

# THE ENEMY'S DECREE

## Esther 3.12-13: The Declaration of the Decree—the enemy defines his wickedness

**Theme:** The decisions you make to follow your flesh will have irreversible consequences that will affect your ability to minister—to "be light" in this world.

**(v12) Our passage begins with a key word: “Then...”**

- After Haman gets the power (v10; the ring) and the provision (v11; the silver) to do what he wants...
- “Then...” (v12ff) he set in motion his plan to satisfy his desires.
- “Then...” (v12ff) he declares a new decree and proclaims that decree through the entire kingdom.
- And the king... is totally clueless (v15) as to what the consequences are going to be of his decision...

**I. (v12) The Power of His Declaration: The enemy has authority.**

A. Historical Application: Some history and orientation:

1. Let's first take a quick look at the history (what's going on this story) and then we can see what all of this implies doctrinally and personally.
  - Haman now makes his desires into law: He writes it all out in an official decree.
2. Scribes: The king's scribes were like secretaries. They wrote down the decree as it was read to them by another (kind of like a living photocopy machine).
  - a) Notice what they are writing down: “...according to all that Haman had commanded...”
  - b) (v10) Remember: With the transfer of the ring, there was a transfer of authority. Haman is now making the decisions and guiding the kingdom.
3. Haman sends his decree to four groups (working his way down the chain of command):
  - a) Lieutenants: These would be the military leaders of the provinces.
  - b) Governors: These would be the political leaders of the provinces.
  - c) Rulers: These rule over (govern) specific people groups within a province (operating under the lieutenants and governors).
  - d) People: These would be the people groups within a province (each under a ruler).
  - e) So, Haman covers all his bases: Everyone in every corner of the whole kingdom comes under the authority and power of decree. No one anywhere is exempt.
4. And, don't forget the ring! Haman's decree has the power and authority of the king himself.
  - a) The decree is “...written according to all that Haman had commanded...”
  - b) And, because of what we saw in Esther 3.10 (the ring), the decree goes out to everyone everywhere “in the name of king Ahasuerus... and sealed with the king's ring.”
  - c) The king has abdicated his power! Haman is in charge. Haman is running the kingdom.

B. Personal Application: So, what does that mean for us? Nothing much new, so let's review...

1. All of this (as we have seen before) is a picture of the old man's desire to control our lives.
2. But, something new we see here (or at least emphasized): Look at how many times “**every**” and “**all**” are used in this passage! Haman wants it **all**: He wants **every** area of your life!
  - a) And if we give him power or provision in one area of our lives, that will only lead to his gaining power and provision in other areas.
  - b) And he won't stop pushing it and pushing it and pushing it... until he has control of it all.

3. One more thing to notice: (Est 8.4-8) Once Haman gets power and authority, his decisions and decrees are irreversible!
  - a) (Col 2.13) When we are saved, we are forgiven of all our sins (past, present, and future).
  - b) (Gal 6.7-8) But that does not mean we are free from the consequences of our sins and of our decisions in life.
    - (1) Just like with Ahasuerus: He cannot reverse the laws Haman put into motion.
    - (2) And there are, oftentimes, consequences to our decisions that we cannot reverse.
      - (a) An unwanted pregnancy... a bad decision about who to marry... bad management of your finances getting you into debt... decisions to play sports (injuries)... career choice.
      - (b) Be very careful about the decisions you make in life because what you sow is what you will reap. Decisions bring consequences (good or bad), so be very careful!

C. Doctrinal Application: Once Haman has power over the kingdom, he decrees a persecution.

1. (Dan 9.27) Once the Antichrist (pictured in Haman) gets power over the world, he breaks his covenant of peace and decrees a persecution of the Jews.
2. (v12 cf. Rev 12.12) And just like Haman wasted no time in declaring his decree (he did it in the first month, immediately after he was given power), so the Antichrist (Satan incarnate) will waste no time in his persecution of the Jews—he'll know his time is short!
3. (v12) And we also see that Haman declares his decree on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of that first month: 13 is the number of rebellion in the Bible (cf. Gen 14.4).

D. [Review: v12] The Power of His Declaration: The enemy now has the authoritative power to run the kingdom and with that power he sets in place an irreversible decree. So, what's he want to do... (v13)?

## II. (v13) The Purpose of His Declaration: The enemy wants action.

A. History: Haman orders four specific things...

1. He wants to [1] destroy, [2] kill, and [3] cause to perish all the Jews (men, women, and children). And he wants to [4] take the spoil of them for a prey (“spoils of war”—take what you want).
2. And he wants those four things (that genocide of the Jews) done in one day.

