

THE ENEMY'S DECREE

Esther 3.14-15: The Proclamation of the Decree—the enemy begins his wickedness

Theme: Don't be ignorant of carnality (spiritual immaturity) in your life; let God open your eyes by spending time learning and living out His Word.

Haman has put his desires into law.

- (v12) “Then...” with the authoritative power (v10) and the provision (v11) to fulfill his desires..
- (v12-13) Haman declares in writing what he wants: to kill and destroy all the Jews, and take their stuff.
- And now it's time to make sure everyone knows about the new law (of “sin and death”)...

I. (v14) The *Publication* of the Decree

A. (v14a) The People: *For whom is this decree...?*

1. We saw this in our last message when we observed how many times God repeats the words “every” and “all” in the passage. And it's worth mentioning again.
2. Haman sends copies of his decree (his new, irreversible law) to *every* province and to *all* people.
3. Every province of the kingdom and all the people of every province are affected by this one, small decision made by the king in private with Haman.
 - a) **Don't be deceived!** The things we decide and do in *private* will always end up bearing their fruit in *public*—in different areas of our lives.
 - b) All those secret little thoughts... all those decisions made in private... will always find their way out “into the kingdom” by way of actions and attitudes.
 - c) And one small decision made in private, can have some pretty far-reaching consequences.
4. Moral of the story: Be very careful with the decisions you make, even if you think they are small and private.
 - a) (Rom 14.7) Our decisions have a way of affecting others in our kingdoms (in our lives).
 - b) Don't make hasty decisions. Don't make decisions based on what *you* want.
 - c) Make decisions based on eternity and what the Bible says (evaluate with biblical principles).

B. (v14b) The Purpose: *For what is this decree...?*

1. Haman's decree is published among *all* people of *every* province “*that they should be ready against that day*” (v13, that day when they can kill all the Jews and take all their stuff).
2. The phrase *that day* in Scripture often refers to that coming day of judgment, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a) (Mal 4.1-5) This coming day is a day of judgment, when Christ comes back to rescue His people and punish the wicked.
 - b) (Mat 24.29-36) The second coming (after the Tribulation, “those days”) is “that day” (v36).
3. In the phrase *that day* in Esther 3.14, we can see a doctrinal picture of the second coming.
 - a) (Rev 16.12-16) At the end of the Tribulation, all the kings (rulers) of the earth will be rallied by the Antichrist to launch one final and massive United Nations offensive against the Jews.
 - (1) Many refer to this is as the “Battle of Armageddon.”
 - (2) (Zech 14.1-2) All the nations will be gathered against God's people in the Promised Land.
 - (3) (Joel 3.12) They will gather in a valley called Jehoshaphat.
 - (4) (Joel 3.14) They will gather in that “valley of decision” right before “that day,” the Day of the Lord—the second coming.

- b) (Est 9.1) And exactly like we see in the Book of Esther, God will triumph over His enemies in that day—that one, single day of battle (the second coming, that day).
- (1) (Zech 14.3-8) In one day (*that day*), the Lord shall go forth in battle and triumph over all.
 - (2) (Zech 14.14) And just like the nations want to spoil the Jews, so the Jews will spoil the nations!
 - (3) (Joel 3.12-14, esp. v13) The Lord lay down the sickle and “harvest” His saints.
 - (Rev 14.14-16) This is the “eleventh-hour,” post-Tribulation rapture when Christ saves the faithful during His return.
 - (4) (Rev 14.17-20) The Lord will then take all the wicked to the Valley of Armageddon, and there He will kill them all.
 - (a) There will be so many killed that the blood will run up to three feet deep (horse bridle).
 - (b) (Ezek 39.9) After that day, they will be destroying weapons for a full seven years!
 - (c) (Ezek 39.12) They will be burying and disposing of the dead for seven months!
 - i) (Ezek 39.17-20) And that's with the help of carrion birds that will eat the dead.
 - ii) (Ezek 39.15) And even after all that, they'll still be finding bodies (and marking them for disposal) during the first year or years of the Millennium.
 - c) (Gen 12.1-3) You cannot touch the nation of Israel without sure and severe consequences.
 - (1) Haman told Ahasuerus that “*it is not for the king's profit to suffer*” the Jews to live.
 - (2) He's in for a big surprise later in the book. And the Antichrist is in for a surprise also!

C. (v14) The Publication of the Decree: Haman sends his "decree of death" out to all the people of every province of Ahasuerus's kingdom. He wants them ready for “that day” of battle against the Jews.

II. (v15a) The *Responsibility* for the Decree

A. Haman wrote the decree... Haman sealed the decree... Haman sent the decree out to the people...

1. But the Bible says in this verse that the postmen went out “*by the king's commandment.*”
2. The king made the decision to delegate his authority, therefore he is ultimately responsible.
 - a) (2Sam 24.1 cf. 1Chron 21.1) The Bible says God moved David to number the people, even though Satan did it... why? Because God delegated His authority to allow Satan to do it.
 - b) (Job 2.3 cf. 1.12) God said He destroyed Job, when it was Satan who did the work. Why? Because God delegated His authority to have it done. In a sense, “He did it.”

