



2/18/26

Wanna know something interesting? Yesterday when I walked my dog Toby at 5:15 in the morning 🥰, I could see some stars, but I couldn't find the moon. You would think that the moon would shine through the clouds better than the stars. But as I contemplated it, I thought, "What a cool reminder of God's presence in my life." First of all, I knew that the moon was still there. I just couldn't see it. God is still there even when I can't see what He's doing. And secondly, I had the opportunity to see smaller lights that still reminded me of His peace and power. It's always peaceful to see the stars, and I always see His power displayed because He's holding them in His orbit simply by the WORD of His power. God will always give us evidence of His presence in our lives. Even if the evidence is faint... Be assured. The evidence of His presence may be faint, but HE IS NOT. Praise His name.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Esther 3 ~

So... to review... King Ahasuerus has kicked out his first wife and replaced her with Queen Esther, who was both beautiful in appearance AND beautiful in character. Through Mordecai, Esther has exposed a plot to kill the king and save his life. All is right with the world, right? Wrong. Enter Haman...

Esther 3 ~ Sometime after all these things took place, the king promoted a guy named Haman. He set his seat above all the other officials. AND the king commanded that ALL the king's servants would have to bow down to Haman and pay him homage.

Mordecai refused. He absolutely would not, and no amount of peer pressure would change his mind. This reminds me of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When they were told to bow to a statue of King Nebuchadnezzar, they also refused. Their king said they would be thrown into a fiery furnace if they didn't comply. They answered, "If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O

king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." Both these men and Mordecai lived the statement, "My God can, my God will, and even if He doesn't, I will worship HIM."

Well, this news of Mordecai's refusal to bow was told to Haman and he was FURIOUS! He was so mad that he was not just going to have Mordecai thrown into a fiery furnace, but he was going to find a way to annihilate him along with ALL his people, the Jews.

I've said before that I can see God's hand all over this story. Now I can also clearly see the devil's hand all over this story. The devil has wanted the Jews killed from the beginning when he heard the prophecy in the Garden of Eden. His fury has grown as he very clearly heard all the other prophecies throughout the Old Testament history. A Messiah was coming, and He would come through the bloodline of the Jews. The devil stirred the anger of Haman whether Haman knew it or not. But let me never forget... Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world! Things may look bad, but God is still in control!

From the time of what we would call March all the way through February, which was considered a month of great joy, Haman had lots cast (called Pur) to determine the best time to attack and destroy the Jews. He believed that his false gods would reveal his best plan of action basically through throwing dice. That is not a problem for God. He can work through what we think of as random things. If I read on through the book of Esther, I'll see that a lot happened during that year of casting lots... things that had to be moved into place so that God could fulfill His plan. Haman may have been waiting on dice, but Almighty God was at work.

Once the lot was cast and the plan was made, Haman went to the king. He did not say, "I can't stand this guy Mordecai. He is the bane of my existence!" Instead, he was cunning. He appealed to the arrogance of the king. He said, "You have a whole group of people scattered throughout your kingdom who live by different laws and refuse to obey YOURS! This is BAD for your kingdom if you tolerate this. You need to have them all killed. I care so much for your royal position that I will pay for these people to be stopped!" He offered to pay 10,000 talents, which today would be about \$13,000,000,000!!!

The king believed him, not realizing that his own wife was a Jew, and he sealed the decree that would command the people to destroy all the Jews on one particular day one year later.

The decree was sent out to all the provinces. This confused the people. Why do they want the Jews to be destroyed all of a sudden? What did they do??? But while the people were confused, "the king and Haman sat down to drink." Wow. So cold and self-serving.

But the story isn't over. The next thing that happened was that Mordecai let Esther know that she was made queen "for such a time as this." And then fasting and prayer. This is an important lesson for me... If the story isn't over, God isn't finished. Let me never forget. I may not see what He's doing, but I can be sure... He's doing. The question is, "Will I trust Him?"

O Lord, I think of Isaiah's words in Isaiah 9:7, "If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all." No matter what comes, whether I can see the moon or the sun or the stars, or all I see is dark clouds, please help me to stand firm knowing... You ARE there. You ARE in control. You CANNOT be dethroned or manipulated or defeated. Greater are You who is in me than he that is in the world.