

Refusing To Bow

Introduction:

A. Esther 3:1-15

B. What's going on here?

- a. We were introduced to Esther & Mordecai last week...
- b. Some 5 years has passed from Ch. 2 to Ch. 3
- c. Today "Haman"
 - i. He was given a promotion that went straight to his head.
 - ii. As you can see he was a tool that Satan was trying to you to annihilate the Jewish people...
 - iii. When Mordecai refused to show reverence to Haman, he not only wanted to get back at Mordecai, but at the whole Jewish race.
 - iv. Why? – Verse (1) may give us a clue...
 - v. Haman was an Agagite.
 1. Some scholars believe this was a reverence to the Persian province of Agag...
 2. But it may have a deeper root in history.
 3. 1 Sam. 15:1-9 & 32-33
 4. Thus Haman could have been a descendent of Agag, king of the Amalakites...long time enemies of Israel!
 - vi. So Haman in his fury pick a date that is almost a year later by casting lots for the slaughter...
 - vii. He takes his plan and plays to the fleshly appetites of King Ahasurus by bribing him with 10,000 talents of silver...
 1. [Est. - \$25,000,000]
 2. 750,000 lbs!
 3. Probably taken from the plunder the Jewish people!

- viii. So the King unaware that Esther was a Jew allows Haman to decree this plot...
- ix. Thus the message was sent all over the kingdom that on the 13th of Adar (Our March) all the citizens of Persia were to rise up, kill, and plunder all the Jews on that 1 day...

d. [The importance of this chapter to understanding the book!]

C. Today? TITLE [Bow – “to bend the head, body, or knee in reverence, submission, or shame” – Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary {to bow out}]

D. “There will be times when we will have to choose to stand for God instead of bowing to the world.”

E. Mordecai (1-6)

- a. There are some who disagree as to why Mordecai refused to bow, but his response to his fellow servants may give us a clue “I’m a Jew”
- b. Out of conviction Mordecai refused to bow
- c. Either he refused because the King had ordered the people to reverence Haman as a god or Mordecai know Haman was an Amalakite!
- d. Either reason Mordecai stood for what He believed in!
- e. He didn’t first take a poll to see the safest or most popular course of action to take...
- f. He had courage, but having courage can be unpopular and dangerous...

F. This is a principle for us today as Christians!

G. [Going Old School – Bibles in Hand!]

H. 3 Areas in life we must not bow:

I. We must stand for God rather than bowing to wicked men.

a. God demands to be our one and only God.

- i. Ex. 20:5-6 {1&2 Commandments}
- ii. We must resist the temptation to find our identity, meaning, & security in others and stuff!

- iii. We can respect man and his leadership, but God deserves our honor and worship.
- b. To stand for God takes courage and faith.
 - i. Dan. 3:8-18
 - ii. When stand for God we will stand out, it might be painful, and we will not always experience a happy ending.
 - iii. But if we are going to be faithful to God we must boldly proclaim, “ I will serve God regardless!”
- c. Obeying God should be our top priority.
 - i. Acts 5:27-32{The Apostles arrested a 2nd time }
 - ii. There will be times that we cannot obey God, while obeying the desires of people.
 - iii. *“What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man.”*
– Lk. 6:22 NLT
 - iv. **[No Excuses]**

“The Second area not to bow...”

- II. We must stand for God rather than bowing to the allure of culture.
[Through the eyes of the church][To be culturally relevant is a good thing, however not everything accepted by culture should be accepted by Christians!]
 - a. Arrogance within the church will lead to worldly corruption.
 - i. 1 Cor. 5:1-6 {immorality in Corinth }
 - ii. If we are going to stand with God we can’t ignore sin.
 - iii. **[Not a question of right and wrong, but of sin]**
 - b. A compromising church will face the Lord’s judgment.
 - i. Rev. 2:12-16 {Church of Purgamos }
 - ii. There is room for differences of opinion, but no church should tolerate heresy or immorality... Thus the Lord may kill the church!

- c. We should stand for God by striving to be a faithful church.
 - i. Rev. 3:7-13 {Church of Philadelphia }
 - ii. We should long to be a faithful and pure church, because Christ is coming soon to take us out of this cruel world!
“The third area not to bow...”

III. We must stand for God rather than bowing to our sinful selfishness.

[On A Personal level]

- a. To deny ourselves is the first step on the road of salvation.
 - i. Matt. 16:24-26
 - ii. To truly follow Christ means that we realize the cost, but by faith we gladly surrender all to receive the everything of eternity!
- b. If we want God’s best in life, we will gladly offer ourselves to Him daily.
 - i. Rom. 12:1-2
 - ii. If we are wise we will not live a life of conformity, but let God renew the way we think...
 - iii. Thus putting Him first!
- c. We must realize that standing for God will not be easy.
 - i. 2 Tim. 3:12-17
 - ii. There will be resistance if we live for Christ, but by the power of the Word and the presence of the Holy Spirit we can be thoroughly equipped!
 - iii. **[Upstream]**

Conclusions

- A. Have you been standing for God or have you been bowing to the world?
- B. Have you accepted the One who bowed for you?
 - a. “Grace” - Hebrew root word meaning “to bend or stoop in kindness”
 - b. Jesus came to show us God’s kindness!