MADE FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

LESSON 3 NOTES

REFUGE CHURCH of SEATTLE

Esther 3:1-4

After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor. Then the royal officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's command?" Day after day they spoke to him but he refused to comply. Therefore they told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai's behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew.

THE RETURN OF A VILLAIN

"Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite..."

Some translations based on the Greek Septuagint say Human was a Macedonian. The Hebrew Bible says he was an Agagite.

Most scholars agree this description was to show that Haman was a descendant of King Agag. If true, it changes the context of the story of the book of Esther to an ongoing spiritual battle.

Read Exodus 17:8-15

Amalek, the son of Esau, out of their hatred for God's people, warred against Jacob's sons. And, God said I am going to blot out Amalek and war against him forever.
You can see how Amalek wanted to annihilate the Jews. And God said because of that desire, He would annihilate war against them from generation to generation.

Read 1st Samuel 15:5-11

On the surface, the command to completely destroy the Amalekites seems extreme. This may be why Saul didn't follow through with the order.

There was more to the battle with the Amalekites than what is shared in I Samuel.

The Family Connection

Saul was removed from the throne because of his actions against king Agag, the Amalekite.

I Samuel 9:1-2

There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bekorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin. Kish had a son named Saul, as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else.

Esther 2:5

Now there was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish....

Not only was Mordecai the grandson of Shimei, the one who cursed king David, and was spared by David. Mordecai was a descendant of Kish, the father of Saul.

THE GENOCIDAL PLOT

Esther 3:7 shows that Haman, a pagan, cast lots (pur) to get a date for the annihilation of the Jews. Those lots eventually revealed a date, in the 12th month of Adar.

Notice, this happened on the 1st month of Nisan. The decree was made on the 13th day of the month of Nisan.

The day after the decree (Nisan 14) was Passover.

LESSON 3 NOTES

Made For This

Mordecai is in shambles, mourning in sackcloth and ashes, and was not allowed to enter the palace in that condition.

Esther sends clothes so he will be able to enter to talk to her. He refuses, and sends a copy of the decree to Esther with a request that she speak to Xerxes.

Apparently, in her cloistered life, she hadn't even heard of what was happening. But upon hearing the request of Mordecai, she responds that it is illegal, and that she hasn't been invited before the king in over 30 days.

Four Reasons (4:12-14)

Mordecai responds with four reasons for Esther to rise to the occasion and risk her life for her people:

1. You will not escape this law unharmed.
2. You are not God's only option - He will save His people.
3. If you don't act, your family will be destroyed regardless.
4. You are here for a reason. Be who you are meant to be.

Esther's response: Fast and pray for three days, then I will break the law and face the consequences. If I perish, I perish.