B. Personal Application: We cannot blame our old man for our sins (we are responsible).

1. (Rom 7.17, 20) Yes, it is true that you do not actually do the sin (you, your new man). Haman does it (your old man, sin living in you, your flesh).
2. (Rom 6.12-14, 16-18) But, who delegated that authoritative power to the flesh to sin? You did.
 - a) Let's not blame others for our bad decisions (or for our sins). “The devil made me do it” or “that's just my old man” doesn't work in God's economy.
 - b) And this principle applies as much to “doing right” as it does to “not doing wrong.”
 - (1) (Luke 19.11-24) Each steward was personally responsible for doing something with what the Lord gave him.
 - (2) And the Lord didn't really care so much about what was done with the talents. What he was concerned about was that something was done. And that is our own personal choice.

C. [Review] The Enemy's Decree

1. (v14) The Publication of the Decree: It's published for all the people of every province... to mount a one-day offensive against all the Jews (on "that day").
2. (v15a) The Responsibility for the Decree: The king is responsible because he let Haman do it.

III. (v15b) The Effects of the Decree

A. The King: Ignorant!

1. The king and Haman sit down to have some tea and crumpets! Ahasuerus has no idea about what has just transpired. He has no clue about what he has just done (the damage, the consequences).
2. Personal Application: This happens all the time with spiritually immature (carnal) Christians.
 - a) Remember that in Esther 1 and 2 we see a picture of the conversion of a lost man. So in chapter 3 we can see how a new convert (or old, immature convert) can easily be deceived by the flesh.
 - b) (Mat 22.29) These kinds of errors (following the flesh, being deceived and manipulated by the flesh) are the result of being ignorant (like Ahasuerus)—ignorant of the Scriptures!
 - c) The only way to avoid “erring” is to know the Scriptures.
 - (1) (Ps 119.130) The Word of God gives understanding, even to the simple.
 - (2) (Ps 119.105) The Word of God give us light so we know how to walk in this dark world.
 - (3) (Ps 119.24) The Word of God is a faithful and wise counselor! We should listen to it!
 - (4) (Ps 119.133) The Word of God will order our steps and keep us from iniquity.
3. Ahasuerus is like a carnal or immature Christian: He is totally ignorant of the truth.
 - We can avoid that same error, but we have to know the Scripture (its content, rightly divided).

B. The Palace: Perplexed!

1. *Perplexed* means baffled, puzzled, confused, bewildered, uncertain, and even afraid.
 - a) Look at the contrast between Ahasuerus and Shushan! Ignorant vs. confused/perplexed.
 - b) The people of the capital city cannot understand why this would be decreed! The Jews never hurt anybody!
2. Personal Application: Shushan (where the king lives) pictures our bodies (where our souls live).
 - a) Even when we (our souls) don't understand the full implications of our choices (like Ahasuerus, we're ignorant)...
 - b) ...there is no peace in Shushan—we have no peace in our bodies (we are perplexed, troubled!).
 - c) (Rom 8.6) There is no peace when we allow the flesh to run our lives.
 - d) (Php 4.6-7) The Christian experiences the peace of God (rather than being perplexed and troubled) when he trusts God—when he follows Mordecai instead of Haman.
 - (1) (Isa 26.3) We have to trust in the Lord and have confidence in Him.
 - (2) (Mat 8.23-24) It's like Christ, sleeping in the midst of a storm that had professional fisherman scared for their lives.
 - (a) Christ had perfect peace in “Shushan” (His body) even though a storm was raging around Him. Why? How could He do that?
 - (b) (Mat 8.26) Faith: Christ trusted the Father for everything all the time.
 - (3) (John 16.33) We need to pay attention to (and rest on) the things Christ has told us in His Word because in this world we will have problems... but we can have peace in the midst of those problems (instead of being *perplexed*). But, we have to follow Mordecai, not Haman!

Conclusion:

Haman has authority... he has power... he has provision to do what he wants. And he declares his decree.

- Every people of every province in the whole kingdom is affected by this decree (especially the Jews!).
- But the king isn't affected at all. He sits down, calm, cool, and collected to have a drink with Haman.
- Shushan, though, is *perplexed*.
 - ✓ Just like the carnal/immature Christian who might be ignorant of Scripture, and therefore ignorant of the consequences of his bad decisions (calm and ignorant like Ahasuerus)...
 - ✓ But, he'll not have the peace of God. Shushan (in his body) will be “perplexed” (confused, affected).
 - ✓ There won't be peace in Ahasuerus's kingdom until Mordecai is running the show (and there won't be peace in the life of a Christian until he decides to let the Holy Spirit lead him with Scripture).

And just like God takes care of Ahasuerus, He'll take care of us, too...

- In chapter 4 we are going to see God “working behind the scenes” to triumph over Haman and bring life and peace to His people in Ahasuerus's kingdom.
- In chapter 4 Mordecai begins to communicate with Esther about the problem of Haman and his decree.
 - ✓ And that's how true spirituality will start! The Holy Spirit will communicate with our new, regenerated spirit, guiding us to victory over the flesh.
- But, he has to open our eyes to the wickedness of the flesh first! Then he can show us the solution.
 - ✓ In chapter 4 we begin to see Mordecai's plan to open the king's eyes to the enemy, Haman.

But, let's not forget the key lesson in our passage this morning: Don't be ignorant of carnality (spiritual immaturity) in your life; let God open your eyes by spending time learning and living out His Word.