup> My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. <sup>2</sup> Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. <sup>3</sup> If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," <sup>4</sup> have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

## Lesson 3: Esther 3:1-15

### Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>3</sup> Then the royal officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's command?"

Q5. Is there a lesson for us today as we think about Mordecai's reaction, his refusal?

Yes? }  
No? } Why?

<sup>4</sup> Day after day they spoke to him but he refused to comply. Therefore, they told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai's behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew.


Q6. What was the motive behind the royal officials informing Haman about Mordecai's refusal?

<sup>5</sup> When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged.

Q7. Why was Haman "enraged"?

## Lesson 3: Esther 3:1-15

### Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>6</sup> Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead, Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

Q8. What was Haman's immediate reaction to Mordecai?

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Q9. And like so many dictators throughout history, what was Haman's final plot?

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Q10. Why might this people-group be targeted?

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**Genesis 12:3** [English Standard Version (ESV)]

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

**Deuteronomy 7:6** [English Standard Version (ESV)]

"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Q11. In Genesis 12:3 (↑): God tells Abraham (or Abram) that "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed". And in Deuteronomy 7:6 (↑): God states that this people-group has been "chosen . . . to be a people for his treasured possession". To Whom, to what might be the blessing, the "treasured possession"?

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

Q12. If every person that comprises this people-group is annihilated, who wins the contest between good and evil?

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**Genesis 3:14-15** [NIV-1984] [This passage from Genesis 3 is the first recorded conflict between good and evil.]


<sup>14</sup> So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."


## Lesson 3: Esther 3:1-15

### Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>7</sup> In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, they cast the pur (that is, the lot) in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

 “The diviners cast lots, according to the custom of those ancient and eastern people, what day and what month would be most lucky, not for his success with the king, (of whose compliance with his request he made no doubt,) but for the most effectual and universal [annihilation] of the Jews; wherein appears both his implacable malice, and unwearied diligence in seeking vengeance of them with so much and so long trouble to himself; and God’s singular providence in disposing the lot to that time, that so the Jews might have sufficient space of time to get the decree reversed.” [© about 1667, *Commentary on the Holy Bible* by Matthew Poole; Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/esther/3-7.htm>]

 Commentators date this event in March or April of 474 B.C. God ensured that the Jews had nearly twelve months to reverse the decree. The month of Nisan is generally considered to be March or April, and the month of Adar corresponds to our March.

<sup>8</sup> Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed and scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people and who do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them.

Q13. Did the king seem to question Haman’s assertion “it is . . . best . . . to [not] tolerate them”?  
Why?

Yes? }  
No? } Why?

<sup>9</sup> If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will put ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out this business."

Q14. Where did Haman expect to get the wealthy sum of 10,000 talents of silver?


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Q15. Obviously to the king a sum of 10,000 talents was a great amount. Haman was crafty in that he offered to place the money in the royal treasury. (1) Who controlled the outflow of money from the royal treasury? (2) If “the men who carry out this business” received any money, who would pay them? (3) Why was this a valuable transaction for the king?

(1)

(2)


(3)

 “One-gram [of silver is valued] about \$38. At this price, a talent (33 kg) would be worth about \$1,400,116.57. Similarly, in February 2016, the price of silver was about \$15 per troy ounce or about 50 cents per gram, so a 33 kg silver talent would be worth about \$16,500.” [<https://www.google.com>; August, 2023]

 Commentators speculate that Haman expected to pillage the wealth of the Jews as they were killed to obtain the 10,000 talents of silver he promised to the king.

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### Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>10</sup> So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha [Ham-mě-da-tha], the Agagite [Ăg-ă-gīt, gīt rhymes with sight], the enemy of the Jews.

Q16. When the king gave his signet ring to Haman, what did that signify?


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Q17. The writer of the Book of Esther used the complete name “Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews”.

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 Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews: “This full description . . . [stresses] . . . the terrible plight in which the Jews were placed by the delegation of unlimited powers for their destruction into the hands of their hereditary foe.” [©1882 and later, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* by Cambridge University Press. Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/esther/3-10.htm>]

<sup>11</sup> "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

Q18. What kind of power did the king grant to Haman?


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Q19. Did the king really give up the huge amount of money: 10,000 talents of silver?

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 “In the East, confiscation of goods is the invariable accompaniment of capital punishment, and they are forfeited to the crown. At first sight the words seem to mean that the king declines Haman’s offer, and gives him free leave to massacre



## Lesson 3: Esther 3:1-15

the Jews, and plunder them for his own benefit. But probably it is implied that the promised payment to the king was to be made out of the spoils. It is clear that the information which Mordecai obtained assured him that the king's treasuries were to receive the booty (Esther 4:7 ↓)." [©1882 and later, *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* by Cambridge University Press. Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/esther/3-11.htm>]

**Esther 4:7** [New American Standard Bible (NASB)]

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

<sup>12</sup> Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman's orders to the king's satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring.

Q20. Even the powerful King Xerxes could not by edict force a common language upon all of the people in the nations under his rule. How did Haman navigate the language barrier?

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Q21. Did the orders have the authority of the king?

Yes? }  
No? } Why?

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## Lesson 3: Esther 3:1-15

### Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>13</sup> Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jews - young and old, women and little children - on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

Q22. Do you think the recipients of the orders knew precisely what the king decreed?

Yes? }  
No? } Why?

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Q23. (1) Did the recipients of the orders have any latitude in executing the orders? In other words, could they show mercy to a Jew (or Jews) within their district/jurisdiction? (2) If they failed to comply with the order, what might be their fate?

(1)

(2)

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<sup>14</sup> A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they would be ready for that day.

Q24. If you were a Jewish father or mother, what might be your response?

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Q25. If your spouse, your business partner, the owner of your favorite market/shop, friend, or next-door neighbor was a Jew, how might you react? Would you distance yourself from them?

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### Lesson 3: Esther 3:1-15

<sup>15</sup> Spurred on by the king's command, the couriers went out, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

Q26. Why might the “city of Susa” be confused (bewildered)?

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 **The city of Susa was bewildered:** “not only the Jews, but a great number of the citizens, either because they were related to them, or engaged with them in worldly concerns; or out of humanity and compassion towards so vast a number of innocent people, now appointed as sheep for the slaughter; or out of a fear either of some sedition and disturbance which might arise by this means; or of some damage which might accrue to themselves or friends, who haply under this pretense might be exposed to rapine or slaughter; or of a public judgment of God upon them all for so bloody a decree.”  
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Q27. What were the king and Haman celebrating?

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