B. Personal Application: (John 10.10) That's just what our enemy has wanted to do with all of us...

1. And that enemy (Satan) uses our flesh (Haman) to get it done! Haman (our old man, the flesh) wants to kill us and, in a certain sense, he has already done that. Think about it...
  - a) (Rom 5.12; Eccl 8.8) Death is a universal sentence pronounced upon all men everywhere.
  - b) (Rom 6.23a) And “Haman” in us (sin in us) is responsible for that “decree of death.”
2. And we also see the number 13 come up again in the context of Haman's “decree of death.”
  - a) Remember, 13 is the number of rebellion in the Bible. Death comes by the hand of Haman on the 13<sup>th</sup> day and death came to mankind because of his rebellion against God.
  - b) The way to “reverse” the effects of that decree of death is to “reverse your rebellion.” We call that repentance. Turn from serving sin and self; turn to the Lord, to serve Him only.
3. Also notice how Haman, like our flesh, wants to kill each and every Jew (even the small children).
  - a) (Mat 5.16) Remember how we saw that the Jews were like “points of light” in the kingdom? They were to be “points of light” to the Gentiles nations.
  - b) These Jews represent the “points of light” in our lives—points where people can see the light of God (godly living, biblical decision making, Christ-like lifestyles, witnessing).
  - c) A lot of times we think we're doing good to avoid the “big sins” in life (we don't let Haman kill the “adults”), but then we give over to the flesh in small areas (he kills the “children”).

- d) Think about something simple, like your gifts, talents, or abilities (what you do well).
- (1) These *ought* to be “points of light,” used as bridges or springboards to preach the gospel to the lost and teach truth to believers.
  - (2) But, what happens to these “gifts and talents” in the life of a carnal Christian (or a Christian who isn’t “totally committed”—who hasn’t given his ring over to Mordecai)?
    - (a) What happens to musical talent, often, in young people? *From praise bands to... bars.*
    - (b) What happens to those who are bold in speaking to others? *From street preaching to...?*
    - (c) What about those who are gifted in study and teaching? *From the church to...?*
  - (3) Far too often we see God’s people taking their gifts, talents, and abilities (“points of light” in their lives meant to glorify God), and they use them in the service of the flesh—in service to their own desires—instead of using them for the glory of God in ministry.
  - (4) And this does *not* have to be “in the world.” It happens in churches all the time.
    - (a) A pastor who is gifted in study, preaching, and teaching is more interested in his own reputation and advancing his own agenda/career than he is in following Scripture.
    - (b) A musician is more interested in building a “edgy praise band” than he is in using his talent to edify the saints... or even use it on the streets to draw a crowd and evangelize!
    - (c) Ruben Israel (street preacher) said that there are *many* bold street preachers who have taken that boldness (which comes from God!) and have left the streets to use it elsewhere (in their jobs, or whatever).
  - (5) Haman wants to put out each and every light in the whole kingdom. *All* of them.

C. Doctrinal Application: Haman’s purpose typifies the Antichrist’s purpose in the Tribulation.

1. (Zech 14.1-2) Just like Haman rallies all the people of all the provinces against the Jews, so the Antichrist, in the Tribulation, will rally all nations against Israel.
2. (v13) And notice, too, that Haman wants to carry out his genocide of the Jews on *one day* (the thirteenth day of the twelfth month) and that day is referred to as “that day” in verse 14.
  - a) This is a picture of *the Day of the Lord*, referred to many times in Scripture as “*that day*.”
  - b) (Zech 14.3-9) The day the Antichrist brings his persecution to its culmination (the day of the battle of Armageddon; Zech 14.1-2) will be “that day” when the Lord will turn the tables against him.
    - (1) The Antichrist will persecute the Jew for three and half years, and right at the last day, he will mount a huge offensive, with the “United Nations” behind him, against Israel .
    - (2) It will be on *that day* (at the “eleventh hour”) when Christ comes back victorious.
3. Haman’s thirteenth day, called “that day,” pictures another “that day” in Scripture: The day the Antichrist’s rebellion comes to its culmination... the Day of the Lord.

**Conclusion: God has given to each of us certain gifts, talents, abilities... things that *we are* or things we *can do* that can be used as "light" in this dark world.**

**And each of us has been given the ability to choose.**

- All of this (this whole wicked plan of Haman) hinges on one thing: (v10) Ahasuerus’s choice to satisfy the desires of Haman.
- And there is *so much* of the Christian life that hinges on that very same thing: (Gal 5.16, 24-26) Our daily choices to *not* satisfy the desires of the flesh (even in small things! but to rather seek after the desires of the Spirit (which means striving, intentionally and eagerly, to learn and apply the Bible).
- I cannot stress it enough: (2Tim 4.6-7) Think about the day you die... And then *choose* to live for that day.