

HAMAN PREPARES & PRESENTS HIS PLAN

Esther 3.7-9: The deceptive subtleties of your enemy.

Theme: Understand how your flesh deceives you... so you can discern it and stop it before you give him control of your kingdom!

This is, without a doubt, an important (or at least and interesting) portion of Scripture. Why...?

- Because this is the first detailed interaction we see between Ahasuerus (a picture of our soul) and Haman (a picture of our flesh).
- Here is where we begin to see how the flesh deceives us and manipulate us to get us to do what he wants.
- Also: (v10) Here is where we see the king's ring come into play (and we'll see it again later: Esther 8.2).

Review: (v5-6) We know what Haman wants to do: Exterminate the Jews in Ahasuerus's kingdom.

- But we also know that it's *Ahasuerus's* kingdom. So, Haman needs his permission...
- (v7-11) Haman comes before the king and sells him the idea of killing all the Jews.
- And to get his plan authorized... Haman has to work his magic! Haman, the enemy of God and of the people of God, is going to have to *deceive* the king to get what he wants.
- And he does a fantastic job of it...
 - ✓ Haman is a *master* at manipulating Ahasuerus to get what he wants!
 - Side Note: But, even so, it's never enough. Haman (like our flesh) is never satisfied.
 - (v10-11) Haman gets what he wants! He gets permission to execute his plan to kill the Jews.
 - (Est 5.10-14) But, it's not enough! He wants more! He, like our flesh, is *never* satisfied.
 - ✓ But, just like our flesh, Haman does a fantastic job of deceiving Ahasuerus to get what it wants!

(v7-9) In this message we are going to see how Haman prepares his plan and then presents it to the king.

- (v10-11) In the next message, we take a look at Haman receiving the power and the provision to execute his plan.
- As we work our way through verses 7-9, pay close attention to this interaction between Haman and the king. This is how your flesh will often try to deceive you into allowing him to get what he wants...

I. (v7) Haman Prepares His Plan: Check out the Providential hand of God!

A. Haman is organizing his year

1. During the first month of the year he plans the days (day to day) of each month (month to month).
2. And if there were a lesson to learn here, I think it would be one of *not* underestimating our enemy.
 - a) Our enemy is very motivated (like Haman), but we need to understand that he is also highly organized and methodical.
 - b) And oftentimes we think that we can just get by “winging it.” Or some even think “planning” is unbiblical and we should just “follow the Spirit” (i.e., live according to how we feel each day).

B. Haman is organizing his year by casting Pur (that is the “lot”).

1. The word *Pur* is Hebrew and it's translated here so we can know what it is: It's the *lot*.
 - a) Think of it as rolling dice or flipping a coin to determine what decision you should make.
 - b) Haman is making decisions on when to do certain things throughout the year, and he's using the lot to determine in which month and on which day he'll do them.

2. This a reminder to us as we study the Book of Esther: God, by His Providence, is in control!
 - a) (Prov 16.33) Dispensational Principle: Under the Old Testament economy, God used the *lot* to guide His people.
 - (1) Side Note: This (Prov 16.33) helps us to understand the selection of the 12th Apostle.
 - (a) (Acts 1.23-26) God selected Matthias (still under the OT economy, using the lot).
 - (b) (1Cor 15.5) Notice how Paul was not the 12th Apostle. He himself refers to “the twelve” as a group separate and distinct from himself.
 - (2) However, we need to understand that today God does not use the lot. Why? Because we have his full and complete revelation in Scripture. Scripture guides us today, not the lot.
 - b) And even though Haman is not “His people,” we can certainly see the hand of God here!
 - c) (v7 cf. v13) Haman casts the lot and the twelfth month is chosen for the genocide. God's hand:
 - (1) This gives God time to finish His preparations (what we'll see in the following chapters).
 - (2) This gives the Jews time to prepare themselves for battle (a whole year almost!).
 - (3) And this will also mean that the Jews will obtain the victory in the twelfth month, twelve being the number of Israel (and so God even has the glory in the number of the month!).
3. God is in control and He will do what He said. No one can oppose him and come out victorious.
 - a) Historically: (Est 9.1) The Jews, by God's Providence, will be victors over their enemies.
 - b) Doctrinally: (Rom 11.25ff) After the Tribulation, God will bring Israel to the place of salvation and victory.
 - c) Personally: (Rom 8.37) Who can stand against God and God's plan in His people today? None!

