

# Pride Comes Before the Fall

Esther 5:15-7:10 | Notes

## Haman's Pride (Read 5:9-14)

**The Queen's invitation to the banquet had stroked Haman's ego and further inflated his pride. But that fragile balloon of pride was soon popped.**

- On Haman's way home, there sat Mordecai, continuing to be faithful to God by refusing to conform to the pressures and threats of the world. (Rm. 12:2)
- **Remember:** Mordecai's refusal to **"rise"** in order to **"bow down"** before Haman was about being obedient to God's commands. ("Their laws are different..." 3:8)
- Mordecai refused to **"bow down & pay homage"** because the kind of honor Haman demanded was the kind of honor that only rightly belongs to God.
- To worship anything or anyone other than God alone is idolatry—& even just *submitting* out of fear is still idolatry; it is worshipping safety over God.
- Likewise, we too must refuse to **"bow & pay homage"** whenever the world's norms & demands would require us to dishonor & disobey our Lord. (Im. 4:4)
- As Jesus said when tempted to bow before Satan: **"For it is written: 'You shall worship the Lord your God & him only shall you serve.'"** (Deut. 6:13; Mt. 4:10)

**But proud people don't like to be told that they are not as important as they think themselves to be. Proud people don't like to be told they are wrong.**

- Proud people don't like to have the illusions of their own grandeur exposed and shown for the empty delusions that they really are.
- But that is exactly what Mordecai's obedience to God in the face of the world's threats said to Haman's pride, and he hated him for it. (Phil. 1:28)
- In fact, that is what all holy living rooted in gospel-faith says to the disbelieving and disobedient world that walks in proud rebellion before God:  
**"You are wrong and your way of life is out of step with the God who created you."**
- By doing what is right in God's eyes in the midst of a world in rebellion, we become a light that shines into the darkness and exposes it for what it is.
- And when the darkness is exposed men have a choice: Will I be led by that light to repent and turn to Christ? Or will I harden my heart in rebellion and try to snuff out that light so that it stops exposing my sinful heart and life?

**Haman chose to harden his heart & dig in his heels. Fighting to "restrain himself," Haman looked to his earthly pleasures to soothe his wounded ego.**

- **Re-read 5:10-13.** Haman sought comfort in his riches, in his progeny, in his accomplishments, in his prestige, in his power, in his wealth, etc.
- Yet despite the fact that he was one of the richest and most accomplished men in the entire Persian empire, none of these earthly treasures and pleasures could change the conviction he felt in his heart. All the wealth of the world cannot satisfy the soul which was made for God alone.
- As Augustine famously wrote, **"O Lord, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until we find our rest in thee."**
- Nothing can truly satisfy the soul except the God for whom the soul was made. Only in fellowship with Christ can we find true life and peace.
- Yet, rather than turning from the empty vanity of his sinful life, Haman sought to snuff out and destroy the light that was exposing his sinful pride.
- Rather than being led by Mordecai's confrontation to repentance & faith, Haman sought to hush Mordecai's witness by hanging him on a **"gallows."**
- And this was not just any gallows. It was a gallows **"fifty cubits high"** so that Haman could make a public statement by Mordecai's gruesome death.
- Little did he know his great pride was leading him to his own humiliation (6) & destruction (7). **Thus it is for all who cling to sin and turn from Christ.**

## Haman's Humiliation (Read 6:1-14)

**Do you remember how God's name is never mentioned in Esther? No actions are directly ascribed to God. Yet his hand of PROVIDENCE is everywhere.**

**1. GOD'S POWER IS UNIVERSAL—Not only ruling over the Persian empire of old, but over all the details of your life as well, dear Christian.**

