

Place: Lurgan Baptist 30:1:2011

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

3. THE OLD TESTAMENT ADOLF HITLER

Reading: Esther 3:1-15

The Holocaust was the murder by Nazi Germany of six million Jews. While the Nazi persecution of the Jews began in 1933, the mass murder was committed during World War II. It took the Germans and their accomplices four and a half years to murder six million Jews. *They were at their most efficient from April to November 1942 250 days in which they murdered some two and a half million Jews.* They never showed any restraint, they slowed down only when they began to run out of Jews to kill, and they only stopped when the Allies defeated them. There was no escape. The murderers were not content with destroying the communities, they also traced each hidden Jew and hunted down each fugitive.

The crime of being a Jew was so great, that every single one had to be put to death – the men, the women, the children, the committed, the disinterested, the apostates, the healthy and creative, the sickly and the lazy – all were meant to suffer and die, with no reprieve, no hope, no possible amnesty, nor chance for alleviation. As a living memorial to the Holocaust, Yad Vashem was established in 1953, as the world center for documentation, research, education and commemoration of the Holocaust.

To visit *Yad Vashem in Jerusalem* is to have the Holocaust forever inscribed on your mind and heart. The term “*Anti-Semitism*,” was first coined in Germany in the second part of the nineteenth century, but, as the book of Esther demonstrates, it sadly existed long before that. Now for four to five years things have peaceful in Shushan. (2:16 3:7) Esther has reigned as Queen and Mordecai has tended to the king’s business at the gate. Then everything changed, and all the Jews in the empire found themselves in danger of being killed, just to satisfy the hatred of a man named Haman.

The Book of Esther is one of five Old Testament books that the Jews call “*The Writings*,” or “*The Five Megilloth*,” The word “*megilloth*,” means “*scrolls*,” in Hebrew. The other books are Ruth, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon and Lamentations. Every year on the Feast of Purim, the Book of Esther is read publicly in the synagogue, and whenever the reader mentions Haman’s name, the people stamp their feet and exclaim, “*May his name be blotted out.*” My to Jews everywhere, Haman personifies everyone who has tried to exterminate the people of Israel. This chapter explains to us why. For it brings before us,

(1) HAMAN’S SINFUL PERSON

My everything about Haman is hateful. You can’t find one thing about this man worth praising. In fact, everything about Haman God hated. The Book of Proverbs says, “*These six things doeth the Lord hate yea seven are an abomination unto him. A proud look, a lying*

tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood. An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief. A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.” (6:16-18) Will you keep those seven evil characteristics in mind as you read this book ? They are all depicted in Haman. You see, when you turn your back on Christ and ignore His Word, you open yourself for a move of the Devil. It’s true that standing somewhere in the shadows you’ll find Jesus, but it’s also true that standing somewhere in the shadows you’ll find Satan. Can you see here his sinful person ? Look at the context and notice there was,

(a) AUTHORITY HERE:

Look if you will at (3:1) At some time between the seventh and twelfth years of King Ahasuerus (3:7, 2:16) the king decided to promote Haman to be the Prime Minister of the entire realm of King Ahasuerus. I mean here is a man who is second in power only to the king himself. *Isn’t this an amazing thing ?* Mordecai saved the king’s life and the king ignored him, yet Haman comes along and the king promotes him. Why ? Did Haman offer the king money ? Certainly Haman was a very wealthy man (3:9) Men like Haman who have money often use their money to gain position and power. Some wealthy folk use their money to obtain an influential church office and get their way in church policy. Whatever the explanation for his promotion, you can see the injustice of it all. My one of the discoveries you are going to make in life is that life is not always fair. There are many seeming injustices in this life, yet God knows what He is

doing and will never forsake the righteous or leave their deeds unrewarded. (Ps 37:25) Mordecai saved the king’s life, yet the king does nothing for him. Haman seemingly does nothing for the king yet the king promotes him. I wonder, does that describe your relationship with the Lord ? My Christ has done everything for you. Where have you put Him in your life ? What role have you given Him ? Where have you placed Him in your heart and home ? (a)

(b) ADORATION HERE:

“ The king’s servants bowed, and revered Haman, ” (3:2) The two words, “ *bowed,* ” and “ *reverenced,* ” both involve bowing or prostrating oneself. But the Hebrew word translated “ *bowed,* ” emphasizes the physical posture whereas the Hebrew word translated “ *reverenced,* ” emphasizes the devotion in the posture. The Hebrew word translated “ *reverenced,* ” is found about 175 times in the Old Testament and is translated “ *worship,* ” or “ *worshiped,* ” 99 times. (Butler) Do you see this a little clearer now ? This is more than a salute like we salute officers in the military. Haman expected a respect that properly should be given to the Lord alone. Do you get the picture here ? Here is a man who loved to “ *throw his weight about.* ” Full of his own importance, he delighted in seeing people bow down before him, giving him adoration that belongs to the Lord alone. You see, what people do with authority is a test of character. Do they use their authority to promote themselves or help others ? Do they glorify themselves or glorify the Lord ?

