

A Time to Stand

...for such a time as this. Esther 4:14



Haman Promoted
Esther 3
Lesson 3

Background Information

At this time, Esther has been queen for about four years. Most commentators believe that Haman is a descendant of Agag, who was the king of the Amalekites, the people who were Israel's sworn enemy for generations. These people, descendants of Esau, were ancient enemies of the Hebrews. If Mordecai was descended from Saul, and Haman from the Amalekites, then what follows is the continuation of a long-standing hostility between the families.

The king decided to make Haman chief officer in the empire. Think of it: Mordecai had saved the king's life and didn't receive a word of thanks, let alone a reward; but wicked Haman did nothing and was promoted! God permitted Haman to be appointed to this high office because He had purposes to fulfill through him. There are many seeming injustices in this life; yet God knows what He's doing and will never forsake the righteous or leave their deeds unrewarded. As the plot unfolds, we can see the sovereignty of God silently watching over the affairs of His people.

They *cast pur* to decide the fate of the people of Israel. What seemed to be a happenstance we will see to be the providence of God. Each year on the Feast of Purim, the Book of Esther is read publicly in the synagogue; and whenever the reader mentions Haman's name, the people stamp their feet and exclaim, "May his name be blotted out!" To Jews everywhere, Haman personifies everybody who has tried to exterminate the people of Israel.

The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly of the Lord [even the events that seem accidental are really ordered by Him]. AMP

Prov 16:33

Treasures of the Heart

...Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus — the people of Mordecai.

Esther 3:6

What are the facts? - Observation

The first step is **Observation**. Carefully **read the text** in several translations, paying close attention to the **facts**. **Mark your text**: look for repeated words, contrasts or comparisons. Look for answers to: Who? What? When? Where? Why or How? Studying a narrative requires following the key characters and paying special attention to what God says and does. Note a key verse in each section, to help you understand the main emphasis of the section?

Esther 3:1-6

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. 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. 3 Then the king's servants who were within the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" 4 Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told it to Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew. 5 When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. 6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus — the people of Mordecai.

Dig Deeper - Interpretation

The second step is **Interpretation**. This is the time to dig out your study tools, such as a bible dictionary, concordance, maps, or word study tools. Keys to correct interpretation are **context**, **repeated words**, **word definitions**, **patterns (similarities/differences)**, **culture and cross-references**. **Notate** where you found it to share with the group. Interpretation answers the question, "What was the original author trying to convey?"

Esther 3:7-9

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.

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."

Dig Deeper _____

Esther 3:10-15

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. 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. 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.

Dig Deeper _____

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Lesson

What lesson can I draw from my observations? A lesson is a general principle or basic truth drawn from the passage. **Note** the verse you took the lesson from. (aim for 10 words or less)

Esther 3:1-6 _____
verse _____

Esther 3:7-9 _____
verse _____

Esther 3:10-15 _____
verse _____

Application

Pray! – Simply state how you will apply each lesson. Is there a challenge, a command, a warning or an example? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What is God saying (to me) through this truth? What am I going to do practically in response to God's Word? (aim for 10 words or less)

Esther 3:1-6 _____

Esther 3:7-9 _____

Esther 3:10-15 _____

Words or repeated phrases

Repeated words help us discover the **main point**.

Getting the point!

State the "Main Point" of each section. See if you can boil down the meaning of each section into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try)

Esther 3:1-6 _____

Esther 3:7-9 _____

Esther 3:10-15 _____

Main idea

Simply state the main idea of the whole passage in one or two sentences.

Title

State the main point of the entire passage in the form of a title.

Flex Your Muscles

Find a New Testament example of this Old Testament truth.

Time to stand

Time to think: How will we know how to respond to life's ups and downs? God's Word is always the basis of our choices. Knowing who He is helps us face whatever circumstances we find ourselves in. **What did you learn about God, that will help you stand firm...in such a time as this?**

Radiating His Truth

*When man does not allow God to rule,
He overrules, and He always accomplishes His purposes.*

Warren Wiersbe



