

Joseph and Esther

Lesson 11 (Esther)

Esther 5:9-6:14

Haman's Plot Against Mordecai (Esther 5:9-14)

Why was Haman so joyful when he left the banquet (Esther 5:9 and see 5:12)? _____

What did Haman see that quickly spoiled his joyful mood and filled him with burning anger (Esther 5:9)?

_____ Haman wanted to destroy his enemy right then and there, but he restrained himself (Esther 5:10).

When Haman arrived at his home, he called together his friends and his wife and told them about all his many blessings (Esther 5:11-12):

1) ***His glorious riches***

2) ***His many children***

How many sons did Haman have (Esther 9:10)? _____ To a Jew, it was a great blessing to have many children (Psalm 127:3-5; think of an archer who has a quiver full of arrows). The Persians felt the same way. Herodotus the ancient historian wrote this about the Persians, "Next to prowess in arms, it is regarded as the greatest proof of manly excellence, to be the father of many sons. Every year the king sends rich gifts to the man who can show the largest number: for they hold that number is strength."

3) ***His great promotion***

4) ***His exclusive invitation***

He was the only one who was able to eat at this special King/Queen banquet, and he would have the same honor tomorrow. Did Haman know that Esther was a Jew (Esther 2:20)? _____

As we can see from the above list, God sometimes allows wicked men to prosper (Psalm 73:2–7,12; Jeremiah 21:1; Psalm 37:1). Though he prospered in many ways, Haman could never be happy or satisfied as long as who was living (Esther 5:13)? _____ Just as a small coin held too closely to the eye can block out the entire sun, so Haman's preoccupation with revenge blocked out for him all his other blessings!

Haman's wife and his friends knew just how to solve his problem. Let a gallows (literally a tree) be made to the height of _____ cubits (Esther 5:14--since a cubit equals about 1½ feet, how tall would this gallows be in feet? _____) The higher the gallows, the farther it could be seen! In the morning Haman would ask the king for permission to **hang** (impale, kill by fixing on a sharp stake) Mordecai. Haman thought this idea was great, and the gallows was built!

Thus two things were to happen on the following day:

- 1) Haman would make his request before the king (that Mordecai be hanged).
- 2) Esther would make her request before the king (that the Jews be saved).

How would God work this out? Something very interesting would happen to the king that very night.

Haman Honors the Man He Hates (Esther 6)

On that night (the night between Esther's two banquets--see Esther 5:4,8) what problem did King Ahasuerus have (6:1)?
_____. Falling asleep is something beyond our own control. There are times when a person wants to go to sleep, but no matter how hard he tries he cannot fall asleep. We cannot make our bodies fall asleep in one minute!" We can control the opening and shutting of our eyes, but falling asleep is not always a simple matter.

What are some of the things that you try to do when you have difficulty falling asleep?

- a. Count sheep
- b. Talk to the Shepherd (Psalm 23:1)
- c. Relax the mind and body

- d. Listen to soft, calming music
 - e. Have something to eat
 - f. Read a book or have someone read to you
 - g. Put in a hard day's work and avoid laziness (see Ecclesiastes 5:12 and Proverbs 26:14).
 - h. Other ideas:
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What did the king try to do in order to fall asleep (6:1)?

The book of the chronicles (see Esther 2:23) was an accurate record of all the important events which took place in the kingdom. This would be somewhat similar to the *Congressional Record* which carefully records what business has taken place in Congress. It is not the most exciting reading, and it could put someone to sleep!

The book of the chronicles was read to the king, and suddenly a certain matter caught the king's attention. What was it (circle the correct answer)?

- a) About four years before there had been a solar eclipse (the moon blocking out the sun) which darkened the land for several minutes.
- b) About four years before the Greeks had waged war against the Persians.
- c) About four years before Mordecai had saved the king's life by exposing a plot (see Esther 2:21-23).
- d) About four years before Esther the Queen had become sick and had nearly died.

In Esther 6:3 the king asked his servants if Mordecai had ever been rewarded for his lifesaving deed. Had anything ever been done for Mordecai to reward him for his heroic action (Esther 6:3)? _____
Little did the king know that the one who had saved his life was one who was to be destroyed by the king's own royal decree (Esther 3:13)!

Often a believer may do good and commendable things that go unnoticed by men. He may not get recognized or rewarded for the good which he has done. His service for Christ is often overlooked and people tend to forget, even as the king forgot about Mordecai to whom he owed his life. When the believer does things for the Lord "in secret" and

unseen by men, who does see what has been done (Matthew 6:4,6,18)? _____ Who will never forget works of love performed by a believer (Hebrews 6:10)? _____

What a great change of events! Mordecai's life would be saved simply because a man could not fall asleep! The man whom Haman wanted to hang became the man whom the king delighted to honor! Haman wanted to revenge Mordecai; the king wanted to reward him. Instead of being Public Enemy Number One, Mordecai was about to be honored as the most outstanding citizen in the kingdom! Why was this so?

Someone might think, Mordecai was certainly a lucky man! It just so "happened" that the king could not sleep on this important night. It just so "happened" that the king asked for the book of the chronicles to be read. It just so "happened" that out of all the hundreds of events recorded in these records, Mordecai's act of heroism which had taken place about four years earlier was "accidentally" read! **What a lucky man!** Who do you think was really responsible for this happy turn of events, good luck or the good Lord? _____
 Mordecai did not have good luck--he had a good God Who works _____ after (according to) the counsel of His Own will (Ephesians 1:11)!

