

Esther 9:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them;

Analysis

Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them; This verse provides the theological explanation for Purim, summarizing Haman's plot and its reversal. The full identification—"Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite" (Haman ben-Hammedata ha'Agagi, הָאָגָגִי בֶן־הַמֵּדָתָא הָאֲגָגִי)—recalls his Amalekite descent (3:1), connecting his hatred to the ancient enmity between Amalek and Israel (Exodus 17:8-16; Deuteronomy 25:17-19). The designation "enemy of all the Jews" (tzorar kol-haYehudim, צָרָר כָּל־הַיְּהוּדִים) emphasizes the comprehensive nature of his hatred—not personal grudge against Mordecai but genocidal intent against an entire people.

The verb "had devised" (chashav, חָשַׁב) means "to think," "to plan," or "to plot"—indicating calculated conspiracy rather than impulsive hatred. Haman's plot was deliberate, systematic, and comprehensive. The dual purpose—"to destroy them" and "to consume them" (l'abedam ul'abedam, לְאַבְדָּם וּלְאֲכָדָם)—uses repetition for emphasis, though some manuscripts vary the second verb to "to consume" (l'khalam, לְכַלֵּם), intensifying the totality of intended destruction.

The reference to casting "Pur, that is, the lot" (hipil Pur hu hagoral, הִפִּיל פּוּר הוּא הַגּוֹרָל) explains the festival's name and highlights the irony central to Esther's

theology. Haman cast lots to determine the auspicious date for destroying Jews (3:7), treating their fate as subject to random chance or fate. Instead, God sovereignly overruled the lot-casting, transforming the chosen destruction date into deliverance day. What appeared random was under divine control—the lots fell according to God's purposes, not Haman's desires.

Historical Context

The practice of casting lots (purim) to determine auspicious dates was common in ancient Near Eastern culture, particularly in Mesopotamian and Persian contexts. Clay tablets document Babylonian lot-casting for determining favorable times for important actions. The practice reflects pagan belief in fate, chance, or divine will revealed through random mechanisms. Haman's use of lots may have seemed religiously appropriate from a Persian perspective but ironically subjected his evil plan to God's sovereign control.

The identification of Haman as "the Agagite" connects him to King Agag of the Amalekites, whom Saul failed to destroy completely (1 Samuel 15). This links Haman's plot to the ancient, persistent enmity between Amalek and Israel. God commanded Israel to "blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Deuteronomy 25:19)—yet here an Agagite attempts to blot out Israel. The reversal whereby Haman's family is destroyed instead fulfills divine justice against Amalek's ongoing hatred of God's people.

The month-long gap between casting the lot (first month, 3:7) and issuing the decree, followed by the eleven-month wait until the execution date (twelfth month), created the timeline allowing Esther's intervention, Mordecai's rise, and the counter-decree. What seemed like procedural delay became providential opportunity. God's sovereignty operates through natural timing and circumstances, not just miraculous intervention.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the overruling of Haman's lot-casting demonstrate that nothing is truly random from God's perspective (Proverbs 16:33)?
2. What does the connection between Haman (Agagite) and ancient Amalek teach about persistent spiritual warfare across generations?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	הָמָן	בֶּן	הַמֶּדְתָּא	הָאֲגָגִי	צֵרֵר	כָּל
H3588	Because Haman	the son	of Hammedatha	the Agagite	the enemy	H3605
	H2001	H1121	H4099	H91	H6887	
הַיְּהוּדִים	חָשַׁב	עַל	הַיְּהוּדִים	לְאַבְדָּם:		
against the Jews	had devised	H5921	against the Jews	them and to destroy		
H3064	H2803		H3064	H6		
וְהִפָּיֵל	פּוּר	הוּא	הַגּוֹכֵל	לֶהֱמַם	לְאַבְדָּם:	
them and had cast	Pur	H1931	that is the lot	to consume	them and to destroy	
H5307	H6332		H1486	H2000	H6	

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