C. (v7) **So, Haman prepares his plan not yet knowing that by God's Providence, he's destined to fail.**

II. (v8-9) **Haman Presents His Plan: Check out the subtle deception of the enemy!**

A. (v8) **Haman's Subtle Slander: God's people... easy prey.**

1. There are two key observations we should make in this verse. What Haman says is true:
 - a) First: Haman is talking about the people of God (historically: Jews).
 - b) Second: Haman says God's people are “scattered” and “dispersed.”
2. Historically, he's talking about the Jews in the dispersion.
 - a) Remember where we place Esther in history: After the order to return to the land.
 - b) The 70 years captivity is over and God sent Israel back to the land under Ezra. But, the vast majority of the Jews decided to stay where they were, scattered and dispersed in the world.
 - c) It would have been hard, sacrificial work to go back to the land and rebuild everything. So, they chose to stay in the lands of their dispersion... comfortable and disobedient.
 - d) (Jam 1.1) We still see the Jews “scattered and dispersed” in the first century. And they will be this way even into the Tribulation...
3. Doctrinally, this is a picture of the Jews during the Tribulation Period.
 - a) Even though Israel became a nation in 1948, the vast majority of the Jews (some 14 million) still live outside the Promised Land.
 - b) (Rev 12.17) And so the Antichrist, just like Haman, will make his plans to exterminate them.

4. Personally, we can find a very interesting practical application in “scattered and dispersed.”

- a) “Scattered and dispersed” speaks of a lack of focus.
 - (1) God's plan from the beginning of the nation of Israel was to give them a land and capital city. Jerusalem, and the temple in Jerusalem, was to be the focal point of the nation as the nation fulfilled God's plan for them to be a light to the Gentiles (Mat 5.16).
 - (2) During the time of Esther, we see Ezra and Nehemiah returning to the land after the captivity and trying to build up that “focal point” (the temple in the city of Jerusalem) again so Israel could return to prominence.
 - (3) But the vast majority of the Jews decided to stay scattered and dispersed, and so Israel was weak and they could not do what God wanted them to do. They lacked focus.
- b) The vast majority of Christians today (and therefore the vast majority of churches) are very much the same: They are “scattered and dispersed” in the world, and they lack focus.
 - (1) (Mat 5.16) The Jews in Ahasuerus's kingdom are “points of light,” just like we have “points of light” in our lives where people can see the “light of God” (in godliness or Christ-likeness; in preaching the Word; etc.).
 - (2) But for many, these “points of light” are like the Jews in Ahasuerus's kingdom: they are scattered and dispersed out among the people of the world.
 - (a) They have no focus... no organization, no direction, no purpose, no goals.
 - i) They are the double-minded man of James 1.8: Without being focused on one thing, he becomes unstable in all his ways (in everything he does).
 - ii) It's like the “Jack of all trades, but master of none” (i.e., “multi-tasking”).
 - (b) Most Christians today live with part of their affection in the world (or on the flesh) and part on God (usually only on Sunday mornings).
 - (c) Most Christians don't have a clear goals they are striving to reach and clear steps defined to reach that goal. They just kind of wait for everything to just “work out.”
 - i) I'm not talking about “killing a vision with structural organization” (because we are really good at that).
 - ii) I'm talking about setting biblical goals, defining what it will take to reach those goals, and then diligently following through until you reach them.
 - iii) For most Christians, this is a totally foreign concept. They simply do not know how to focus.
 - (d) And for that reason, they are weak and easy prey for the enemy. They are “scattered and dispersed” and have no real affect on those around them.
 - (2) But for many, these “points of light” are like the Jews in Ahasuerus's kingdom: they are scattered and dispersed out among the people of the world.
- c) It's the difference between a flashlight and laser.
 - (1) With a flashlight you have light that is “scattered and dispersed,” but the laser has focus and so its light has much more power to accomplish greater things.
 - (2) We'll see the power of these “lights” in our lives when we get ourselves organized and focused behind the leadership of Mordecai (Holy Spirit) to fulfill the mission God gave us.
 - (3) But, sadly, most have no idea what the mission is... how the Holy Spirit guides us... what a good strategy is to follow in order to accomplish the mission...
 - (4) Most Christians today just jump from one popular fad to the next without accomplishing anything of substance or value. They are scattered and dispersed in the world; no focus.

