**The Book of Esther**

**Wednesday Night Bible Study**

**Wednesday, 09 June 2021**

**Queens Chapel UMC \* 7410 Muirkirk Road \* Beltsville, MD 20705**

**Instructor: Rev. Dr. Will Butler**

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**Theme:** **“A Woman for Such a Time as This”** **(Esther 4:14)**

"…Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

**Esther Chapter 3**

**(Part 1)**

As we study **Esther, Chapter 3**, the name Haman son of Hammedatha *[ham-e-da-tha]* the Agagite *[a-ga-git]* is a synonym for *Adolf Hitler*. Editors of the Encyclopedia Britannica briefly reveals a description of Adolf Hitler’s anti-Semitic violence against humanity—especially the Jews.

“The storm of anti-Semitic violence loosed by Nazi Germany under the leadership of **Adolf Hitler** from 1933 to 1945 not only reached a terrifying intensity in Germany itself but also inspired anti-Jewish movements elsewhere.

The camps’ victims were mostly Jews but also included Roma (Gypsies), Slavs *[slaaves]*, homosexuals, persons with alleged mental defects, and others. The extermination camps played a central role in the holocaust. In Nazi Germany, anti-Semitism reached a racial dimension never before experienced.

The Nazis, who regarded Jews not only as members of a subhuman race but a dangerous cancer that would destroy the German people…The final solution…the murder of all Jews— men, women, and children—and their eradication from the human race.”

**www.britannica.com/event/Holocaust**

The Nation of Israel, in the 3rd chapter of Esther, is about to encounter Haman’s destructive, hateful and ugly spirit of anti-Semitism.

**Esther 3:1**

1 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him.

* Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite
* Haman was a descendent from a royal family
* His father was Hammedatha the Agagite*.* An Agagite was a title of the kings of the *Amalekites*

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**Note:**

In **1 Samuel 15,** God gave King Saul a direct command to destroy the Amalekites. Saul did not obey God and because of Saul’s failure to exterminate the nation of the Amalekites it almost led to the extermination of the Nation of Israel in the Book of Esther. God saw down through history what could take place if the entire Nation of the Amalekites were not destroyed.

Let’s review the history of how Haman became a threat to Israel.

**Read, 1 Samuel 15**

* **The Command from God to King Saul through the Prophet Samuel:**

1 One day Samuel said to Saul, “It was the Lord who told me to anoint you as king of his people, Israel. Now listen to this message from the Lord!

2 This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies has declared: I have decided to settle accounts with the nation of Amalek for opposing Israel when they came from Egypt.

3 **Now go and completely destroy the entire Amalekite nation—men, women, children, babies, cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys.”**

* **King Saul’s act of disobedience**

7 Then Saul slaughtered the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, east of Egypt.

8 **He captured Agag, the Amalekite king, but completely destroyed everyone else.**

9 **Saul and his men spared Agag’s** life and kept the best of the sheep and goats, the cattle, the fat calves, and the lambs—everything, in fact, that appealed to them. They destroyed only what was worthless or of poor quality.

* **A valuable Lesson about disobedience**

17 And Samuel told him, “Although you may think little of yourself, are you not the leader of the tribes of Israel? The Lord has anointed you king of Israel.

**18 And the Lord sent you on a mission and told you, ‘Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, until they are all dead.’**

**19 Why haven’t you obeyed the Lord?** Why did you rush for the plunder and do what was evil in the Lord’s sight?”

20 “But I did obey the Lord,” Saul insisted. “I carried out the mission he gave me. I brought back King Agag, but I destroyed everyone else.

21 Then my troops brought in the best of the sheep, goats, cattle, and plunder to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.”

**22 But Samuel replied, “What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice,** and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.

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Q = What did the Amalekites do to deserve such punishment from God?

**Read Deuteronomy 25:17-19**

Q = Why do you think God commanded King Saul to kill innocent children and animals?

**Read Exodus 17:8-16**

Q = What does this say to us today about raising our children today?

Q = What did God want King Saul to learn about obeying God?

Q = What issues are you dealing with today because of past disobedience?

Q = If you had the opportunity to share the importance of obeying God, what would you say?

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Note:  **There are three important facts about obeying God:**

* Obedience identifies who we belong to
* **Exodus 19:5** **[Contemporary English Version (CEV)]**

“Now if you will faithfully obey me, you will be my very own people. The whole world is mine”

* Obedience sets the future for your family
* **Deuteronomy 5:29 (CEV)**

“wish they would always worship me with fear and trembling and be this willing to obey me! Then they and their children would always enjoy a successful life.”

* **Obedience adds years to your life**
* **1 Kings 3:14 (CEV)**

“If you obey me and follow my commands, as your father David did, I’ll let you live a long time.”

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**Because of King Saul’s disobedience, The Nation of Israel had to face Haman**

* Haman comes from a long line of those who hated Jews
* Haman’s promotion in the Kingdom was equal to a Prime Minister
* Haman’s position in the Kingdom gave him political power

**Esther 3:2**

2 And all the king’s servants who were within the king’s gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage.

* The King sends out a command that everyone has to bow before Haman and recognize his position
* Mordecai is a Judge at the gate which means he has to bow also—but he doesn’t

Q = Why do you think Mordecai is risking his life and position by not bowing to Haman?

**Read Exodus 20:4-5**