

Esther 5:9 - 7:10

Day 1

Haman's Plot against Mordecai. Read Esther 5:9-14

1. How was Haman feeling about the banquet? 5:9 Why? 5:12

2. What two things did Mordecai refuse to do? 5:9
 - What words describe Haman's reaction? (*What does this say about the focus of Haman's happiness/emotional state? Why do you think Mordecai's actions had so much power over Haman?*)

3. Why do you think Haman "controlled" himself? 5:10 (See 3:6)

4. List the things that Haman bragged about to his friends and family. 5:11,12.

5. How controlling was Haman's pride and need for approval? 5:13
 - How far did he let his obsessions take him? 5:14 What adjectives would you use to describe this man?

FYI: "Joy is short-lived for a man like Haman: the ups and downs of his emotional life are illustrated in these two very different episodes (5:9-14; 6:1-14), which both rely on Haman's self-obsession. Haman receives no sense of pleasure from those things that should bring him honour, because Mordecai's dishonouring of him means too much to him in comparison. In one sense this is ludicrous; in another it betrays the deep-rooted nature of the enmity between them."
- Debra Reid (112)

"Haman the Agagite, is truly a Hitlerian figure - a man of seemingly limitless ego, self-absorption, and cruelty. We have just seen him plot the death of Mordecai by crucifixion, along with the mass murder of the entire population of Jews in Persia."
- Ray Stedman (82)

6. How would you contrast Haman and Mordecai's' priorities and goals in life?

7. In the following underline the words that describe the consequences of pride (self-centered living) and circle those of humility (God-centered living).
- Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes **disgrace**, but with humility comes **wisdom**.
 - Proverbs 13:10 Pride only **breeds quarrels**, but **wisdom** is found in those who take advice.
 - Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before **destruction**, a haughty spirit before a **fall**.
 - Prov. 18:12 Before his **downfall** a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before **honor**.
 - 1 Peter 5:5 All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
 - Luke 14:11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." NIV

Applying the Word: *When or under what circumstances do you struggle with pride or a need for approval? How can you make Christ your all sufficiency in that area?*

Day 2

The King's Plans to Honor Mordecai. Read Esther 6:1-11

8. What events led to the King's realizing that Mordecai had never been rewarded? 6:3

FYI: "This lapse in his receiving affirmation is a reminder that, though God may often seem absent in your life, He is at work. Trust Him where you are because He is doing something bigger than you can imagine."

- The Tony Evans Study Bible (553)

"6:1 is the narrative center of the book, after which the plot turns to the Jew's favor." - The Woman's Study Bible

9. Where do you see the "finger" of God in the events and the *timing* of the events ("ironies and coincidences") in 6:1-5? (See Proverbs 21:2)

- "If the name of God is not here (in Esther) His finger is." (Matthew Henry) Where else have you seen evidence of God in Esther and Mordecai's life so far? (Consider: 2:9,15,17,22; 3:7; 5:2)

FYI: "The *chronicles of the kingdom* was the official record of memorable deeds, of adventure and heroism, of the great accomplishments and glories of the empire. This had happened five years before the king's sleepless night... In those ancient days, long before the rise of democracy, palace revolt was a common way to change a government - and it was the scourge and terror of kings. The man who helped avert a palace coup should have been richly rewarded and highly honored! King Xerxes knew he was deeply indebted to Mordecai - he owed this man his life."

- Ray Stedman (83,84)

10. What did Haman assume from the king's question? 6:6

11. List the suggestions that Haman made. 6:7-9

12. How closely did Haman want each article (robe, horse, crown) to be associated with the king? Thinking this was for himself, what does this reveal about the standing he desired?

- Why do you think he didn't suggest material wealth or land?

FYI: "These actions would publicly position their recipient for a leadership role in the kingdom of Persia."
- The Tony Evans Study Bible (556)

"A royal robe was a great honor to wear the king's robe in ancient times,, for it symbolized special favor (see 1 Samuel 18:4), What is here called the 'royal crest' on the king's horse is seen in the reliefs excavated from the palace in Persepolis."
- The Woman's Study Bible (795)

"Surely the king must have guessed Haman was dreaming up all this for himself. What more could he ask short of the kingship itself? Perhaps at this moment Haman's words planted a seed of distrust in the king's mind."
- Margaret Hess (97)

13. How did the king respond? 6:10

- Note that the king knew that Mordecai was a "Jew." Do you think he knew what group of people Haman's edict (3:8) was aimed at destroying?

14. Picture the public display in 6:11. What conflicting emotions do you think Haman and Mordecai were experiencing?

- What phrase did Haman have to keep repeating? What concerns would this have caused in his mind considering his plot to kill the Jews?

