

GOSPEL COMMUNITY GUIDE

Living Faithfully in Exile
Esther 3 | April 26, 2026



REDEEMER
ROUND ROCK

QUICK UPDATES

Share any upcoming church events and handle housekeeping for the Gospel Community.

CONNECT

What are some situations where your identity or beliefs have shaped your choices differently than those around you?

REVIEW

Have someone read the passage out loud from the ESV translation or something similar. Reflect on any insights, questions, or parts that stood out from the text or the sermon. Then read the summary below.

Esther 3 introduces the rise of Haman, an enemy of God's people whose promotion signals the resurgence of an ancient conflict. Mordecai's refusal to bow reveals a moment of costly allegiance to God, even under pressure. Haman responds with extreme evil, plotting the destruction of all Jews, while the king passively enables the injustice. Though God's name is not mentioned, His providence is quietly at work - even in the casting of lots and the timing of events. The sermon points forward to the ultimate reversal in Christ, reminding believers to lament evil, resist compromise, and live with hope that evil will not have the final word.

LEARN & LIVE

These questions help us grasp the truth of the passage and consider how to live it out.

- What stands out to you about how Haman is introduced and elevated in Esther 3:1–2? What does that reveal about how evil can rise?
- What is significant about Haman being called an “Agagite”? How does that shape the conflict in this chapter?
- Why do you think Mordecai refuses to bow while everyone else complies? What does the text say about his reason?
- What do you observe about how others respond to Mordecai's refusal? What pressure is he under?
- How does Haman react to Mordecai's defiance, and what does that reveal about his character?
- What pattern do you see in how Haman describes the Jewish people to the king?
- What role does the king play in this chapter? What stands out about his response to Haman's proposal?
- What is the significance of casting lots (Pur) in verse 7, especially in light of Proverbs 16:33 mentioned in the sermon?
- How does the final scene (v.15) contrast the response of the city with the response of the king and Haman?
- Based on the sermon, what are the three responses God's people are called to when evil rises?

GO DEEPER

These questions invite us to slow down and wrestle with what's going on beneath the surface. Use these to go a little deeper or in your Huddle Groups.

- Where are you most tempted to “bow” just to avoid conflict or stand out less?
- What does your instinctive reaction to evil tend to be - anger, avoidance, numbness, fear - and why?
- When have you felt pressure to stay silent about something you knew was wrong? What held you back?
- How do you personally discern when to quietly endure and when to visibly resist?
- What kind of “Haman-like” distortions do you see in the world around you - and how do they shape your thinking?
- Where might you be underestimating the danger of passive complicity, like the king?

- How easy or difficult is it for you to lament honestly before God? What keeps you from it?
- Do you truly believe that God is at work when you can't see Him? Where is that belief being tested right now?
- **How is the Holy Spirit comforting you or challenging you personally from this discussion? How will you respond and what will you do differently this week? Is there anywhere you need help to make that happen?**

PRAY FOR NEEDS in the GROUP

- Some other ways to pray:
 - Pray about one way God spoke to you tonight through His Word
 - Pray by name for one person you know who is far from God..
- Pray for this ministry area of Redeemer: [Pray for SOMA Austin..](#)

5 GROUP DISCUSSION RULES

We want to be full of grace as we meet, deepening our relationship with one another and with Christ. These five values help us know our **P.L.A.C.E.** in our GC's and Huddles.

1. **Pray** - Prayer is a space for confession, struggle, and praise. Keep requests focused on yourself and your immediate family, so we can pray specifically and personally.
2. **Listen** - Be present and attentive. Share with humility, be mindful of time, and remember: silence is okay.
3. **Apply** - Answer honestly. Consider how God's Word speaks into your life, and what it might look like to respond.
4. **Confess** - Confession and repentance are signs of maturity. We meet one another with grace, not shame.
5. **Encourage** - Practical advice is helpful, but truth is better. Speak the gospel into each other's hearts and stories.

COMMENTARY EXCERPT:

Haman Plans to Destroy the Jews (3:1–15)

3:1–6 Mordecai's actions for the king would normally have led to a reward, but instead the narrative leaves him aside to report the promotion of Haman, who became the king's leading official. No reason for this is provided. Instead, his ancestry is noted, reporting that he was an "Agagite." This indicates that he is descended from Agag, the Amalekite king that Saul had failed to destroy (1Sam 15:9). Mordecai's connection to Saul was noted in his genealogy (Esth 2:5), so these notes establish that the long-held conflict between Israel and Amalek (see Exod 17:8–16) is again about to be worked out. Haman is presented as vain, perhaps someone lacking popular support since the king needed to command that people bow before him, something that routinely happened in that culture. Mordecai did not bow, though Haman seems not to have noticed. But the others in the gate did, asking Mordecai why he transgressed the king's command. This happened over a period, and when Mordecai still did not bow, they reported this to Haman. Central to this is that Mordecai had indicated that he was Jewish. Ordinarily, Jews followed the custom of honoring those in power, so being Jewish would not of itself explain not bowing. But if Mordecai is participating in the enduring conflict with Amalek, then his decision can be understood. Haman only noticed Mordecai's behavior after being told, but in a clear sign of both an age-old conflict and widespread anti-Jewish sentiment, Haman determined to destroy all the Jews in the empire. What Saul had not done to Agag, his descendant would do to the Jews.

3:7 The pivot to this chapter is the casting of lots called Pur (the plural of which is Purim). This process was intended to find a propitious day for an action. Finding this day takes the story forward by nearly a year, a period which will place the Jews under a serious threat. Although the exact date on which the lots were cast is not stated, doing so in Nisan means that this happens at the time of Passover, the time when Israel left Egypt (Exod 12) and entered the land (Josh 5:1–12). In the exodus, God had saved his people. Will he do so again?

3:8–15 With his date chosen, Haman approached the king to gain royal approval for his plan. His words are carefully chosen, a mixture of truth, half-truth, and deceit, all chosen to show that the king's best interest was to destroy the Jews. The Jews were indeed scattered through the empire, though the laws that differed were largely religious. Since Haman has made an argument about profit, it is unsurprising that he offered a massive bribe too. The sum may be hyperbolic, and there is no clear way Haman could have paid it. But since Ahasuerus accepts any advice he receives, he passes his signet ring to Haman so a decree can be issued, the ring functioning like a royal signature. Although Ahasuerus's response could be taken as declining the bribe, it is more likely a polite way of accepting the money. Accordingly, just as the scribal and postal system had earlier been called into action to send out the decree deposing Vashti, so here it issues the decree to destroy the Jews. Haman here receives the title "enemy of the Jews." Given that the empire covered the known world, there was no way for the Jews to escape. Even as Ahasuerus and Haman drink in celebration, unsurprisingly the city of Susa (as the first to know of the decree) was thrown into confusion.