



# Esther 2:19-3:15

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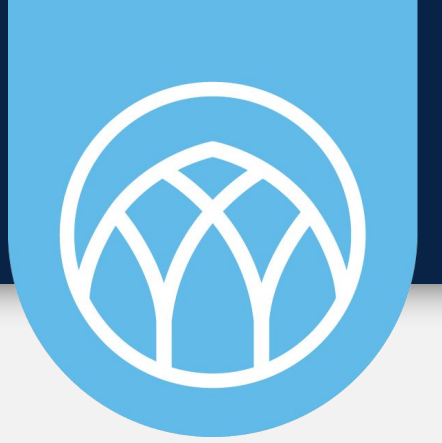
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## Esther 2:19-23



<sup>19</sup> Now when the virgins were gathered together the second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. <sup>20</sup> Esther had not made known her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had commanded her, for Esther obeyed Mordecai just as when she was brought up by him. <sup>21</sup> In those days, as Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. <sup>22</sup> And this came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. <sup>23</sup> When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows.<sup>[a]</sup> And it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

# Group Questions



- What key details stand out in the text?
- What do we learn about Mordecai?
- What do we learn about the king?

# Jeremiah 29:7-11



<sup>7</sup> But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. <sup>8</sup> For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>9</sup> for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> “For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. <sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare<sup>[b]</sup> and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

## Esther 2:23



<sup>23</sup> When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows.<sup>[a]</sup> And it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

## Esther 3:1-6



After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, and advanced him and set his throne above all the officials who were with him. <sup>2</sup> And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage. <sup>3</sup> Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" <sup>4</sup> And when they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's words would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew. <sup>5</sup> And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury. <sup>6</sup> But he disdained<sup>[a]</sup> to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So, as they had made known to him the people of Mordecai, Haman sought to destroy<sup>[b]</sup> all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

# Group Questions



- What is the source of tension between Haman and Mordecai? Where in the text do you see it?
- What does it tell you about Haman and his character?
- Why do you think Mordecai refuses to bow or pay homage?
- Why is it only here that Mordecai finally reveals his identity as a Jew?
- What do we learn about the court as expressed through the actions of the king's servants in verses 3-4?



“I am your slave, who is less than the dust under your feet, and I renew my covenant with Pharaoh by bowing before you seven times seven times.” (Labayu, Governor of Shechem, to Pharaoh)



# Esther 3:1



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

# Deuteronomy 25:17-19



<sup>17</sup> “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, <sup>18</sup> how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. <sup>19</sup> Therefore when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you, in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget.

# 1 Samuel 15:2-3



<sup>2</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. <sup>3</sup> Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction<sup>[a]</sup> all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’”

# 1 Samuel 15:9



<sup>9</sup> But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves<sup>[a]</sup> and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.

# 1 Samuel 15:8



<sup>8</sup> And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword.

# Esther 2:5



<sup>5</sup> Now there was a Jew in Susa the citadel whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite,

# Ephesians 6:12



<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

# Genesis 39:10



<sup>10</sup> And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.



## Esther 3:4



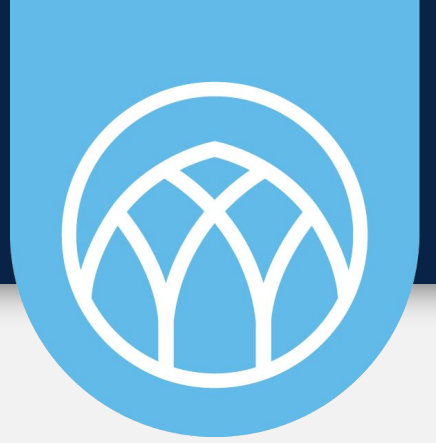
<sup>4</sup> And when they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's words would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew.

## Esther 3:7-11



<sup>7</sup> In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman day after day; and they cast it month after month till the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. <sup>8</sup> 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 every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's profit to tolerate them. <sup>9</sup> If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay 10,000 talents<sup>[a]</sup> of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, that they may put it into the king's treasuries.” <sup>10</sup> So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. <sup>11</sup> And the king said to Haman, “The money is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you.”

# Group Questions



- What is the significance of casting “*Pur*” or “*lots*” in Haman’s presence day after day? Why do you think that?
- In verses 8-9, how does Haman frame the problem to Ahasuerus? What do you notice? What does Haman play on?
- In verses 10-11, what do we learn about this king?

## Esther 3:7 (NIV)



In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, the pur (that is, the lot) was cast in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.”

# Proverbs 16:33



The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

## Esther 3:8



<sup>8</sup> 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 every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not to the king's profit to tolerate them.

# Esther 3:10



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

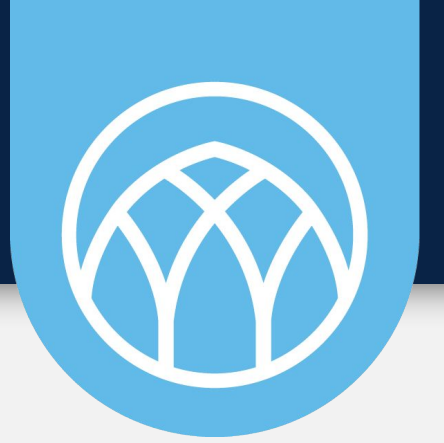
## Esther 3:12-15



<sup>12</sup> Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring. <sup>13</sup> Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. <sup>14</sup> A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day. <sup>15</sup> The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the citadel. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.



# Group Questions



- Why do you think the city was thrown into confusion? Again, what kind of empire are you revealed to be living in?
- In verse 12, it says the edict went out on the thirteenth day of the first month. What significance might that date have for a Jewish reader? What significance should it have for us?



“Ahasuerus [Xerxes] was very unjust to consent that a whole people, who were under his protection, should be massacred without any inquiry into their fault, only because his favourite [sic] had said that they were enemies to his state. No wonder that the city of Shushan should be perplexed, for it must grieve every humane or loyal person to see the king [act] so absurd[ly], and the innocent condemned to destruction. Observe, from this chapter, how dangerous it is to listen to detractors, and that we ought never to credit evil reports till we have first inquired into the truth of them.” - Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810)

# Leviticus 23:5



In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight,<sup>[a]</sup> is the LORD's  
Passover.

## Acts 4:27-29



<sup>27</sup> for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup> to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. <sup>29</sup> And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,

# Revelation 13:10



If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes;  
if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain.

# Habakkuk 3:17-19



Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines,  
the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food,  
the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, <sup>18</sup> yet I will rejoice  
in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. <sup>19</sup> GOD, the Lord, is my  
strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.  
To the choirmaster: with stringed<sup>[a]</sup> instruments.