

Mission Impossible

Esther 5

Intro: What is your mission impossible?

- I. Reasons why this was a mission impossible¹
 - A. To succeed she has to break a law which ordinarily has the death penalty (4:11)
 - B. To succeed she has to admit that she is a Jew condemned to death by the king himself
 - C. To succeed she has to convince the king to reverse an irreversible law (cf. 1:19; 8:8 with Dan. 6:8,12,15)
 - D. To succeed she has to oppose the most powerful person on earth (next to Darius)
 - E. To succeed she must strike a serious blow to the king's pride
- II. Her strategy
 - A. She presents her case in person rather than by letter
 - 1. It lets her communicate with more than just words. Though her words could be misinterpreted, her body language can show her sincerity.
 - 2. It lets her read the body language of the king and Haman
 - 3. It helps her to control the circumstances to some degree and to determine the best timing
 - 4. It forces the king to deal with a person rather than an impersonal "problem."
 - 5. It keeps a decision from being procrastinated
 - B. She appeals to the king's curiosity
 - 1. What could be so important that she would risk her life?
 - 2. What could be so important that she doesn't spill her tale on the first banquet?
 - C. She makes sure that Haman (the accused) is present
 - 1. It will prevent Haman from being able to talk his way out of it without her being able to respond
 - 2. This will have the advantage of throwing Haman off guard
 - 3. It will let the king read Haman's body language
 - 4. It will present an object towards which the king's wrath can be turned immediately and will help the king to save face.
 - 5. It will maximize the possibility that action can immediately be taken.
- III. God's strategy
 - A. He gives Haman plenty of rope to hang himself
 - 1. He knows Haman will be blinded by pride (v. 9a,11-12))
 - 2. He knows Haman likes vengeance with style (v. 10)
 - 3. God knows that Haman's friends and wife will feed his pride and satisfy his desire for vengeance (v. 10-14)
 - 4. He knows Haman will be blinded by rage & bitterness (v. 9b,13))
 - 5. He let's Haman build his own noose (v. 14)
 - B. (to be continued)

¹ These five subpoints (A-E) were suggested by Bob Deffinbaugh in *Esther: A Study of Divine Providence*. (Biblical Studies Press, 1998). Though I disagree with much of what he writes, I thought this was a helpful observation.