



Esther

Lesson 3

Esther Chapter 3-4

Both Mordecai and Esther have made significant contributions to the Persian society at this point in that Esther has become queen, and Mordecai has saved the life of king, though he has not yet been identified as the hero. Although the Jews have somewhat assimilated into Persian society and culture, they are still a distinct people in that they were not natives of that land. They had been brought there as a conquered people by the Babylonians many years previous and had been there when the Persians defeated the Babylonians.

When Cyrus gave the edict that the Jews could return, many went back to Israel, but many who had been born and raised in the region stayed. Unfortunately, they did not understand

the seriousness of being the chosen covenant people of God who are still in rebellion against Him. Because of that, the Jewish people will never have peace and safety until they repent and return to live under the theocracy they agreed to. They will always be strangers and aliens wherever they are until the Kingdom of God is established in their midst. Their existence will always be threatened by the enemies of God. Even the people that have returned to Jerusalem faced opposition from those who wanted to destroy them and thwart God's purposes for them. But now, in Susa, a new threat is arising that would be instigated by a long-lost enemy of the Jews; the Amalekites.

READ ESTHER CHAPTER 3

1. *How is Haman identified? Give the details of the story in 1 Samuel 15 that describes a possible reason Haman is considered the enemy of the Jews (3:10).*

2. *What had the king commanded regarding Haman, and why didn't Mordecai comply? 3:2-4*

3. What was Haman's response to this? 3:5-8



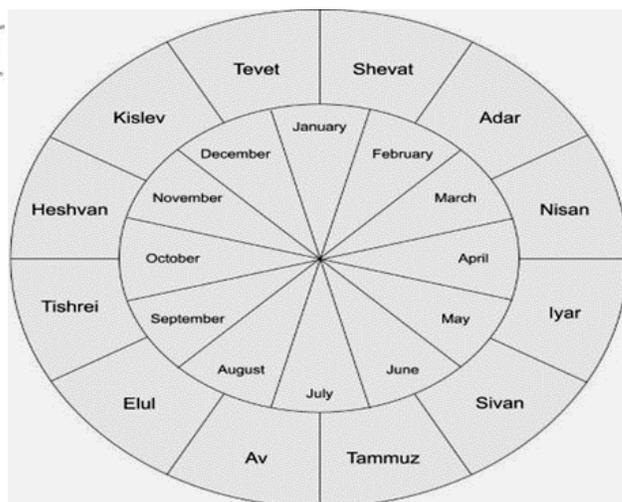
The Hebrew word goral is related to the Arabic word jaral/jarwal — “stones” or “pebbles” which were used for drawing lots. The goral comes up elsewhere in the Bible where it refers to the lottery used to determine which goat on Yom Kippur goes to G-d, and which to Azazel (Lev. 16:8). It also refers to the mechanism of lots by which the Holy Land was divided amongst the various tribes (Num. 26:55). A goral also refers to the portion allotted to somebody, oftentimes by way of a raffle or lottery. In fact, the English words lot and plot, which refer to sections of land, are probably derived from the word lottery (www.ohr.ed).

“...seeking then the guidance of the spirits, they cast lots to see what would be the most appropriate month to carry out this edict. And so they cast Pur; it fell on the twelfth month, which is in the Jewish calendar the month of March” (Smith’s Bible Commentary).

“Haman was seeking ‘wisdom’ to know when to execute his genocidal plan against the Jews. So he cast Pur or the lot” (Explaining the Book).

4. How does Haman describe the people he tells the king about, and what is his suggestion on how to deal with them? 3:8-9

5. On what day was the edict written, and what was to happen on its determined date? 3:12-14



READ ESTHER CHAPTER 4

6. *What do you think is the root cause of all prejudice including anti-semitism? Explain your reasoning.*

7. *How did Mordecai and Esther respond to the news? 4:1-4*

8. *What information about the edict did Mordecai send to Esther, and what did he want her to do? 4:5-8*

9. *What was Esther's response, and how did Mordecai convince her to do what he asked? 4:9-14*

10. *Although the name of God is not mentioned in this book, what can we assume from Esther's response to Mordecai, and why would we assume that? 4:15-16*

Prayer requests:

Group time notes:
