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## **If It Pleases the King...An Eight Week Study of Esther**

A Study for Women by *Stephanie Little*

**Key Verse: "When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath." Esther 3:5**

**Have you ever known someone who lived a life filled with anger, bitterness, even hatred toward another person? Think about them for a moment. Not a very pleasant person to be around, huh? This week, we'll meet a man so consumed with anger, bitterness and hatred that his heart became darkened with an evil plan for the destruction of God's chosen people, the Jews. Yet, we'll also see God at work in the darkness, His light shining through the actions and words of His servant, Mordecai. As you study this week, ask God to embolden you to reflect His Light in a dark world.**

- 1) Please read chapter three of Esther all at once. Write a brief summary of what takes place in this chapter:  
As you recount the progression of events, do you see Haman's anger growing or diminishing?  
Along with *angry*, what other adjectives could be used to describe Haman?  
Is there a Haman in your life right now? If so, take a moment to pray for him/her, asking God to break their prideful heart and turn it toward Him.**
- 2) Verse one gives some interesting information and insight about Haman, the king's choice for promotion. He was an *Agagite*. Haman's heritage is quite significant; we'll examine it more closely as we walk through the remaining verses. For now, look at the response of Mordecai to the king's command in verses 2-4. Mordecai refuses to bow because he is a J \_\_\_\_\_. What does verse 4 tell us about his reputation?  
Mordecai is literally "taking a stand" for his God. How about you? Has God called you to take a stand for your faith in Him?**
- 3) Because of Haman's anger against Mordecai, he sets out on an evil path of destruction. According to verses 6-9, what are the steps he takes to manipulate the king into ordering the extermination of the Jews?**

**Right in the middle of this passage, Haman's servants "cast the lot" to determine the timing of the destruction. Haman surely thinks he is in control of the situation; but Proverbs 16:33 tells us something different. Copy it here:**

**Underline Who really has complete control.**

- 4) Verse 10 recounts the ultimate prize of Haman's quest for power. He is given the king's signet ring. With the ring he can pass any law he chooses. Again we are reminded that Haman is a descendant of Agag, the enemy of the Jews. For a better understanding of the history involved, take a look at 1 Samuel 15:1-35. What was Saul ordered to do? How did he disobey? How did Samuel follow through on God's command?**

**Exodus 17:8-16 gives more history between God's people and the Amaleks, ancestors of the Agagites. What is God's promise in verse 16?**

**We can be assured that God never forgets or fails to fulfill His promises. He will prevail. Just wait and see.**

- 5) As we continue our study together, we'll explore the impact of Haman's decree and the possible ramifications for the people. To close our study this week, take a look at verse 15. Haman and the king sat back and relaxed while the people of the kingdom stood in stunned confusion. Isn't that the general response of those on the receiving end of an angry person's attacks?**

**Think about what drove Haman to do what he did and specifically his desire to destroy a whole group of people completely. The grudge he held stemmed from something that happened years before he was even born. Is there any anger or resentment in your own life or in the life of someone you know that comes from a past hurt? How can someone move beyond that hurt and deal with the anger or bitterness they feel in a godly way? Write down at least one verse that can be used to help someone address this issue: Make that verse your prayer this week.**