

Day 2 – Esther 3

1. If you are one of those people who are musical and always have a song playing within your spirit, you might have “heard” a different tone and pace of music while you read the third chapter of Esther! Open in **prayer** as you begin the study of Esther 3 and then complete these **observation questions**.

- How was Haman introduced in Esther 3:1?
- What was expected of the people of Susa and why according to Esther 3:2?
- What do you learn about Mordecai in Esther 3:2-4?
- What was Haman’s reaction to Mordecai’s actions according to verses 5 and 6?
- How were decisions made in Persia according to Esther 3:7?
- How did Haman describe the Jewish people in verse 8?
- How and when was Haman’s plan going to be take place? (A talent weighed about 75 pounds, so 10,000 talents would be about 750,000 pounds of silver.)
- How much time would take place between the “lot” being cast and the order being carried out?
- What was to happen to the Jewish people according to verse 13?

Lesson 3

In Hebrew literature, when something was said three times it was to emphasize the message. In Isaiah 6:2, 3 when one seraph called out to another he said, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.” A number of times when Jesus was teaching He said, “Truly, truly, truly I say to you...” The *KJV* translated this as “Verily, verily, verily” because of the influence of the Latin word for truth, *veritas*. Notice again the three statements made in verse 13.

- What was the response to the king’s order according to verse 15?

2. Please examine these word studies for some of the **key words** in this lesson.

Strong’s # and Transliteration:	Definition from Strong’s Concordance, unless written in <i>italics</i>:	Use of the word in other Scriptures:
3766 kara kor ^a yim Esther 3:2	Kneel <i>ISV</i> , bowed <i>KJV</i> , to bend the knee; by implication, to sink, to prostrate: bow (downself,), bring down (low), cast down, couch, fall, feeble, sink, smite (stoop) down, subdue ...	1 Kings 19:18
7812 shachah uwmishtachawiyim Esther 3:2	Bow <i>ISV</i> , revered <i>KJV</i> , to depress, i.e. prostrate (especially reflexive, in homage to royalty or God): bow (self) down, crouch, fall down (flat), humbly beseech, do (make) obeisance, do reverence, make to stoop, worship	1 Kings 1:31
6332 puwr puwr Esther 3:7	Pur , a lot (as by means of a broken piece): Purim (<i>plural</i>). (<i>The plural form in is the most common plural ending for Hebrew words, as the letter s is used in the English language.</i>)	The words pur and Purim are only used in the book of Esther. Esther 9:26, 28, 29, 31, 32
1486 gowral hagowraal Esther 3:7	Lot , to be rough (as stone); properly, a pebble, i.e. a lot (small stones being used for that purpose); figuratively, a portion or destiny (as if determined by lot)	Jonah 1:7
7737 shavah showeh Esther 3:8	Best interest , properly, to level, i.e. equalize; figuratively, to resemble; by implication, to adjust (i.e. counterbalance, be suitable, compose, place, yield, etc.): ... countervail, (be, make) equal, lay, be (make, alike, make plain, profit <i>KJV</i> , reckon	Esther 7:4
1881 dath w ^a daateeyhem Esther 3:8	Laws , (see word study for “law” on page 14)	Esther 1:13, 15

3. In Esther 3 Haman was said to be of Hammedatha the Agagite. Back in Lesson 2 you looked at 1 Samuel 15 which recorded the time when Israel’s King Saul lost favor with God because of disobedience. Do you remember the name of the king of the Amalekite’s that was involved in Saul’s disobedience? His name was Agag. Scripture says that the

Israelites destroyed all of the Amalekites except Agag. 1 Samuel 15:33 tells about how King Agag met his death. Scholars have said that the Amalekites were a nomadic people, and while Israel destroyed the Amalekite settlement according to 1 Samuel 15, other Amalekites could have existed in other locations. (The name Agag was also a title given to Amalekite kings.)

What did God say about the Amalekites in Deuteronomy 25:17-19?

The tradition of the Hebrew people claims that a Jewish man who was living in Susa wrote the book of Esther. Why would it have been significant for the author to mention that Haman was of “Hammedatha the Agagite”?

4. In Esther 3:8 Haman told King Ahasuerus about the Jewish people, without specifically mentioning them by name. Would you be able to explain to someone how the laws of the nation of Israel were “different than all other people”? Do you understand why Mordecai would not obey the laws of the King of Persia? Look at these Scriptures to determine what those outside of Israel might have known about the Hebrew people.

a. Deuteronomy 4:5-9

b. Deuteronomy 6:1-3, 13-17

Read what was written to Artaxerxes, who came after Ahasuerus in Ezra 4:12-17 when some of the Hebrew people returned to restore the temple in Jerusalem and the walls around the city. What was the reputation the people of Israel had according to this letter?

Centuries later the Apostle Paul and Silas were brought before the civil authorities in Philippi by an angry group of “business men.” Look at what was said about Paul and Silas in Acts 16:20, 21.

Lesson 3

The Use of the Name “Jew”

The literal meaning of the name Jew is a “person belonging to (the tribe of) Judah,” although it was never used in this way in the Old Testament.¹ The name became common after the destruction of the northern kingdom and especially after the Babylonian Captivity. The way the word Jew is used in Esther is to include those of the tribe of Benjamin as well as those from the tribe of Judah. The term Jew takes on a “religious” connotation in the book of Esther and in Daniel 3:8, 12.

In the intertestamental time between the writing of the Old Testament and the writing of the New Testament, the term Jew was rarely used by the Hebrew speaking people in the land of Israel. Evidence of this is found in the apocryphal books written in Hebrew, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Rabbinic Mishnah and Talmud, and even on the coins minted during the Bar Cochba rebellions around A.D. 70.

Another noteworthy difference is found in Mark’s Gospel. In Mark 15:32 the leaders of Israel referred to Jesus as the “King of Israel” while the Roman governor and Roman soldiers called Jesus the “King of the Jews,” (see Mark 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26).

5. What did you see in the context of Esther 3 that teaches you something about God’s character?

At the foundation of Israel’s laws were the Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses at Mt. Sinai (also called Mt. Horeb). The Ten Commandments are explained in Exodus 20:1-17. Other laws were given to the nation of Israel concerning their conduct within their community, regarding dietary laws, as well as very specific laws concerning how they were to worship Almighty God.

In closing please turn to Psalm 95 and read the first seven verses as your own prayer before your God and then close with this beautiful hymn of our faith.

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee; Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore Thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea; cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee, which wert and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty! All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea; Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

By Reginald Heber and John B. Dykes

¹ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Editor, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979..