

It's All In God's Timing . . . Part 2!

Our Text: **Esther 6:1-14** *That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."*

So the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

The king's servants said to him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."

So Haman came in, and the king asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?" Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" And Haman answered the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"

Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken."

So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"

Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."

While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

Last week we looked at some of the evidences of God's providential hand in the scenario surrounding King Ahasuerus' insomnia:

- 1) **Think about the king's insomnia.**
- 2) **Think about the king's choice of entertainment.**
- 3) **Think about the servant's choice of books.**
- 4) **Think about the king's delay in rewarding Mordecai.**
- 5) **Think about the timely arrival of Haman.**

When we review these five evidences of the providence of God, we can't help but want to praise and thank Him for the great God that He is!

Psalms 33:10-11 *The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.*

Proverbs 21:30 *There is no wisdom or understanding Or counsel against the LORD.*

Romans 8:31 *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

God is moving and now we will see how **POWERFULLY** and **DECISIVELY** He can move!

Not What He Had Hoped For!

Esther 6:6-10 *So Haman came in, and the king asked him, “What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?” Now Haman thought in his heart, “Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?” And Haman answered the king, “For the man whom the king delights to honor, let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!””*

Then the king said to Haman, “Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king’s gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.”

It’s one thing to enter the king’s throne room . . . But now Haman was invited into the king’s bedchamber!

- This absolutely boosted Haman’s pride and false sense of confidence!
- He thought that he was in control of events and that Mordecai’s doom was sealed.
- And, when the king asked for Haman’s advice on a personal matter, it puffed up Haman’s ego even more.

Notice verse 6 again:

Esther 6:6 *So Haman came in, and the king asked him, **“What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?”** Now Haman thought in his heart, **“Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?”***

Notice the king’s question was vague and didn’t identify who the man was. But Haman’s pride led him to conclude that the king was **OBVIOUSLY** speaking about him . . . ***After all, what other man in the empire deserved such honor from the king?***

After the way Mordecai had embarrassed him, Haman would now give a good dose of revenge:

- First, Mordecai would see Haman honored by the king.
- And then Mordecai would be hanged on the gallows.
- Haman would then celebrate the day by feasting ***“merrily”*** with the king and queen:

Esther 5:14 *Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; **then go merrily with the king to the banquet.**” And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.*

What kind of a sick person has a celebration dinner after watching the public execution of an innocent man?!

But little did proud Haman realize that, before the day would end, **THE SITUATION WOULD BE COMPLETELY REVERSED:**

- Haman would be forced to honor Mordecai before all the people of the city.
- Esther's feast would turn out to be an exposé of the traitor, Haman himself.
- And Haman, not Mordecai, would end up hanging on the gallows.

Proverbs 11:8 *The righteous is delivered from trouble, And it comes to the wicked instead.*

Proverbs 18:12 *Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility.*

Proverbs 29:23 *A man's pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor.*

In all of these verses, half can be applied to Mordecai and half can be applied to Haman . . . The question we have to ask ourselves is, ***“On which side of the comma do we live?”***

Haman clearly (and mistakingly) thought that the king was describing the honors he himself would receive, so he asked for the very best:

- The man to be honored should be dressed in the king's own apparel;
- He should also ride on the king's horse with the royal crest on its head;
- And one of the noble princes should lead the horse through the city and command the people to honor him.

This event would almost be like a coronation!

The more we ponder the character of Haman, the more convinced we become that he actually wanted the throne for himself!

- As second man in the empire, if anything happened to King Ahasuerus, Haman was certainly in the best position to capture the throne for himself.
- **But a proud man with selfish ambitions isn't content to take second place if there's any possible way to secure first place!**
- **If what is described in Esther 6:8–9 had actually been done for Haman, it would have given the people of Shushan the impression that Ahasuerus had chosen Haman to be his successor!**

Let's look again at verse 10:

Esther 6:10 *Then the king said to Haman, “Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, **and do so for Mordecai the Jew** who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.”*

Notice that King Ahasuerus called Mordecai ***“the Jew”***. We get the clear impression **that the king completely forgot that he had permitted Haman to issue an edict TO DESTROY ALL THE JEWS!!!**

- One day the king is an enemy of the Jews.
- And now, just a few weeks later, he is honoring one of the leading Jewish citizens!

Whatever the king's mental state, Ahasuerus had a debt to pay . . . After all, Mordecai had saved his life and maybe by honoring Mordecai in this way publicly, the king might help calm the stress existing in his cities.

Everybody was making decisions:

- The king had decided to reward Mordecai,
- And Haman had decided what the reward should be.

Let's wrap this up . . .

How Embarrassing!

Esther 6:11-14 So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"

Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."

While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

I wonder what Haman's face looked like when the king told him to do all those things for Mordecai?!

- Was he shocked?
- Did he show his astonishment openly?

I would argue that he probably didn't because people didn't express themselves that freely before an Eastern monarch. So Haman bowed to the king's commandment and obeyed like the character-lacking man that he was.

