

A BAD DECISION

Esther 3.1b: The king is the one who decides to put Haman in charge

Theme: You and you only can decide to keep Haman (the flesh) off the throne of your life. Choose you this day whom you will follow: Haman (the flesh) or Mordecai (the Spirit)!

How is it that Christians seem to be so “carnal”? How is it that so many Christians never seem to grow up? How is it that so many Christians seem to make such a mess out of things in life?

- Even though every situation is different, I think we can find one common answer to these question in all of them: Bad decisions!
- We took some time in our last message to find out a little bit about this guy Haman that shows up in Esther 3.1. We looked at what his name meant, and then we looked at where he came from (his lineage).
- Haman is *not* a shining example of godliness and sound character. We saw that he's a lot like the coming man of sin (the Antichrist) and he's a lot like our flesh.
- So, how in the world did this mess of a man get to be prime minister of King Ahasuerus's kingdom? Same answer: A bad decision! And who made that bad decision?
- That's what we want to talk about this morning...

Since we are going to talk a lot about the personal application of Esther 3.1 this morning, let's review our pictures and types really quick:

- King Ahasuerus: He is a picture of our souls, the “us” that lives inside our bodies.
- Shushan the Palace: The capitol city is a picture of our bodies, where Ahasuerus (soul) lives.
- Esther: The new regenerated spirit that replaced Vashti (the rebellious human spirit) at salvation.
- Mordecai: A picture of the Holy Spirit that we get as part of the “package deal” with Esther.
- Haman: A picture of the flesh, the enemy in Shushan that seeks to destroy all that is from God.

So, what can we learn from Esther 3.1 and Ahasuerus's decision to put Haman in charge of *everything*?

I. The king makes this decision “after these things.”

- A. We spent a considerable amount of time on this phrase in our last message, so we only need to remind ourselves of one key observation here...
- B. Haman is an adult when Ahasuerus puts him in charge of the affairs of the kingdom.
 1. That means that Haman was alive and well and living in Shushan the palace (the capitol city) long before Ahasuerus decided to put him in charge.
 2. But, it's not until “after these things” that Haman is promoted and starts to cause problems.
- C. Haman is a picture of your flesh—your old man, the sin that lives in your members (Shushan).
 1. Before your conversion to Christ, Haman (your flesh) was right there in Shushan. But, he didn't cause you any problems (you didn't even know he was there).
 2. It's not until *after* you dethrone Vashti... *after* you repent of your sin...
 3. It's not until *after* you decide to accept Esther (God's provision for your salvation in the gospel)...
 4. It's not until *after* you convert to Christ that Haman shows up and starts causing you problems.
 5. The flesh has always existed in us. But, it's not until “after these things” (Est 1-2) that he begins to oppose everything that is good in our lives.
 - a) And that is what the rest of the Book of Esther is about: Getting Haman *out* and Mordecai *in*.
 - b) But, first, we need to ask ourselves: How did Haman get *in* in the first place...?

II. The king makes this decision (no one else; it's the king who decides!).

- A. It's obvious how Haman rises to power: King Ahasuerus decides to give him his place of power!
- No one else is responsible for this decision. The king did it. Nobody else... King Ahasuerus.
- B. And here we can ask ourselves again: How is it that Christians seem to be so “carnal”?
1. The answer is the same: They did it. They decided to be that way. No one else; they did it.
 2. We all have a free will and God allows us to choose in certain areas of life. As Christians, we choose each and every day to either keep Haman off the throne... or put him in charge...
- C. The New Testament is clear when it speaks of the position and condition of the Christian:
1. (Rom 6.6) Our old man (Haman) is crucified with Christ. He has no power over us.
 2. Therefore, whatever power and authority our old man has in our lives, we gave it to him.
 - a) (Rom 6.14) Sin (Haman) shall not have any power or dominion in our lives after we're saved.
 - b) (Rom 6.12) That's why God can command us to not let sin (Haman) reign and rule our lives!
- D. So, first and foremost, we need to understand this simple truth: The carnal Christian is carnal... the immature Christian is immature... *because he chose to be that way.*
1. King Ahasuerus made a bad decision and put a bad man in charge of his kingdom; he chose to allow Haman to run the daily affairs of his kingdom.
 2. Carnal, immature Christians have made bad decision to let sin and carnality run their daily lives.
 3. And I think we can see three simple steps in the decision-making process to put Haman in charge...