Promotion is a test of character. Promotion can bring out the best or the worst in a person. In Haman's case promotion went to his head. My when you get a little glory what to do with that glory ? Do you take that glory to yourself ? Or do you give that glory to the Lord ? My God is jealous of His glory. He says, "*My glory will I not give to another.*" (Is 42:8) Is it not tragic that some believers have touched the glory and thought of themselves more highly than they ought to think ? (a) (b)

(c) ANTAGONISM HERE:

"*But Mordecai bowed not nor did him reverence,*" (3:2) I mean can you see this man Haman marching along in his pride and everybody is falling around. The political flunkies of the day are on their all fours in front of him, falling down. Yet there is this man, Mordecai who refuses to bow down. Why ? Because he is a Jew. (3:4) You see, there was,

1. A Background that was Colouring His Thinking:

Do you notice who Haman was ? He was an "*Agagite,*" (3:1) The Jews, according to F. C. Cook, generally understand the expression "*the Agagite,*" to mean a descendant of Agag who was the Amalekite king whom Samuel killed with the sword." (1 Sam15:32-33) My this story goes away back to Moses. To the time when Israel were brought out of Egypt by the blood of the lamb. When the Amalekites, attacked God's weary people in the rear ranks of the marching nation. (Deut 25:18) Do you recall with Moses in the mount with his rod and

Joshua in the valley with his sword Israel won a great victory against the Amalekites and God said that He would blot them out. Saul failed to do this and lost his crown (1 Sam 15:23) and one of their descendants Haman determined to annihilate his people's ancient enemy the Jews. My Haman has been nursing a grudge which had been taught him since childhood. Prejudice is a vicious evil. And it's hereditary, passed down from generation to generation. When Mordecai refused to bow down, the anti-Semitic hair on the back of Haman's neck stood on end. Mordecai was a Jew and he refused to bow because of (1) and because of,

2. A Book that was Controlling His Thinking:

I mean what did God's Book say ? "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them or serve them.*" (Ex 20:3-4) A Jewish Targum says that Haman set up a statue of himself to which everyone was obliged to bow in adoration. Worship is God's supreme right. Haman demanded something God forbids and there was one man would not compromise. Everyone else is bowing down, but Mordecai is standing up. Now that's not easy. Do you recall the three Hebrew children in Daniels day ? *Can you picture the scene ?* As the orchestra begins to play thousands fall to the ground in worship, that is all but three, for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are still standing during the invitation.

(Dan 3:12) Now it's not easy to go against the crowd. It's not easy to be a non-conformist. But here was one man who would not bow. The world said to him, "*Bow down you stupid fool.*" But he said, "*I will not bow.*" Young folk are you as clear in your stand in school, university and college ? When there's peer pressure, when the majority want you to conform and go with them to the dance, disco, drink, and drugs are you like this man ? Is your mind controlled by the Word of God ? Older folk, what about you ? *Have you made up your mind that you are not going to bow to anything that is contrary to God's Word ?* It's wonderful to see people who have got the courage of their convictions. Athanasius was one of the early church fathers. We are indebted to him for the purity of the doctrine of the deity of Christ. He would not relinquish his stand against a popular heresy of the day. Someone came to him and said, "*Athanasius don't you know that the Emperor is against you. The bishops are against you, the church is against you, the whole world is against you.*" Do you know what Athanasius said ? "*Then Athanasius is against the whole world.*" (1)

