**The Book of Esther**

**Wednesday Night Bible Study**

**Wednesday, 30 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 3)**

**Esther 3:7**

 7 In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

**Amplified**

 7 In the first month, the month of Nisan (Mar-Apr), in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Haman cast Pur, that is, the lot, cast before him day after day [to find a lucky day to approach the king], month after month, until the twelfth month, the month of Adar (Feb-Mar).

* This was the moth of Nisan—During this time period [March/April] the Jews would be celebrating the Passover.

Q = What is the Passover?

Q = How should the Passover resonate with Christians today?

* In **Verse 7,** Haman irritation grows day by day as he walks through the gate and Everybody bows except Mordecai
* Haman knew that Mordecai’s religious belief prevented him from bowing
* Haman becomes even more determined to massacre the Jews
* Haman decides to have his musicians to cast a lot called *“Pur”* to decide which day of the year the Jews would be destroyed
* Haman and the musicians didn’t realize that God was still in control of God’s people and time

**Note:**

 Magicians Casting Lots were a practice for advisors that made decisions superstitiously based on astrology and knowledge of biblical history for Kings and public officials with rank

**Esther 3:8-9**

 8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people’s, and they do not keep the king’s laws. Therefore, it is not fitting for the king to let them remain.

 9 If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king’s treasuries.”

**Amplified**

  8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a certain people scattered [abroad] and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of all other people, and they do not observe the king’s laws. Therefore it is not in the king’s interest to [tolerate them and] let them stay here.

 9 If it pleases the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who carry out the king’s business, to put into the king’s treasuries.”

* Haman brought to the attention of the King that there were people in his kingdom that were different
* In **verse 8,** Haman never identified the people he was speaking of
* These people follow the Mosaic Law and not your law
* These people should be exterminated
* Haman convince the King that the extermination of these people would bring an abundance of wealth into the King’s treasure by:
* 1. Killing them
* 2. Confiscating their property

**Note**

 In verse 9, Hamon mentioned *Ten thousand talents of silver*—this exact amount is unknown but it probably would have weighed 375 tons. The talents of silver equaled 70% of the King’s annual revenue.

 Since this sum would have been derived from the plunder of the Jews, it indicates that they have grown prosperous by the Favor of God

**The MacAuthur Bible Commentary**

* This sounded wonderful to the King because he lost a very costly war and he needed a way to financially replenish what was lost.
* The King had little regard for life
* At this point the King didn’t care who had to die—he wanted the money
* The King never inquired about who the people were that Haman wanted to exterminate
* Haman or the King didn’t know that Queens Esther’s nationality was Jewish
* Therefore, when the King signs off on this, he is signing away Queen Esther’s life.

**Esther 3:10**

 10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

* The King has a signet ring that written laws and commands are sealed by
* The signet ring was pressed down in soft wax and that became the King’s signature
* Any order that had the King’s signet ring’s image upon it was Law that could not be reversed.

**Esther 3:11-13**

 11 And the king said to Haman, “The money and the people are given to you, to do with them as seems good to you.”

 12 Then the king’s scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and a decree was written according to all that Haman commanded—to the king’s satraps, to the governors who were over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king’s signet ring.

 13 And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king’s provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions.

Amplified

 11 The king said to Haman, “The silver is given to you, and the people also, to do with them as you please.”

 12 Then the king’s scribes (secretaries) were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written just as Haman commanded to the king’s satraps (chief rulers), and to the governors who were over each province and to the officials of each people, each province according to its script (writing), each people according to their own language; being written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king’s signet ring.

 13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth [day] of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar (March 7, 473 b.c.), and to seize their belongings as plunder.

* This was a decree to destroy all the Jews in one day

Let’s get a proper perspective of this effort:

* 1. The empire stretched from India, across Asia down through the Fertile Crescent (modern-day Iraq) and the Mediterranean Sea
* It also included some of Europe, Asia Minor and parts of Africa through Egypt and Ethiopia
* Within this vast Kingdom, there were people of many languages—probably about 127 different dialects
* The scribes had the responsibility of translating and making enough copies to cover the entire kingdom
* When the administrative work was completed, messengers were sent out on camels and donkeys—which took days [if not, weeks] to cover the kingdom
* This law was giving non-Jewish people an anti-Semitism permit to kill Jewish persons that lived within the Kingdom without legal consequences.
* In other words, on this designated day, it would be lawful to kill a Jewish person in any way one desired to.

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***Note:***

 *In* ***Chapter 1*** *we learned that any Medes and Persians law could not be reversed, changed or repealed—not even by the King himself. We saw how powerful the laws were carried out when Vashti the queen was expelled out of the King’s life and sight.*

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**Esther 3:14-15**

 14 A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province, being published for all people, that they should be ready for that day.

 15 The couriers went out, hastened by the king’s command; and the decree was proclaimed in Shushan the citadel. So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

**Amplified**

 14 A copy of the edict to be decreed as law in every province was published to all the peoples, so that they would be ready for this day.

 15 The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa. And while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was perplexed [by the unusual and alarming decree].

* The Jewish people were innocent of any wrong doing but their lives were in danger
* History declares that the citizens of the kingdom didn’t want to exterminate the Jews.

Let’s look at a perspective of Jewish and non-Jewish relationships:

* The Jews were neighbors
* The Jews were employees and employers
* The Jews were sitting in political leadership position throughout the Kingdom—Read **Daniel 2:46-49 (NLT)**

 46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar threw himself down before Daniel and worshiped him, and he commanded his people to offer sacrifices and burn sweet incense before him.

 47 The king said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is the greatest of gods, the Lord over kings, a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this secret.”

 48 Then the king appointed Daniel to a high position and gave him many valuable gifts. He made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon, as well as chief over all his wise men.

 49 At Daniel’s request, the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be in charge of all the affairs of the province of Babylon, while Daniel remained in the king’s court.

* Therefore, the letter had no specific reason for killing the Jews
* Most likely, even the non-Jewish population was puzzled at the extreme and deadly racism of the King and Haman