

HAMAN & THE JEWS. ES. 3:1-7. 04/27/25. #04.

3 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. 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.*

1. Elevation of Haman

- a. Introduced to a man named Haman (1st mention)
 - a1. He is not listed as 1 of 7 closest advisors
 - a2. He is elevated above all other nobles
- b. As later indicated, Haman was wealthy & may have bought his way into his position with donations
 - a1. The king ordered that all would do homage to Haman by bowing before him
 - a2. The other nobles had to honor him
- c. Haman is described as an Agagite
 - a1. The Jews teach that he descended from the Amalekite king, Agag, whom Saul saved alive, but Samuel killed
 - a2. It is unlikely that Haman descended from the Amalekite king hundreds of miles to the west & 600 years earlier (not likely also that any of Agag's sons survived)
 - a3. In the Sargon inscriptions, Agag is listed as a province in Persia (Haman's home?)

2. Mordecai's rebellion

- a. Mordecai refused to bow before Haman
 - a1. Paying homage was not idol worship
 - a2. Surely, Mordecai bowed before the king (like a salute)

- a3. Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, & Nehemiah all paid homage before their kings (respect)
- b. The other officials & nobles at the gate encouraged Mordecai to obey the king's order
- c. Several unanswered questions about this situation
 - a1. Why did Mordecai defy the king?
 - a2. Mordecai revealed himself to be a Jew, even though he warned Esther not to do so
 - a3. There is no indication of previous interaction with Haman
 - a4. There is no indication that Haman hated the Jews at this point
 - a5. Mordecai's action would threaten himself, Esther, & his fellow Jews
 - a6. Since Esther had been queen for 4 years (474 BC) there had been no unusual events

3. Haman's plot

- a. Haman was initially unaware of Mordecai's sleight
 - a1. His fellow nobles inform him of Mor.'s act
 - a2. Haman is furious & highly offended
- b. Since Haman is determined to destroy all the Jews there must have been previous animosity against the Jews, who refused to worship the pagan gods
 - a1. Fuels speculation that he descended from the Amalekite, King Agag
 - a2. Both pride of Mor. & Haman collide
- c. The Persians were superstitious, believing in the control of fate
 - a1. Haman cast lots (the *pur*) to see when the gods desired the extermination to occur
 - a2. The *Pur* was cast in the first month (Nisan, April/May) & fell on the 12th month (Feb./March) by obvious divine providence
- d. Destruction of the Jews throughout the *entire kingdom* would include all the Jews in Judea as well
 - a1. An affront by 1 official at the gate at the palace in Sushan would lead to the execution of millions of Jews
 - a2. Extreme reactions by Mor. & Haman