III. The king makes this decision in three easy steps (that anyone can do today!).

A. Ahasuerus promotes Haman: Feeding the flesh...

1. “After these things did king Ahasuerus *promote* Haman...” Haman got a promotion!
2. Haman is raised from a position of relative insignificance (we don't hear of him until now) and he is placed in a position of authority (the highest position of authority, after that of the king).
3. What is important to note here is that this “promotion” has been Haman's obsessive ambition:
 - a) (Est 5.11-12) Haman's desire is to be in charge, to be the center of attention, to run the show.
 - b) (Est 6.6-9) Haman wants to be promoted to the ultimate place of honor and authority.
4. Haman's ambition (his desire) is just like your flesh: **FEED ME! Give me what I want!**
 - a) Your flesh wants preeminence in your life. Your flesh wants its desires (all of them) fulfilled.
 - b) Your flesh wants you to give it anything and everything it wants... now!
5. (Rom 13.14) And the Bible says: Don't even make a provision for the flesh...
 - a) Don't even make a provision that might in some way allow the flesh to get what it wants.
 - (1) If you have a problem with alcohol, don't buy it and keep it in your fridge.
 - (2) If you have a problem with pornography, don't have access to the Internet in your house.
 - (3) If you have a problem with materialism... let your wife control the family finances.
 - (4) Don't even make a provision for the flesh to be able to feed itself and fulfill its desires.
 - b) How much less should we give prominence and priority to our flesh and its desires!
6. Carnality is a decision you make to “promote Haman”—to give him priority, to give him what he wants (to feed his desires).
 - a) Ahasuerus made a bad decision in promoting Haman—giving him and his desires priority.
 - b) And we make bad decisions every time we give our flesh and his desires priority (rather than removing even the provision for the flesh!). Point being: YOU make that decision.

B. Ahasuerus advances Haman: Trusting the flesh...

1. Ahasuerus “advances” Haman in giving him the promotion to a place of authority. Why would he do that?
 - a) Because he trusted Haman and Haman's capacity to do the job.
 - b) Ahasuerus recognized the capacity of Haman to do the job... he valued it... and he trusted Haman to do it. So, he “advanced” him.
2. The Christian does the same thing when he values what his flesh can do. He'll trust it to do it!
 - a) How many are there that trust in their own capacity (their personality, their preparation, their titles, their schooling, their own knowledge... their flesh!)?
 - b) When that happens, you trust your flesh to do run your life and daily affairs: You advance the flesh to a position of authority and rule.
 - c) A Christian who trusts in himself is a carnal Christian because he is trusting in his flesh rather than in God.
3. The king makes his bad decision in three easy steps:
 - a) He promoted Haman: It starts by feeding the flesh (giving Haman what he wants and desires).
 - b) He advanced Haman: It builds when you start trusting the flesh to run your life.

C. Ahasuerus gives the seat of authority to Haman: Following the flesh...

1. Ultimately, Ahasuerus set Haman's seat above all the other princes that were with him. Haman becomes “prime minister,” the minister/prince that is above all the others in authority.
 - a) No one in the kingdom, except Ahasuerus, has more leadership authority than Haman.
 - b) Haman (like Daniel under king Darius or Joseph under the Pharaoh) ran the day-to-day activities of the entire kingdom. Ahasuerus delegated the running of his kingdom to Haman.
2. Feeding your flesh (giving him what he desires) will lead you to trusting in your flesh (and your flesh gains strength in your life). Ultimately your flesh will run your day-to-day activities...
 - a) This is what we call a carnal (or immature) Christian. His flesh runs his life; he has delegated decision making to his flesh (let the flesh decide what to do with his time, talents & treasure).
 - b) This is a Christian who feeds his flesh, trusts his flesh, and now... follows his flesh.
 - c) And how did we get here (with Haman—the flesh—in charge)? Who made that decision?!

(Mat 6.24) You cannot serve two masters.

- Ahasuerus could not serve both Haman and Mordecai at the same time. They hated each other and advocated the complete opposite to the king.

(Gal 5.17) You cannot serve both the flesh and the Spirit of God.

- You (the “king”) must choose which of the two you will serve—which of the two you will put in charge of the daily affairs of your life. Haman or Mordecai—the flesh or the Spirit?
- If you toy around with the flesh...
 - ✓ You will feed him and he will gain strength in your life.
 - ✓ As he gains strength, he will gain your trust (you will think he's your friend!).
 - ✓ And ultimately you'll find the flesh running your life and making your decisions for you.
- Here is the battle for true spirituality (the daily battle): You daily choice to follow the Spirit (by following Scripture) or to follow your flesh (by following his desires and doing what he wants to do).
 - ✓ True spirituality has nothing to do with some mystical experience or other-world feeling.
 - ✓ True spirituality is about the daily decision you make to not satisfy the desires of the flesh, but rather to follow the leading if the Spirit of God as he directs your life through the Word of God.
 - ✓ And that's what the Book of Esther is about: The battle for true spirituality (Haman or Mordecai?).