- d) I would like to see this church be different, but that will require that we be different.
- (1) This is why we started out with our purpose... our mission... our strategy... But we are still not there, yet. We still lack focus... we are still in many areas “scattered and dispersed.”
 - (2) It's like the idea behind a simple planning model (you go from big to small) to help focus:
 - (a) Our Purpose: To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
 - (b) Our Mission: To be and make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (c) Our Strategy: [...we need more focus! ...and we're working on this.]
 - (d) Our Goals: [...we need more focus! ...and we're working on this.]
 - (e) Our Tasks: [...we need more focus! ...and we're working on this.]
 - (3) We are not “there” yet. We need to continue to focus more and more on following Mordecai!
 - (4) But, sadly most Christians, like the Jews in the dispersion, don't want that. They'd rather pass the time in the world, comfortable... “scattered and dispersed.” And when they do that, they are easy prey for Haman!
- e) Summary: Haman's observation is right. God's people are scattered and dispersed. Now...

5. Haman makes three accusations about God's people who are “scattered and dispersed.”

- a) First, he tells the truth: Their laws are diverse from all peoples.
- (1) Our enemy (world, flesh, devil) will often begin this way, by luring us in with truth (usually truth out of context, not “rightly divided”).
 - (a) (Isa 55.8-9) It's true: God's laws are different than any others in the entire world!
 - (b) But, don't be deceived by truth out of context. Judge everything by the Bible and make sure it's always *in its proper context* (“rightly dividing” the Word).
 - (2) Also, notice how there are two sets of laws identified by Haman in this verse.
 - (a) First you have the laws of “all people” and then you have the law of God as He gave it to His people.
 - (b) (Rom 7.21-23) Haman is right: There are two sets of laws and they are in conflict.
 - i) The law of God is different than any other law out there, because it's from God. And today it is God's Word that reveals God's will for each and every one of us.
 - ii) The other law (of the people) is the law of sin, and all the peoples of the world have this law in common.
 - iii) Which of these two laws does Haman not agree with? Haman pictures the flesh.
 - (3) So, what we see here is a good picture of what happens at conversion.
 - (a) The old man (Haman) doesn't like the presence of the Law of God in our lives.
 - (b) So, he opposes it... relentlessly, methodically, intentionally, continually... and he'll often use truth (twisted and out of context) to get us off tract.
- b) Second, he tells a half-truth: Neither keep they the king's laws.
- (1) This is a half-truth because: (Jer 27.12) God told the Jews to obey their captors.
 - (a) It's just like we see in the NT: (1Pet 2.17) Honor the king; or (Rom 13.1) submit to the governmental authorities.
 - (b) God expects us to obey the laws of the land in which we live.
 - (2) The only exception to this would be when man's laws contradict God's laws. Then we (like the Jews) will “obey God rather than man.”

(3) But we see that Haman starts out his deception with truth and then moves to half-truth.

(a) The deception by your flesh is no different! It is subtle and very often very effective because...

i) Most Christians don't know their Bibles (the easiest way to recognize a counterfeit is to know the truth).

ii) Most Christians don't know how to “rightly divide” their Bibles in order to keep things in the proper context.

iii) And of those who do know their Bibles and can “rightly divide” them, many have no idea how to practically apply it.

(b) The point: You need to be aware of how the flesh operates so you can avoid it.

c) Third, he out-right lies: It is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

(1) (Gen 12.1-3) There is obviously much benefit to suffer them (and help them). And just as obvious is the fact that to oppose them is bring serious consequences.

(2) And, again, this is just how our flesh works.

(a) He'll show up with his accusations about how the things of God in our lives are worthless—there is no profit in keeping any “point of light” in your life.

