

Esther 5-6 – Thursday, December 21st, 2017

Esther 5 -- 1 Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house. 2 So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter. 3 And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!"

- The chapter begins by telling us that Esther, who is willing to perish, approaches the king with great courage and great faith.
- Thankfully the king, who as one noted, doesn't have a good reputation in how he treats his queen, holds out his golden scepter.
- Not only is Esther's life spared by him doing this, the Lord directs him to grant whatever her request is up to half the kingdom.

Proverbs 21:1 (NKJV) — 1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

4 So Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him." 5 Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said." So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared. 6 At the banquet of wine the king said to Esther, "What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!" 7 Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and request is this: 8 If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

- What we're told here is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that it seems Esther is cowering in fear.
- However, upon a closer examination of the narrative, one will realize that instead of being fearful, she is actually being wise.
- This because, Esther has received the wisdom from above after three days of praying and fasting, and it's not the right timing.

Charles Spurgeon had this to say about Esther's delay, "Doubtless she longed to bring out her secret, but the words came not. God was in it; it was not the right time to speak, and therefore she was led to put off her disclosure."

- I would suggest that God has given Esther a pause and a check in her heart to delay by inviting them for a second banquet.
- The reason I suggest this is because, unbeknownst to Esther, God is working behind the scenes and setting everything up.
- Also, Esther is seeking only one thing, but God is about to do exceedingly abundantly above anything she could ever imagine.

9 So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai. 10 Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh.

- Again we see the hand of God ruling over all and over ruling all by restraining Haman from reacting to Mordecai at that time.
- This one truth should be of great encouragement to each and every one of us such that it means God restrains our Haman's.
- In other words, the enemy cannot touch even one hair on our head unless and until God allows it, which only serves His end.

11 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. 12 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. 13 Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

- There's an interesting and important principle woven into the fabric of Haman's brag-fest, and it has to do with insatiable thirst.
- By that I mean the Haman's of this world who seek success, money power and prestige will never be satisfied, only emptier.
- This is the way God has made us in that; He is the only way and only one Who can satiate the hunger and thirst of our souls.

Of this Adam Clarke said it best this way, "The soul was made for God, and nothing but God can fill it and make it happy."

- There's something else here that I would like to point out before we move on, and it's related to Haman being full of himself.
- Clearly, Haman has been fully given over to pride and arrogance and as such sort of becomes the poster child for "the fall."
- Lest we become self-righteous and indignant, we would do well to consider our self when a Mordecai doesn't acknowledge us.

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.

- While I don't wish to be too graphic, I think it would be good to understand a little about how evil and cruel these gallows were.
- It's important to note that they were not gallows that they would hang men on; rather, they were stakes to impale the men with.
- I suppose you could liken it to the cruelty of Roman crucifixion on a wooden cross, as it was as bad if not in some way worse.

Again Adam Clarke says it best in his description, "A pointed stake is set upright in the ground, and the culprit is taken, placed on the sharp point, and then pulled down by his legs till the stake that went in at the fundament passes up through the body and comes out through the neck. A most dreadful species of punishment, in which revenge and cruelty may glut the utmost of their malice. The culprit lives a considerable time in excruciating agonies."

Esther 6 -- 1 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.

- Couple of thoughts here on what we're told in the beginning of chapter six, the first of which has to do with the king's insomnia.
- The king could have done anything he wanted when he couldn't sleep but God put it on his heart to ask for the historical record.
- I find it interesting that this divinely appointed insomnia happens the very night after the first banquet and prior to the second.

2 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. 3 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."

- I have to say that this is amongst the most fascinating examples of God's providence in the entirety of the pages of Holy Writ.
- If you think about it, the king chose to have the chronicles read to him, from literally thousands of other things to choose from.
- Then, they not only choose from thousands of chronicles, they read this exact account from within all the pages of this one.

4 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. 5 The king's servants said to him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."

- You'll forgive me for stating the obvious, but God has perfectly orchestrated the timing of Haman's entrance at this moment.
- Meanwhile, Mordecai and Esther have no idea what God has just set up, and this while they were sleeping through the night.
- What's fascinating about this is nobody has any idea about what will happen next, not the king, Haman, nor Mordecai or Esther.

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?" 7 And Haman answered the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, 8 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. 9 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!'"

- This is textbook when it comes to being so full of pride and full of self. In their way of thinking everything is always about them.
- It's also a textbook case of pride leading to destruction in the sense that this is literally about to happen to Haman as a result.
- He thinks that he's about to be honored by the king on a royal horse, while Mordecai is impaled on a seventy-five foot stake.

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."

- This is one of those places in the Word of God where you wish it were possible to be a proverbial fly on the wall to see all this.
- I have to confess that if I were there, I would've tried to take a picture of the look on Haman's face and post it on social media.
- One has to wonder what could have been going through Haman's mind when he heard these piercing words from the king.

11 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!" 12 Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.

- To even begin to grasp how humiliated Haman must have been, you have to realize that these people had prior bowed to him.
- Now, instead of bowing in honor to Haman, they are bowing in honor to Mordecai as Haman proclaims it before all the people.
- It's for this reason that Haman hurries to his house mourning with his head covered in shame. He couldn't get out fast enough.

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

- The chapter ends by telling us how his friends, wife and wise men, to their credit, have rightly discerned that Mordecai is done.
- Notice the detail we're provided with in verse fourteen where we're told that while they were telling him this, it was time to go.
- So much so, that they "hastened" to bring him to Esther's banquet, which doubtless, Haman does not really want to attend.