(2) HAMAN'S SPITEFUL PLAN

Here's one man over here named Mordecai who won't bow down and here's another man over here named Haman and he is furious. The Bible says he is "full of wrath." (3:5) But he's not just angry. He is intent on breaking the fifth commandment "*Thou shalt not kill.*" (Ex 20:13) He's a 5th century B.C. preview of the 20th century Adolf Hitler. He wants to exterminate all Jews. You can tell a lot about a person by how little the thing is

that causes him to be upset. Sometimes men of little moral character end up in big jobs. Haman is one of those kind of men who said, "I demand to be respected." My respect is not something you demand, respect is something you earn. Here'[a little man. Little in his attitude, and little in his outlook. He just can't take it and so he decides not only to get rid of the person of Mordecai but to get rid of the people of Mordecai. Can you see the stages in this Satanic plan ? Haman is,

(a) BUILDING HIS HATE:

The Bible states that twice Haman was "*full,*" of anger over Mordecai's refusing to bow to him. (3:5 5:9) Haman was a man who could not control his passions. Scripture says, "*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty,*" (Prov 16:32) but Haman was not slow to anger. He was quick to anger, and to great anger. Now remember he has been nursing his grudge from childhood. That hatred ate away at him and when he was placed in a position of power he carried that hate with him. He wore it like a mantle. He's now on a self appointed mission not unlike Adolph Hitler in the 1930s and 1940s to kill all of Mordecai's people. He's going to get rid of the ones he hates. "*Just finish them off.*" My have you allowed bitterness or hatred to smolder in your heart ? Has some injustice or indignity that someone has thrown your way caused to have smoldering hatred in your heart ? Are you nursing a grudge ? (Heb 12:15)

Perhaps a former spouse has wronged you and you have hate. Maybe a pastor or elder has offended you and

you've said "*I'll get even with him.*" Do you have someone who has made life difficult for you and has never made it right? Are you entertaining thoughts like "*Someday, someday I'll get back.*" This nursing of anger festers and grows. Oh, it's silent but it's so deadly. So Haman is building his hate and then Haman is,

(b) PICKING HIS DATE:

For they cast Pur. (3:7) Eastern peoples in that day took few important steps without consulting the stars and the omens. Can you see these astrologers casting lots and coming up with a most suitable day? "*The thirteenth day of the twelfth month,*" (3:13) You see, they are wrapped up in astrology, in all kinds of mysticism. Isn't it amazing that here in cultured Britain we are having a revival of spiritism and witchcraft and mysticism? *How many people consult the horoscope? Or should we call it the horrorscope?* My you're not going to find your destiny in the stars. You are going to find your destiny in the Scriptures. You don't look to God's creation, you look to God the Creator to find direction and guidance for your life. For when your life is driven by superstition you come up with some ridiculous ideas and decisions. Stupid things sometimes demonic things. Is that not exactly what happened here? For here we see Haman (a) (b)

(c) SEALING HIS FATE:

For who has prospered who has ever put his hand against the Jew? J. Vernon McGee used to say, "*The Jew has*

attended the funeral of every one of the nations that has tried to exterminate him." And Haman was no exception. Do you see him as he goes in to make a proposal to the king? In this proposal there is

1. A PEOPLE:

"*Whose laws are diverse from all the people,*" (3:8) Their laws were different because they were God's chosen people who alone received God's holy law from His own hand. Do you recall Moses asked the question, "*And what nation is there so great that hath statues and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?*" (Deut 4:8) And the answer is "*none.*" "*King Ahasuerus there is a group of people in your kingdom and they are different from everyone else.*" Amen. My did you know that Christians are to be different? It does not mean that you are to be odd. It does not mean that you are to some kind of screwball. No, Peter says we are "*a peculiar people.*" (1 Pet 2:9) Do you know any peculiar people? An old Quaker said to his wife one day, "*There's naught so odd as people and sometimes I find thee odd too.*" You say, "*Preacher I know as lot of peculiar Christians.*" Well, Peter is not talking about being odd. Rather Peter says we are "*God's own special people.*" You're to be different.

You see, we operate on the basis of a different foundation. At the heart of our Christian experience is the atoning death and bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We operate on the basis of a different authority. Our authority is the Word of God. We operate on the basis of a different

dynamic. The Holy Spirit who now lives in us, is committed to making us like Christ. 1.

2. A PRICE:

Haman offers to pay the king, 10,000 talents of silver for the privilege of getting rid of the Jews. According to the Greek historian Herodotus the annual income of the entire Persian Empire was 15,000 talents of silver. This bribe indicates that Haman was an extremely wealthy man. The world, like Haman, spends big time money to gain their evil goals, and yet sometimes we are so stingy in giving to the Lord's work, that worthy goals go unrealized. My our love for the Lord is seen in how much we are willing to give.

