

Living In The Word- Part 2

Esther 3

1. Battle of Forces vs. 1-7

Although the mighty power of Persia was against God's people that is observed through their demands to honor them or be destroyed, an even greater power is also at work protecting, preserving and saving the Jews from destruction; reminding the Jews through the Passover celebration.

Remember, an attack on God's people at anytime in history is really an attack against God's authority, power, and character. Let us place our trust in God's sovereignty by believing "that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

Questions:

- Read Proverbs 16:33. How might the original readers be encouraged with the knowledge that Haman's casting of lots to determine the divinely sanctioned day for the massacre of the Jews, will be taking place twelve months into the future on their date associated with Passover? What key reminders from Passover will help the Jews in coping with Haman's plan to promote their genocide?
- Read Luke 4:5-8. Although the devil demanded respect and to be worshipped by Jesus, how did Jesus endure the evil one's demands?

* Jesus refused to be obedient towards Satan's (the devil) demands, and those that Satan influenced (Jewish aristocracy & Roman regime who turned against him at his crucifixion).

2. Bewildered? Respond in Prayer vs. 8-15

Both Jews and Gentiles were bewildered by King Xerxes' approval of Haman's plan to annihilate all the Jews in the Persian Empire without any proper evaluation. King Xerxes chose not to receive clarity with the vague proposal and chose not to investigate whether this proposal was an accurate assessment. This hopeless situation would lead God's people to pray.

Throughout scripture we are reminded that God's faithful often cry out to God when they are facing crisis. We prayerfully hold on like Habakkuk, "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no

food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior." (Habakkuk 3:17-18)

Questions:

- Haman doesn't name the people he is going to kill and King Xerxes doesn't ask. This dehumanizes those they are going to murder. How common is it to dehumanize those we dislike?
- 1 Timothy 2:1-2 says, "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." What does this passage teach us about praying for those in charge?
- How does our attitude of the mind and heart toward the situation and towards God be renewed when we go to God in prayer and reflect on His promises and attributes?