

Esther 3:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

Analysis

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. The phrase "after these things" marks the transition to Esther's central conflict. Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite to the highest position in the empire, "above all the princes." The designation "Agagite" is theologically loaded—Agag was king of the Amalekites whom Saul spared (1 Samuel 15), earning God's judgment. The Amalekites first attacked Israel unprovoked during the Exodus (Exodus 17:8-16), leading to God's decree of perpetual war against them (Deuteronomy 25:17-19). Haman represents the ancient enemy of God's people, now elevated to power. Mordecai, descended from Saul's family (2:5), faces the descendant of the king Saul should have destroyed. God's providence sets up this conflict to complete what Saul failed to accomplish. The promotion of this enemy seems disastrous, yet God will use even this for deliverance.

Historical Context

The reason for Haman's promotion isn't specified—perhaps political maneuvering, family connections, or service to the king. Ancient Near Eastern monarchs elevated officials based on various criteria, not always merit. Haman's Agagite descent connected him to the Amalekites, Israel's ancient enemies. Historically, the Amalekites had been largely destroyed by Saul and David, but remnants

survived. The elevation of an enemy of the Jews to the empire's second-highest position created extreme danger for the dispersed Jewish community. God's providence often allows temporary apparent victories for His enemies before demonstrating His ultimate sovereignty through dramatic reversals.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the elevation of God's enemies to power test faith and demonstrate that apparent setbacks serve God's ultimate purposes?
2. What does the Saul-Agag backstory teach about how unfinished obedience creates future crises that later generations must address?

Interlinear Text

אַחַר	הַדְּבָרִים	הָאֵלֶּה	גִּדֵּל	הַמֶּלֶךְ	וְאֶחָשׁוּר וְשׁ	אֶת
After	these things	H428	promote	did king	Ahasuerus	H853
H310	H1697		H1431	H4428	H325	

הָמָן	בֶּן	הַמֶּדָּתָא	הָאֲגָגִי	וַיַּנְשְׂא הוּא	וַיִּשֶׂם	אֶת
Haman	the son	of Hammedatha	the Agagite	and advanced	him and set	H853
H2001	H1121	H4099	H91	H5375	H7760	

כִּסֵּא	לְ	כָּל	הַשָּׂרִים	אֲשֶׁר	אֶתּוֹ:
his seat			above all the princes		
H3678	H5921	H3605	H8269	H834	H854

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 24:7 (Kingdom): He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

Daniel 6:2 (Kingdom): And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.

Esther 5:11 (Kingdom): And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

1 Samuel 15:33 (Parallel theme): And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

Esther 3:10 (Kingdom): And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

Genesis 41:40 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.