So what did he have to do in order to eat his "humble pie"?

- First, he had to go out to the king's gate, get Mordecai, and bring him into the palace.
- Then he had to dress Mordecai in the king's robes.
- Then he had to put Mordecai on the king's horse.
- Then he had to lead the horse throughout the city and proclaim, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"

- After he had visited all the city streets, Haman had to lead the horse back to the palace, remove the royal garments from Mordecai, and send him back to his place at the city gate.

THIS IS DRIPPING WITH IRONY!!!

- **For almost a whole day Haman was the servant of Mordecai, commanding the people to bow down and honor him!**
- **The thing Mordecai wouldn't do for Haman—bow down—Haman had to tell others to do for Mordecai!**

So how did this pageantry and prominence affect Mordecai? When it was over, he simply returned to his place at the gate and continued to serve the king.

“Applause doesn't change truly humble people, for their values are far deeper. God can trust His blessings with the humble because they seek to honor only the Lord.” Warren Wiersbe

However, Haman's reaction was quite different **BECAUSE HE WAS HUMILIATED!!!**

- He went home as soon as possible,
- He covered his head as though he were grieving for the dead.
- **It's interesting that this had been the way Mordecai had responded to the king's edict concerning the Jews:**

Esther 4:1-2 *When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.*

THE TABLES HAD TRULY TURNED!!!

Even if the people were willing to bow down to him, Haman had no desire to see the public, because he had been humiliated before them and he knew that they were probably laughing at him behind his back!

This is the difference between reputation and character:

- Haman was a famous man,
- A man of reputation,
- But only because the king had made him so, **BECAUSE HE WAS NOT A MAN OF CHARACTER!!!**
- On the other hand, his reputation depended on his office, his wealth, and his authority, **ALL OF WHICH COULD BE EASILY TAKEN FROM HIM!!!**

Just look again at the contrast between Haman's family gathering in Esther 6:13 and the one recorded in Esther 5:10–12:

Esther 5:10–12 *Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh. Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.*

Moreover Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king.

Esther 6:13 *When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."*

- Before, Haman had boasted of his greatness.
- **But now he had to confess how he had been humiliated!**

If it was any other official on the horse, Haman might have been able to handle the situation, **BUT THIS WAS MORDECAI THE JEW AND THIS WAS ABSOLUTELY HUMILIATING FOR HAMAN!!!**

At this point, his wife and counselors made an interesting statement:

Esther 6:13 *When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."*

The humiliation in the streets and these words in his house, **SHOULD HAVE ALARMED HAMAN AND MOVED TO REPENT AND CHANGED THE COURSE HE WAS ON . . . BUT IT DIDN'T!!!**

God, in His mercy, was warning Haman. **But his pride wouldn't allow him to heed the warning!**

If Haman had sincerely repented and asked for God's mercy, it's likely that he could have saved his own life and the lives of his ten sons . . . **BUT PRIDE IS AN UGLY KILLER THAT LEADS TO DEATH!!!**

Even while Haman was discussing his misfortunes with his wife and advisers, the king's eunuchs arrived at the door to escort Haman to the queen's banquet. Remember, he had planned to go "**merrily**" to the feast, but now everything had changed.

- *What would happen next?*
- *And what was the mysterious petition that Queen Esther would reveal at the banquet?*

So off Haman went with the eunuchs to his last meal.

What can we learn from this? When God sounds the alarm, we need to **STOP**, **LOOK**, and **LISTEN**—and **OBEY!**

We have to remember, what goes around comes around.

This saying reminds us of a magnificent theological principle underscored again and again in the Scriptures: **When God seems absent, He's present!**

Even when we think we have lost all, God uses it as an opportunity to awaken us to the realization He is still in charge, as well as to bring us to our knees.

“All this reminds me of the story of a man who was shipwrecked on an uninhabited island. He painstakingly built a little hut for protection from the elements and where he could keep the few items he had salvaged from the wreck. For weeks he lived with only the hot sun and the cold nights and the tropical storms for company. Prayerfully, he scanned the horizon for the approach of a ship. Nothing.

Then, one evening, when he returned from a search for food, he was terrified to find that his little hut was in flames. As he stood there, unable to put out the fire, he was crushed by the disaster. What few possessions he had were now gone up in smoke. He went to sleep that night near the ashes, listening to the surf pounding on the sand and despair throbbing in his heart.

Early the next morning he awoke to find a ship anchored off the island—the first ship he had seen in all the weeks he had been searching for the hope of rescue. Still trying to believe his eyes, he heard footsteps and then heard the captain's voice: “We saw your smoke signal, and so we came to rescue you.”

Everything the marooned man owned had to be destroyed before he could be discovered—and rescued. God seemed so distant for so long, but He was working on both ends—to bring the ship of rescue near at just the right time and to reduce the marooned man to nothing in order to bring him to his knees!

Let's pray . . .