

LIFE GROUP SERMON SUMMARY QUESTIONS

ESTHER SERIES

These questions are for the **January 28, 2018** sermon, "Threatening Conditions." Please read the sermon passage (Esther 3:1-15) together out loud.

SERMON OUTLINE

AS GOD'S PLAN THROUGHOUT HISTORY INVOLVING THE JEWS UNFOLDS, NOTE . . .

1. The initial stirrings of anti-Semitism (1-6)
 - a. Haman "the Agatite." He was "of Agag," who was king of the Amalekites (1 Sam 15).
 - i. Agag was an anti-Semite who tried to annihilate the Jews.
 - ii. Haman hated one Jew, then tried to destroy all Jews.
 - b. Mordecai was passed over for a promotion that he deserved. And it was because he was a Jew. But in the light of that oppression, he remained faithful. He did his work faithfully and excellently, while he waited for God to sort things out.
 - c. There will be more plots to kill Jews (pogroms) in the future. It is what Satan does.
2. The organizational efforts of anti-Semitism (7-11)
 - a. God has providentially thwarted attempts to annihilate his people. God preserves his people. And he will until the end of time.
 - b. Note the blessing of the timing! The written threat from Xerxes came out on the eve of Passover, when the Jews would be meeting together to reflect upon their identity as God's people and encourage one another.
3. The social unrest of anti-Semitism (12-15)
 - a. The Jews had been causing the city of Susa to flourish, and they had many friends.
 - b. Note how the evil one works through political systems and political correctness.
 - c. God preserves those who are loyal to him and remain under his authority.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: Throughout history, the evil one has devised pogroms in order to annihilate Jews and those loyal to the living God. Note that the effects of being loyal to God are widespread (social pressure "day after day"; being passed up for deserved promotions; plots to kill). What was Mordecai's response to all of these challenges? How does this instruct you?
2. Based on #2, above: The written threat came out at the perfect time for the Jews. The next day they would meet to observe Passover. This allowed them an opportunity to encourage one another and re-focus on God's faithfulness. Today we meet every week to encourage one another in the ways of Scripture and the faithfulness of God. Do you come to church every week with the intention of encouraging others, no matter how dark "the news" seems to be?
3. Based on #3, above: Those who are faithful to God should be causing the city to flourish through wise business practices (employing people), a commitment to God's authority (being a wise parent) and promoting life (standing up for the oppressed) and moral living (so satisfied with God's ways!). How do you see believers in Sheboygan County causing the city to flourish? In what way are you causing the city to flourish? What ministry or passion might God be stoking in you?