(b) He may even start with the truth! For example... something pleasing to the flesh...

i) Truth: (John 15.8) You know God is glorified and pleased when you bear much fruit. The more fruit, the more God is glorified and pleased. Amen!

ii) Half-Truth: (1Cor 9.22) Therefore, God wants you to be like the people in the world so that you can reach the people in the world! “*You gotta be one to reach one!*” We call that “adapting to culture.”

iii) Lie: Don't actually preach to the lost because there is no profit in it (it's not effective); just show them the love of God by being their friend and accepting them for who they are. When they ask why you are so nice, then you can tell them about the gospel.

iv) It's all a subtle attempt to get you to give the flesh what he wants:

- He wants you to doubt the value of God, the things of God, and the ways of God in your life.
- He wants you to doubt the value of the “points of light” in your kingdom (the value of godly living and bold proclamation of the truth).
- And he wants to lead you to oppose those things so you'll follow him and do what he wants (don't bother sacrificing your comfort to preach to people).

6. Review: Haman's subtle slander of God and His people...

a) They're easy prey: they're scattered and dispersed; they lack focus and so they won't be able to stand against the opposition.

b) He slanders them to pave the way for his solution to the “problem.” And so now Haman sells the king his idea...

B. (v9) Haman's Sick Deception: Haman's promises... easy money.

1. Haman has to ask permission!

a) Remember what he wants: (v6) He wants to destroy the Jew—to exterminate all of them!

(1) But he can't, not without the king's permission. That's why he says, “*If it please the king...*”

(2) If it doesn't please the king, then Haman can't do it. ***The king is the one in charge.***

- b) The old man (our flesh) can talk to us, deceive us, and influence us. But, at the end of the day, he doesn't make the decision... we do.
 - (1) No one makes the decision for us (the decision to follow the flesh and his desires).
 - (2) (Rom 6.14) The old man would have no power and no authority over us or any part of our lives if we didn't give it to him.
 - (3) Haman has to ask permission, and it's the king who has to give him the permission.

2. Haman offers the king “free money”!

- a) Haman promises to pay 10,000 talents to those who administer the king's business: “*I'll give you 10,000 talents of silver if you let me kill all the Jews.*”
- b) First, I think we need to understand how much money that is: 10,000 talents of silver.
 - (1) The annual income of the Medo-Persian empire at that time was about 15,000 talents of silver.
 - (2) That's about 750,000 pounds (170 tons) of silver.
- c) And this is exactly what your flesh will tell you! He's promise you the world (the Powerball)!
 - (1) He sidle up beside you and talk to you about what he wants, and he'll tell you that if you give him his way, he'll give you something in return... a lot!
 - (2) Give the flesh what he wants and you'll be rich... or comfortable... or satisfied... or whatever it is that he thinks he can bribe you with (pay you off, entice you).
 - (3) Just follow the desires of your flesh (give Haman what he wants) and you'll live well, you'll be happy, fulfilled, and prosperous!
 - (4) That's the voice of Haman. These are the promises of the flesh: 10,000 talents of silver!
 - (5) It sounds good... It sounds like a good deal... easy money... easy life... just follow the flesh.
- d) But what's Haman's motive?
 - (1) Haman is offering the king money so that he (Haman) can kill God's people.
 - (2) And your flesh will do the same thing: He'll offer you “free money” (pleasure, gratification, comfort, whatever) if you'll just do what he wants.

Conclusion: Haman prepares (v7) and then presents (v8-9) his plan.

This is an important portion of Scripture.

- This is the first detailed interaction we see between Ahasuerus (our soul) and Haman (the flesh).
- Here is where we begin to see how the flesh deceives us and manipulates us to get us to do what he wants.

Haman starts with the truth... then slides into a half-truth... and then places his full-blown lie on the table.

- Lesson: Know your Bible. Know the truth. Know how to “rightly divide” the word of truth (context!).
- If you don't, Haman will use the truth to deceive you and you'll not know he did it until it's over.

And then Haman offers the king money: “*Give me what I want, and I'll give you what you want.*”

- But even with that, we see that he has to ask the king for permission to execute his plan.
- Who's in charge? Ahasuerus. And so Haman (just like our flesh) has to ask the king to buy into his plan.

*Understand how your flesh deceives you...
so you can discern it and stop it before you give him control of your kingdom!*

(v10-11) Next week we'll see the king not only give Haman the power to execute his plan, but he also give him the provision to carry it out.

- Bad things happen when the king gives his ring to Haman...