The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD (see Proverbs 16:33). Can you see God's Providential Hand in the following events or do you explain these things based on blind chance and luck? Please **match** the following:

<p>1. ____ A man shot an arrow at random (without definite or deliberate aim) and the arrow "happened" to hit Ahab, the wicked King of Israel.</p>	<p>A. Jonah 1:15,17</p>
<p>2. ____ As Joseph's brothers were about to leave him in an empty cistern to die, a company of Ishmaelites just "happened" to come by.</p>	<p>B. 1 Kings 22:34</p>
<p>3. ____ As Jonah was thrown out of the ship and into the sea, there just "happened" to be a great fish swimming by.</p>	<p>C. Esther 2:21-23</p>
<p>4. ____ Peter had a "lucky" day fishing because the first fish he caught "happened" to have a coin in its mouth!</p>	<p>D. John 19:24 and Psalm 22:18</p>
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5. ____ As Christ was being crucified, Roman soldiers just "happened" to cast lots for His clothing as the Scriptures had predicted 2000 years earlier!	E. Genesis 37:24-25
6. ____ That man sure was "lucky" to have been elected as President. A few more votes for his opponent would have swung the election the other way.	F. Matthew 17:27
7. ____ Mordecai just "happened" to be the one to discover a plot against the king.	G. Daniel 2:21; 4:17

Are you thankful that an all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving God is in control of this world and is successfully working out His plan for His glory and for the good of His people?

Early in the morning Haman came to the outer court, hoping to get permission to see the king. What did Haman want to talk to the king about (Esther 5:14; 6:4)?

Haman wanted to do a terrible thing to Mordecai. Little did he know that something terrible would soon happen to him! Haman had the gallows prepared for Mordecai (Esther 6:4), but God had something prepared for Haman! The person Haman wanted to hang was the person the king wanted to honor!

Did Haman get permission to come before the king (Esther 6:5)?
 ____ Remember, those who see the king must be invited (Esther 4:11). Before Haman even had a chance to open his mouth, the king spoke and asked, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" Upon hearing this, Haman forgot about Mordecai and started thinking about himself! What man did the king have in mind (Esther 6:3)? ____ Who did Haman think the king had in mind (Esther 6:6)?

Compare 2 Samuel 12:1-7. Who did David think this "man" was (2 Samuel 12:5)? Who did Nathan say this "man" was (2 Samuel 12:7)? David thought Nathan was talking about another person; Nathan was really talking about David. Haman thought that the king was talking about Haman but the king was really talking about Mordecai.

In Esther 6:7-9 we see that Haman was ready to give the king his answer. This must have been something that Haman had thought

about and dreamed about before. He must have been eager to tell the good news to his wife and friends (compare Esther 5:10-12). He was probably thinking, "My most wonderful dreams are about to come true!" He did not realize that all his dreams would suddenly turn into a terrible nightmare!

Notice carefully all the things Haman wanted to have done to himself (Esther 6:7-9). These involved **royal clothes** (which the king had worn), a **royal steed** (which the king had ridden) and a **royal crown**. As people would see him coming down the street, they would think that the king himself was coming! Haman was about to receive the shock of his life!

In chapter 6:9 Haman mentioned "one of the king's most noble princes." Who did this man turn out to be (6:10)?

_____ Suddenly Haman realized that the man whom the King delighted to honor was not himself, but the man he hated more than any other man. Instead of hanging him, he must now honor him! The very thing he wanted done to himself, he must now do to Mordecai, and he must do exactly what the king told him to do. Instead of getting permission from the king to hang Mordecai, he received a command from the king to honor him!

Haman was trapped. He could not say, "I do not like this idea!" It was his own idea! He was the one who thought up the whole thing! He had to go through with it!

The king commanded Haman, saying, "Let nothing fail (fall) of all that thou hast spoken" (Esther 6:10). Haman must do exactly what he said! His own words were coming back to haunt him. All of Haman's words had to be fulfilled and had to be accomplished!

Can we trust God to do exactly what He says? Will all of God's words be fulfilled? Will God accomplish all that He said He would? See Joshua 21:45; 23:14; 1 Kings 8:56; 2 Kings 10:10.

Haman was forced (against his own wishes) to do to his enemy what he wanted done to himself. Did Haman obey the golden rule (Luke 6:31)? _____ Did he willingly obey it? _____

One day earlier, when Haman left the queen's banquet, he was joyful and had a glad heart (Esther 5:9). After helping to parade Mordecai throughout the city, did Haman have a glad and joyful heart (Esther 6:12)? _____ Probably the Persian Empire had never seen such a miserable and humiliated person! (**Note**: the covering of one's head was a sign of deep grief and mourning.)

Haman's wife and friends knew that what had happened to him was more than bad luck. If it were merely bad luck then perhaps his luck would change. They knew, however, that Haman was headed for a fall from which he would never recover (the partial fall would be followed by a total fall). They knew that it was not safe to be an enemy of the Jews. What had God promised to do to those who curse the Jews (Genesis 12:3)? _____ You cannot fight against God and expect to win! Although Haman was backed up by a powerful person (Satan), was there Someone infinitely greater backing up the Jews (compare 1 John 4:4)? _____ Did Haman's wife and friends correctly predict his downfall (Esther 6:13; compare Esther 7:10)? _____

Before Haman was finished talking with his wife and friends, he was rushed off to Esther's second banquet (Esther 6:14). The Lord (not bad luck) had something else prepared for this wicked man!

How does the life of Haman illustrate the spiritual principle found in Luke 18:14?

How does the life of Haman illustrate the following proverbs:

Proverbs 16:18

Proverbs 29:23

Proverbs 11:2

Proverbs 18:12

Does this serve as a warning to you?



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