FYI: "Imagine how ridiculous the whole proceeding appeared to Mordecai. He and his people were doomed to death. In the city, he would pass posters proclaiming the day of their doom. He would see Jews mourning in sackcloth and ashes. He would see the gallows that Haman had erected for him." - Margaret Hess (99)

"The scene with which the episode ends is...acutely symbolic of a deeper reality. It has been reached by **coincidences** that have been carefully crafted and left unexplained. It marks the beginning of a series of **reversals** in favour of the Jew by empowering their representative Mordecai and humiliating their enemy Haman."
- Debra Reid (121)

15. The king wanted to honor the man who saved his life. Underline how we should honor the Lord for saving our life.

- Romans 6:13-14 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. NIV
- Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. NIV
- 1 Corinthians 6:20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. NASU
- Ephesians 5:8-10 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. NIV
- 1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us. NIV

Food for Thought: " *therefore honor God in your body* " Is it your delight to do this? If not, then you have forgotten the One to whom you owe your life! Grant Him authority over your life. Give Him your crown to wear. Grant Him the right to be Lord of every aspect of your life! That is true honor." - Ray Stedman (88)

Applying the Word: *Have you ever done a good deed that went unnoticed? How did you feel about that? (See Mark 9:41)*

Day 3

Esther's Second Banquet, Haman's Downfall. Read Esther 6:12 - 7:6

16. What kind of reception do you think Mordecai received when he returned to the king's gate? Although personally exalted, what was he still facing?

17. What kind of comfort do you think Haman was seeking from his family in 6:12,13?

- What did they realize about the situation? (See Proverbs 16:25) *(How does this compare to their tone in 5:14? What hope did they give? What responsibility did they take for their bad advice?)*

18. What does 6:14 indicate about Haman's control at this point? What hope, if any, do you think he may have had about the banquet?

19. At the banquet, what questions did the king ask Esther and what assurances did he give her? 7:2 What does this say about his frame of mind?

20. On what did Queen Esther base her *petition* and *request*? 7:3

- What was her petition and request? How do you picture the king reacting at this point?

Food for Thought: [Esther] "didn't demand; she didn't accuse; she only appealed. She knew the king's imperious nature. He could swat her like a fly, as he had Vashti. She said nothing to hint at his part in Haman's vile scheme. She let the king save face. Esther put her request modestly. She only asked for what she already had. She spoke in terms of the king's best interest...So much hung on Esther's courage! She must attempt to reverse by mere weight of personal influence the decrees of an empire." - Margaret Hess (106)

21. What three words did Esther repeat from the edict? 7:4a

- What other circumstances did she say she would have accepted and why? 7:4b (*How do you think this made the king feel?*)

22. From the King response, what did he seem to be unaware of? 7:5 i.e. What connection hadn't he made?

23. What three words did Esther use to describe Haman? 7:6

- What would have made Haman so *terrified* at this point?

FYI: "Haman never imagined that *Esther* was a Jew; now he stood before the king being rightly accused of plotting the murder of the king's wife. Now the wisdom of Esther's strange request to invite Haman to these banquets can be seen; it maximized the impact upon both the king and upon Haman himself." - David Guzik

24. How did the king react? 7:7 What do you think he understood at this point? (What did Haman realize?)

FYI: Anger/rage/wrath Strong's OT:2534 *chemah*; heat; figuratively, anger, poison

"King Xerxes is struggling with himself... the king knows that he has been duped and manipulated by this snake in human form. This prideful king realized that he now looks like a complete fool. He has followed the counsel of this deceiver, and he has put his whole kingdom at risk...including his beautiful Queen Esther!" - Ray Stedman (99)

25. How desperate was Haman?" 7:7b-8a (*An Assyrian regulation states: "If a courtier speaks with one of the women of the palace, he must not come closer to her than seven paces."*)

- Ironically, what opportunity did this give the King? 7:8b What chance was Haman given to defend himself?

FYI: "Had Haman followed harem protocol, he would have left Esther's presence with the king. Although it was a common Near Eastern gesture of contrition to seize the feet or even kiss them, such behavior was completely inappropriate with a woman of the harem, much less the queen herself!" - The Woman's Study Bible (796)

26. Who was Habona and why do you think he made the suggestion about the gallows? 7:9

- What amazing reversal took place? 7:10 (See Psalms 7:15-16)

Applying the Word: *Think of one of your best friends. How important has honesty and trustworthiness been to that relationship?*

Day 4 Choices

27. What does scripture say about the outcomes of the choices we make and the actions we take? Underline the choices and the results.

- Job 4:8 As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. NIV
- Proverbs 11:5-6 The righteousness of the blameless makes a straight way for them, but the wicked are brought down by their own wickedness. 6 The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires. NIV
- Proverbs 22:8 He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, NAS
- Proverbs 26:27 He who digs a pit will fall into it.... NAS
- Hosea 8:7 They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. NIV
- 2 Corinthians 9:6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. NIV
- Galatians 6:7-9 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. NAS

28. Psalm 73 deals with injustices in life. Read through the Psalm and answer the following:

<p>What did the psalmist envy about the wicked? 73:3-5,12</p>	
<p>How did he characterize their attitudes and actions? 73:6-11</p>	
<p>How did this make him feel? 73:13-16</p>	
<p>What led him to a better understanding? 73:17</p>	
<p>What did he eventually understand about their destiny? 73:18-20 (See Psalm 37:20)</p>	
<p>What kept him from realizing that earlier? 73:21,22</p>	
<p>What blessings was he finally able to focus on? 73:23-26</p>	
<p>What did he resolve to do? 73:28</p>	

29. What can we trust that God will do with evil? *Ecclesiastes 12:14*

- What will He do with good? *Ephesians 6:8*

Applying the Word: *What are some of the major things that you are sowing? What consequences have you reaped or do you think you will reap as a result?*