

EXILE AND RETURN Lesson 14

FIRST DAY

Read Lesson 13 Notes

SECOND DAY:

Read Esther 3

Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews

[3:1] After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. [2] All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

[3] Then the royal officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's command?" [4] 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.

[5] When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. [6] 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.

[7] 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.

[8] 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. [9] 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."

[10] So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. [11] "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

[12] 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. [13] 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. [14] 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.

[15] 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.

Question 4b

Genesis 3:15; [15] 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."

John 8:44; [44] *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

Revelation 12:9; [9] The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Question 5

James 4:7-10; [7] Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Come near to God and he will come near to you.

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Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [9] Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

THIRD Day:

Read Esther 4

Mordecai Persuades Esther to Help

[4:1] When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. [2] But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. [3] In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

[4] When Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. [5] Then Esther summoned Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why.

[6] So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. [7] Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. [8] He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to urge her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

[9] Hathach went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. [10] Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, [11] "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is

for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

[12] When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, [13] he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. [14] For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

[15] Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: [16] "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

[17] So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

FOURTH DAY:

Read Esther 5

Esther's Request to the King

[5:1] On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. [2] When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

[3] Then the king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you."

[4] "If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him."

[5] "Bring Haman at once," the king said, "so that we may do what Esther asks."

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So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. [6] As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, “Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.”

[7] Esther replied, “My petition and my request is this: [8] If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question.”

Haman's Rage Against Mordecai

[9] Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. [10] Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home.

Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, [11] Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. [12] “And that's not all,” Haman added. “I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. [13] But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate.”

[14] His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy.” This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the gallows built.

Question 11

Galatians 5:25; [25] Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

FIFTH DAY

Read Esther 6-7

Mordecai Honored

[6:1] That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. [2] It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

[3] “What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?” the king asked.

“Nothing has been done for him,” his attendants answered.

[4] The king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows he had erected for him.

[5] His attendants answered, “Haman is standing in the court.”

“Bring him in,” the king ordered.

[6] When Haman entered, the king asked him, “What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?”

Now Haman thought to himself, “Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?” [7] So he answered the king, “For the man the king delights to honor, [8] have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. [9] Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!’”

[10] “Go at once,” the king commanded Haman. “Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended.”

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[11] So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robbed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, “This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!”

[12] Afterward Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, [13] and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.

His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, “Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!” [14] While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

Esther 7

Haman Hanged

[7:1] So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther, [2] and as they were drinking wine on that second day, the king again asked, “Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.”

[3] Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. [4] For I and my people have been sold for destruction and slaughter and annihilation. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.”

[5] King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, “Who is he? Where is the man who has dared to do such a thing?”

[6] Esther said, “The adversary and enemy is this vile Haman.”

Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. [7] The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.

[8] Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining.

The king exclaimed, “Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?”

As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. [9] Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, “A gallows seventy-five feet high stands by Haman's house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king.”

The king said, “Hang him on it!” [10] So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.

Question 13c

John 3:36; [36] Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.”

John 11:25-26; [25] Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; [26] and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?**”

Galatians 3:13; [13] Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

SIXTH DAY:

Review Esther 3-7

See Days 1-5 above

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