- What was it that caused the sleeplessness of King Ahasuerus? Was it luck? Was it chance? Coincidence? Just a random bout with indigestion?
- No. It was the sovereign hand of God "working all things together for good for those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
- Moreover, God's sovereign power was also shown by the specific material to which the king's mind was drawn: **"The book of memorable deeds."**
- Of all the diversions which the most powerful man in the world could have chosen to employ during his sleepless night, this is what he requested?
- But God's sovereign power extends still further. Such a book would have been written on many scrolls, with each scroll being approx. 20-30 feet long with thousands upon thousands of words contained within it. Yet, behold, even the greatest kings dwell under the sovereign authority of God.
- Therefore, according to God's will, the king's sleep was arrested, his desires were kindled for an obscure book, the proper scroll of that book was selected, the exact place in that scroll was found, and the king's mind became fixated on the specific content which God ordained so that Mordecai, God's beloved child and faithful servant, would be rescued from his enemies and delivered from death.
- **Such is the sovereign power of God for his people—yes, even for you dear Christian!** The power of your God extends from the highest throne to the lowest and most trivial details of life, choreographing all of it to fulfill his perfect eternal purpose for your everlasting good & his everlasting glory.

**2. GOD'S TIMING IS PERFECT—Not only in Mordecai's life, but in your life as well, dear Christian.**

- Note the precise timing of these events—not only **WHEN they occurred**, but also **when they DID NOT occur**. (We will start with when they *DID NOT* occur)
- Do you remember in Ch. 2 when Mordecai, against his natural instincts, chose to trust & obey God's commandments even though his obedience would save a man who had done atrocious evils to his own daughter? Do you remember that afterward, his good deed went entirely unrewarded?
- In that passage we spoke about how we often struggle when things in our lives don't work out the way we think they should, or when our devotion to Christ and costly obedience seems unnoticed by God. **But behold now an example of God's watchful eye and perfect timing to reward his people!**
- Whatever immediate reward Mordecai might have received in Ch. 2 would have been a far lesser reward than what God bestowed upon him now!
- The **DELAYED BLESSING** for Mordecai's obedience was NOT a sign of God's absence or apathy, but of God's perfect timing and indescribable love!
- So when *DID* Mordecai's reward come? It was **"On that night..." (6:1)**—that is, on the very night when Haman built his gallows to destroy Mordecai.
- When God's timing does not fit our plans, by faith we must remember that his timing is far better than ours & his rewards far greater for his people.



### 3. GOD'S JUSTICE IS GLORIOUS—No one who truly belongs to Christ by faith shall ever be put to shame at the last. Life and honor are ours in Christ!

- Consider the poetic justice of Haman's humiliation. It was at the very moment that Haman showed up to flex his might for the destruction of Mordecai that God used Haman's own pride to name both the height of the reward for his beloved servant and the depths of humiliation for himself.
- The king asked Haman: **"What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?"**
- Being completely full of himself in pride, Haman instantly thought to himself: **"Whom could the king delight to honor more than me?"**
- So, thinking he was serving himself, Haman mounted the honors as high as he could. He had no idea that the one to whom these honors would be given was not himself, but God's faithful servant Mordecai! Haman was then humiliated by being forced to serve and honor the very man he hated.
- Notice the contrast:** Haman *exalted himself* in wicked *pride*, therefore God brought upon him great *humiliation*. Mordecai, on the other hand, had been sitting at the king's gate in sack cloth and ashes, *humbling himself* before the Lord, and now that humble man was *greatly exalted & honored*.
- Is this not what the Scriptures continually teach us in every place, beloved?** Is this not the call of God's word even to our hearts today?

**God honors the humble and humbles the proud.** (Ps. 138:6; Prov. 3:34; 29:23; Mt. 21:12; Lk. 1:52; Jm. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5)

- Moreover, **"pride comes before the fall."** (Prov. 16:18) And, if a lesser fall like this one is still not enough to turn the proud heart to humility before Christ, then that pride will only carry the sinner further into evil, eventually leading them on to total destruction by God's just and everlasting judgement.
- Indeed, the Bible says that a heart repeatedly hardened against the Lord will eventually find itself broken beyond repair & dashed into pieces. (Prov. 29:1)
- Such was the case for Haman as we shall soon see. He went home to lament his humiliation but instead his own wife became a prophet of doom.
- Then, **"while they were yet talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried to bring Haman to the feast that Esther prepared."** (6:14)

