



Disciplers Bible Studies

HAMAN'S PLOT EXPOSED -- CHAPTERS 5-6

INTRODUCTION

Mordecai had promised to gather all the Jews in Shushan (Susa) to fast for Esther for three days before she went before the king. Esther and her attendants would fast also. With the realization that God may have providentially placed her on the throne of Persia for such a time as this (Esther 4:14), Esther humbly sought His will and His strength for the task at hand. She would go before the king, an act which was contrary to the Persian law and which might even result in her immediate execution, but she would go forward supported by the prayers of her people and the providential power of God.

Chapters five through seven represent the turning point in the Book of Esther. The crisis point is reached when Esther appears before the king and is welcomed into his presence with the golden scepter. The events which follow, although they may seem like fortuities, are really the over-ruling power of God working on behalf of His people. Although God's name is never mentioned, it is very clear that He is in control.

Outline of Esther 5-7

- I. Esther's Favorable Reception - Esther 5
- II. Haman's Humiliation - Esther 6
- III. Haman's End - Esther 7

I. Esther's Favorable Reception - Esther 5

- A. Scepter of grace extended - Esther 5:1-3

Esther had prepared herself through fasting and prayer. On the third day she put on her queenly robes and boldly presented herself before the king as he sat on his royal throne. During the three days of fasting, God had not only prepared Esther to go into the presence of the king, but He had also prepared the heart of the king to receive her favorably (Proverbs 21:1). Ahasuerus held out his golden scepter.

Esther knew all too well that approaching the king without being called might mean death for her. In extending the scepter, the king granted her life. God, our King, has extended the scepter to us in Jesus Christ. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life* (John 3:16). *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need* (Hebrews 4:16).

Not only did the king receive Esther into his presence, he also promised to give her anything she requested, up to half his kingdom. Did it surprise you that the king would be so generous in his offer? *Up to half my kingdom* is probably an idiomatic expression which would assure Esther that she was in favor with the king and that he desired to meet her need, whatever it might be. Believers also have a King who desires to give us whatever we ask of Him within the confines of His will. *Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it* (John 14:13-14). And again, *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you* (John 15:7). These verses make it clear that we should take our requests to God, but, at the same time, we must be sure that we are in His will and that we ask according to His will.

- B. Invitation accepted - Esther 5:4-8

Esther's request was that the king and Haman should come to a banquet which she had prepared. Esther had not only been fasting and praying for three days, but she had also stepped out in faith to prepare a dinner for the king. "The days of corporate fasting, accompanied by prayer, had given Esther a wisdom from above and a confidence not her own. She had prepared the meal, believing that the outcome of her daring initiative would be favorable" (Esther, Joyce G. Baldwin).

The king accepted the invitation for both himself and Haman, and they went to the banquet which Esther had prepared. After dinner, as they lingered over the wine, the king again asked Esther to make her request known. Again, he offered her up to half his kingdom. Esther apparently sensed that the time was not yet right to make her petition, so she invited Haman and the king to another banquet which would take place on the following day. Esther had the wisdom not to rush things but to await God's perfect timing. Sometimes patience is a difficult thing, but we will see that Esther's patience will pay off. Do you practice patience in your daily life, or are you often one step ahead of God?

- C. Gallows constructed - Esther 5:9-14

1. Haman's anger - 5:9-10

As Haman left the palace that day, he was on top of the world; that is until he saw Mordecai who had now taken off his sackcloth and returned to the king's gate. When Mordecai refused to acknowledge him, Haman

was filled with rage. The final phrase of verse 9 indicates that Haman was nursing his anger against Mordecai. He restrained himself for the time being, knowing that he would soon get even.

2. Haman's ego - 5:11-13

Upon arriving home, Haman called together his wife and friends and boasted to them of his great riches, his ten sons (Esther 9:7-10), his exalted position in the king's court, and the special attention he had received from the queen. Haman was totally absorbed in his self-importance. If any man ever had an inflated ego, it was Haman. But in spite of all his power, position, and wealth, Haman could not get over Mordecai's refusal to bow down to him. According to Scripture, Haman showed himself to be a fool. In his own self-confidence he raged and boasted (Proverbs 14:16), caring not about understanding, but only about expressing his own heart (Proverbs 18:2).

Haman's wife and friends had a solution to his problem; build a gallows fifty cubits high and suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it. If he had the gallows built quickly and spoke to the king first thing in the morning, the problem of Mordecai would be solved, and Haman would be able to attend Esther's banquet with a joyful heart. This suggestion obviously fed Haman's already inflated ego and added fuel to the fire of his hatred for Mordecai. Haman wasted no time in having the gallows made.

Today, we think of a gallows as a device used for execution by hanging, but from Persian pictures and statues, it is evident that the gallows referred to an impaling stake. A gallows fifty cubits in height would have been as tall as a seven story building. Mordecai's impaled body would have been visible throughout the city of Shushan, even from the king's palace.