3. A PERMISSION:

“ If it please the king let it be written that they be destroyed,” (3:9) A nation is to be eradicated yet no question is asked. Think of all the questions that should have tumbled from the kings lips. What people are these ? How do they come to be in my kingdom ? What strange customs do they practice ? Which of my laws do they flout ? Why has no-one told me of this danger to my rule before ? But there was nothing, as the king gave Haman his royal signet ring granting him the authority to act in his name. What a death warrant this was. A proposal that ended with,

4. A PROCLAMATION:

“ Death to the Jews.” Can you imagine the grief, the anguish as the royal couriers take this message to every part of the empire ? By the way, it has been estimated that something like 330,000 Christians are martyred each year for their faith. But can you see the Jews now ? All the men, women, boys and girls are to be destroyed. Haman not only wants to destroy these people, but he wants to terrorize them for a solid year. (3:12-13) They have a solid year to worry and dread their fate. What would happen in the morning if you got up and there were special bulletins all over the television that all believers in Great Britain on the 13th December 2011 will be killed ? What would you do ? What would you say ? (1) (2)

(3) HAMAN'S SHAMEFUL PARTY

For don't miss the last verse. (3:15) The city of Shushan fell into confusion and panic. But do you see what Ahasuerus and Haman are doing ? They plotted the destruction of an innocent people then had a drinking party. *“ Evil can make merry in the presence of the misery it creates. Nero, after he had set fire to Rome, fiddled as he sat and looked at the blaze,”* (Dinwiddie). Ahasuerus and Haman were like the people whom the prophet Amos denounced when he said they *“ drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.”* (Amos 6:6) They have just written a death warrant for millions of souls and now they have cocktails. My There is,

(a) A FUTURE PROPHECY THERE:

For is Haman not an illustration of “ *the man of sin,*” who will one day appear and ruthlessly reign over humanity. (2 Thes 2:4 Rev 13:7) Haman was given great authority from the king and Satan will give great power to this wicked world ruler we call the Antichrist. (Rev 13:4) My as Haman tried to destroy the Jews, so the Antichrist will usher in a wave of world wide anti-Semitism. (Rev 12:13-17) Of course, initially he will be friendly to Israel and will even make a covenant to protect them, but then he will break the covenant, and oppress the very people he agreed to help. (Dan 9:24-27) You say, “ *Is that how its going to end ?*” No, for as Haman was defeated and judged, so the Antichrist will be conquered by Jesus Christ and confined to the lake of fire. (Rev 19:11-20) My Satan to Jesus must bow. (a)

(b) A PRESENT REALITY HERE:

The king and Haman have just sent out a decree that meant death for millions of people. So what do they do ? They just go and have a drunken meal. I mean, how cold, brutal can you be ? *Yet I think about us this ! All around us there are souls that are under the sentence of eternal death and what do we do ? We entertain ourselves, we enjoy ourselves, we fellowship among ourselves. Is that not important ? Sure. But there’s something wrong with people who call themselves Christians who believe there is a heaven and hell, who can never have a broken heart or a burdened spirit for those around them who not know Christ as their Saviour.* My we can sit at our church banquets and Sunday dinners without thinking about helping to get the message out that “ *the Father sent*

the Son to be the Saviour of the world.” (1 Jn 4:14) In the month of June, 1865, missionary to China J. Hudson Taylor had gone to stay with Brighton by the sea. He was weary and ill and seeking the will of God for the future of his ministry. On Sunday 25th June, “ unable to bear the sight of rejoicing multitudes in the house of God,” he went for a walk on the seashore and wrestled with God in agony of soul. The Lord met in a fresh way, and he trusted God to provide twenty four workers to labour with him in China. Two days he went to the London and Country Bank and opened an account in the name of the China Inland Mission. It was the beginning of a miracle ministry that continues to this day. Do you know the phrase that strikes me ? “ Unable to bear the sight of rejoicing multitudes in the house of God.” Sure, its good to rejoice in the Lord and to do it in His house. But rejoicing must never take the place of responsibility. A gospel song puts it like this,

**God’s tables are full
But His fields are empty**

Do you want to enjoy the feast, but not share the message ? Do you want to know God’s blessing, but not share God’s burden ? Do you want to have the good things of God, but not share the gospel of God ? “ *Few there are who seem to care and few there are who pray.*”
Is that us ?