#### Haman's Destruction (Read 7:1-10)

**During the feast, Esther shared a reality which Haman had not understood: She herself was a Jew, a member of the people Haman sought to destroy!**

- In other words, God sovereignly worked ahead of Haman's evil schemes to position a Jewish queen on the throne of Persia so that when Haman later sought to destroy God's people, Haman would unwittingly make his own king into his greatest enemy and place his own life in desperate peril.
- Esther's childhood pain and abduction and Mordecai's *seemingly* futile obedience were all being used by God in ways that none of them could see or understand until now! **God's hand had seemed invisible, even absent, but now they saw that God was sovereignly working in it all for their good!**
- Everything Haman had been doing to this point—which he meant to destroy God's people—was now being turned by God to destroy himself! The noose Haman braided for God's people was wrapped around his own neck. The knife he sharpened against Israel was plunged into his own heart.
- When the king was made aware that Haman's plotting threatened the life of his own queen, he **"arose in his wrath"** to consider what to do.
- But we are told that **"Haman stayed [back] to beg for his life from Queen Esther". But the door of deliverance had now closed for Haman.** (Ps. 32:6)
- As God would have it, even Haman's begging for his life was turned to further the judgment against him because as he begged he tripped and fell onto Queen Esther in a way that appeared to the eyes of the king as if he were trying to **"assault the queen...in his own house".**
- This only served to further enlarge the king's wrath against him and led Haman into a dreadful state of hopeless destruction. The attendants standing by **"covered Haman's face"** and he was led away to be **"hung"** upon the very **"gallows he prepared for Mordecai"**—God's faithful servant.

**What are we to see here beloved? There are 2 lessons: A Lesson of Warning For the Proud & Rebellious & A Lesson of Comfort for Afflicted Saints.**

#### 1. WARNING FOR THE PROUD: This is a preview of the inevitable end of all who walk in pride before God & who seek the harm of Christ's chosen people.

- When we harden our hearts against God's will for us as our Creator and Lord, we are only braiding the noose of our own destruction. Every rebel nail we hammer in as we seek to build our own little earthly kingdom's of pride are nails we are driving into the coffin of our own everlasting ruin.
- Sin seems like pleasure, prosperity, & reward in the moment, but its end is always death, sorrow, regret, & judgment by the God who rules over all.
- Moreover, this passage not only shows us the end of sin in general, but also more particularly the end of those who seek to do harm to God's people.
- Just as Haman made King Ahasuerus his enemy by attacking his bride, so they make God their enemy who harass & attack Christ's Bride, the Church.**
- The Lord is a Defender of his people.** He will not deal gently with those who persecute his saints, who slander their good names, who sow division in their ranks, who plunder his people's goods, who lead his people astray from truth, and who disrupt the forward march of the gospel. (II Pet. 2:1-10)
- For all persecutors of the Church—whether by word or deed—God shall **"whet his sword"** against them & bring devastations upon their heads. (Ps. 7)
- As the Apostle Paul tells us in I Corinthians 3:17, **"If anyone destroys God's temple"**—that is, his Bride the Church—**"God will destroy him."**
- Therefore, take heed and be warned. Turn from pride and sin to Christ and live! For the Lord who is judge of all stands ready to save all who come!**

#### 2. COMFORT FOR THE AFFLICTED: This is a picture of the love which your heavenly Husband has for you, dear saints, and of the deliverance he shall bring!

- God does not sit idle when his people are attacked. He does not turn a blind eye. He has not forgotten or rejected you. His love for you is ever-sure.**
- Though the timing of God's deliverance may not always fit man's ideas or preference, that deliverance will most assuredly come.
- And when the Day of deliverance comes it will be an overwhelming defeat for those who have opposed God and his people, and an overwhelming victory for those who, by God's sovereign grace, have been united to Christ and brought into his beloved Church. (\*Read Isaiah 54:17 & II Chronicles 20:17\*)
- All Mordecai and Esther had to do was **walk by faith, stand firm, and wait upon the Lord.** Likewise, we must do the same and God will deliver us!

#### Application:

**"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you..."** (I Pet. 5:6)