II. Haman's Humiliation - Esther 6

A. A sleepless night - Esther 6:1-3

That night as Haman oversaw the construction of the gallows, the king was also awake. Unable to sleep, he ordered one of his servants to bring the book containing the historical records of his reign and read to him from it. Was it by chance that the servant chose the volume containing the record of Mordecai's good deed? Was it by chance that the servant opened to and read the account of Mordecai saving the king's life by reporting the two doorkeepers' conspiracy to kill King Ahasuerus? Or was it the providence of God?

When the king heard the account of what Mordecai had done, his question was, *What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?* The answer was

that nothing had been done for him. Mordecai's loyalty had been overlooked. Five years had passed and he had received no reward for his service to the king.

What are your motives in serving God? Do you desire an earthly reward of position, power, or popularity? Or are your good deeds humbly done for God alone? Jesus said, *When you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly* (Matthew 6:3-4). God will reward service humbly rendered. *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name* (Hebrews 6:10).

Mordecai's good deed was overlooked by the king. But God will undertake for Mordecai.

B. Honor bestowed - Esther 6:4-11

The king was questioning his servants about who was present in the court just as Haman arrived to ask permission to have Mordecai hanged on the gallows he had prepared. How ironic that Haman had come to ask for the life of Mordecai at the very same moment that the king was making plans to reward him. Of course neither Haman nor the king knew what was on the other's mind. Haman must have been very pleased when the king immediately called him into his presence and asked, *What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?*

1. Haman's pride - 6:6b

Haman could not imagine the king honoring anyone but himself! His first thought was, *Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?* Again we see the flagrant display of Haman's egotism and pride. This kind of pride is something which we usually find detestable in others, but sadly tend to tolerate in ourselves. The Bible says, *God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble* (James 4:6 NASB). *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time* (1 Peter 5:6).

2. Haman's pretension - 6:7-9

With enthusiasm, Haman laid out a plan which would give the one being honored the appearance of being king himself. The honored one would wear a royal robe which had been worn by the king. He would ride upon a royal horse which the king had ridden, and a royal crest would be displayed on the horse's head. One of the king's most noble princes would parade the honored one through the city square shouting, *Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!* Haman wanted to look like a king and be displayed ostentatiously as he rode through the streets so everyone could see. Little

did he imagine that Mordecai, the man he detested, was the one who would receive the accolade.

3. Haman's public humiliation - 6:10-11

It is not hard to imagine Haman's reaction when the king ordered him to do all that he had suggested for Mordecai, the Jew. The blood must have drained from his face and his mouth dropped open in surprise as he struggled to keep his composure and hide the rage which welled up within him. Again we see the irony — the very man who had privately planned Mordecai's death was the one who would publicly honor him. How humiliated Haman must have felt as he carried out the king's order, dressing Mordecai in the robe he wanted to wear, and putting him on the horse he wanted to ride! The words he was forced to speak must have been bitter in his mouth as he broadcast Mordecai's honor in the city square.

C. Doom predicted - Esther 6:12-14

Afterward, Mordecai humbly returned to his place at the king's gate. Haman hurried home as fast as he could to seek the consolation of his wife and friends. His life had taken a terrible turn. He had been publicly disgraced and his pride crushed. Grief stricken and utterly mortified, he covered his head in shame as he slunk home. There, instead of finding the comfort he so desired, he was met with only a prophesy of doom. The very ones who had encouraged him to build the gallows for Mordecai now changed their tune and predicted Haman's downfall. They told Haman that if Mordecai were of Jewish descent, and they knew he was because Haman had formerly referred to him as "*Mordecai, the Jew*" (Esther 5:13), then he would never be able to triumph over him. "Pagan advisors and the pagan wife of an evil man unknowingly stated the central thrust of the book: neither Haman nor any other human can possibly stand against God's Chosen People, the Jewish nation" ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#), commentary on "Esther" by John A. Martin).

The early readers of the Book of Esther, the Jews who were scattered throughout the Persian empire, would be encouraged by this to remember God's promises and protection of them in the past. Those who had returned to Judea, as well as those who remained outside the land God had promised, could take heart in the knowledge that God would preserve and protect them as His chosen ones. The existence of the Jewish people and the nation of Israel today is a continuing witness that God is still at work in preserving His people.

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you too are one of His chosen ones. *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world* (Ephesians 1:4.), and He has promised in His Word to preserve

and protect you. The apostle Paul wrote, *The Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one* (2 Thessalonians 3:3 NASB). The apostle Peter confirmed that we are, *Protected by the power of God* (1 Peter 1:5 NASB). The Book of Esther is therefore an encouragement to all of God's people. As one of His chosen ones, no enemy will prevail against you.