

Esther Reveals Haman's Plot

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Esther reveals Haman's plot and treachery after the king elevates Mordecai
2. aim – to cause us to be willing to step out in faith to do what is right when we called to do so
3. passage – Esther 6:1-7:10

b. outline

1. The King Honors Mordecai (Esther 6:1-13)
2. The King Hears Haman's Plot (Esther 6:14-7:6)
3. The King Hangs Haman (Esther 7:7-10)

c. opening

1. the **direction** of our exposition of the book
 - a. **chapters 1-2** lay out *in detail* how it is that Esther (a Jewess) was able to rise to Queen of Persia
 - b. **chapter 3** is the "center" of the book – the plot by Haman to destroy the Jews
 - c. **chapters 4-7** outline the **response** to the edict by Haman (**chapters 8-10** = its resolution)
 1. (**in a sense**) how each main character responds to this edict – Mordecai, Esther, Haman himself, and (**now**) the king (as the events unfold)
 2. this sermon will revolve around the *king's* response, *under the direct providence of God*
 - a. **i.e.** these two chapters are filled with *obvious* examples of God working out circumstances

I. The King Honors Mordecai (Esther 6:1-13)

Content

a. the king reads of his own chronicles (vv.1-3)

1. **note:** a series, of twists, ironies, and comedies, clearly orchestrated by God – **LOW:** a series of *implied* actions on the part of God (although not directly mentioned) to fulfill his purposes in the events
 - a. however, although we embrace the sovereignty of God, and argue for it being central to the gospel message of Christ, we must not become ***fatalistic***
 - b. the consequences here are brought about *as much* by the poor choices of the players as they are by the superintention of God – **remember:** sovereignty does *not* excuse sinfulness
2. (**in this case**) the king has a night of insomnia, and this begins the flow of the story
 - a. it is actually "*on that night*" = the very night that Haman builds his gallows (**see 5:14**)
 - b. he reads his own chronicles (diary) – apparently his own exploits would act as a "sleeping aid"
 - c. he reads of the specific event related to Mordecai – **i.e.** his revelation of the plan of Bigthana (Bigthan) and Teresh to assassinate the king (**see 2:21ff**)
 - d. he inquires of what honor (reward) has been bestowed on Mordecai for this revelation
 1. his "*young men*" (officials) inform him that no honor has (yet?) been given to Mordecai
 2. **question:** why the oversight – why hasn't this king rewarded Mordecai for his revelation?
 3. **answer:** so that *how* and *by whom* Mordecai is honored will serve the purposes of God
 4. **remember:** Mordecai's revelation comes *before* he refuses to honor Haman, so this is a recollection of an event that was a *precursor* to the

b. the king orders the honoring of Mordecai (vv. 4-11)

1. providentially, Haman arrives just at this point (and seeks an audience with the king)
 - a. because he wants the king to give him permission to hang Mordecai (see 5:14)
2. the king doesn't care about what business Haman has arrived to do
3. instead, the king asks Haman what should be done to honor a man in the kingdom worthy of honor
 - a. the king is talking about Mordecai, Haman assumes that the king wishes to honor him
 - b. the **arrogance** of Haman exudes throughout the story:
 1. he arrogantly believes that everyone should bow down before him *as a god*
 2. he arrogantly believes that Esther is honoring him by *inviting him* to her feasts
 3. he arrogantly believes that the king is thinking about him all the time, even here at night
 4. it is the natural inclination of unregenerate men to be thinking only about themselves, and to assume that everyone else is also thinking about them

5. **true believers think about Christ – they meditate upon him day and night, because he is the one worthy of our thoughts and meditations**
 - a. **IOW:** to concentrate on the person and work of Christ is the *opposite* of idolatry
 4. Haman (ironically) lays out what he believes should be done *to him*:
 - a. clothe the man in royal robes and a crown (**note:** that the king himself has worn)
 - b. set the man on a horse (**note:** that the king himself has ridden)
 - c. guide the horse through the city streets by a “*noble official*” (**note:** one of the king’s own men)
 - d. shout about the man in the city square “*thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor*” (**i.e.** may this man be treated with the same respect as *the king himself*; as royalty)
 - e. **IOW:** Haman expects to be treated by the king *as though he were king* – thinking of himself as *equal* to the king is what gets him killed – the king will see Haman **as a threat**
 5. the king orders Haman (unaware of Haman’s thinking) to do all of that to Mordecai
 - a. **observation #1:** can you imagine the utter *humiliation* that Haman must now be feeling?
 - b. **observation #2:** why doesn’t this humiliation drive Haman away from his arrogance?
 1. **the same sun that softens wax also serves to harden clay – the grace of God turns the hearts of the elect to him; that grace only serves to harden the sinner**
- c. Haman mourns over Mordecai’s honoring (vv. 12-13)**
1. after he finishes honoring Mordecai, he sulks home, depressed, ashamed, defeated, worried
 2. his wife and friends hear the story, and wisely observe something to Haman (**see v. 13b**)
 - a. the king has raised Mordecai to a position of honor “greater” than you
 - b. therefore, the plot that you have hatched against him may (now) **boomerang** on you
 - c. so (**by implication**) you should do whatever you can to prevent the destruction of the Jews
 1. **note:** they see Mordecai as “*of the Jewish people*” = because he is a Jew (whom you have plotted to wipe out), the king could (potentially) see that as a disloyalty to him (having honored Mordecai) and destroy you
 2. **note:** although the *essence* of the statement is true, the *source* of this danger is not Mordecai, but **Esther** – *she* is the Jew that will (ultimately) take Haman down

II. The King Hears Haman’s Plot (Esther 6:14-7:6)

Content

a. the feast of the queen (6:14-7:2)

1. the eunuchs arrive to hustle Haman off to the feast
 - a. the “balloon” with Zeresh’s words are still hanging in the air above his head
 - b. **imagine:** what is Haman thinking about as he heads to the feast, *and* during the feast?
2. the feast lasts for two (2) days – probably out of custom, but also to “limber up” the king
 - a. Esther knows the **gravity** of what she’s about to do, and she needs him in a right state of mind
 - b. Esther knows the **danger** of going up against Haman, and she needs him disarmed
3. on the second day, the king grants her a wish – even to as much as “*half of my kingdom*”
 - a. **i.e.** I will grant you whatever you wish, even if such a request seems *unreasonable*
 - b. **meaning:** surely you desire something, Queen Esther, and I am prepared (either by drink or by love) to grant it to you – do not *withhold* your thoughts or desires

b. the request of the queen (7:3-5)

1. Esther requests simply “*her people*” (**see v. 3b**) = that the king spare her people *and her with them*
 - a. she honors the king by asking this only if she pleases the king (which she obviously does)
 - b. she informs the king that her people (and her, by extension) have been scheduled for genocide
 - c. she notes that the king has been tricked by a great bribe (“*we have been sold*”)
 - d. she appeals to the king on an economic basis (probably a bit of an overkill)
 1. **i.e.** if the Jews had simply been sold into slavery, the king would continue to benefit, and she would have remained silent – as it is, the annihilation of the Jews means a great loss to him
 2. note: this is the *opposite* argument that Haman made in tricking the king in his plot
2. Esther reveals (here) her true identity and ethnicity (as a Jewess)
 - a. it all comes down to **this point:** will the king accept or reject *her* – ultimately, the decision will hinge on whether his love (or sympathy?) for her will override his surprise at her revelation
 - b. in this case, (**it appears**) the king overlooks her ethnicity and becomes angry over the fact that someone has tricked him (**i.e.** has “*dared to do this*”)
 - c. **principle: true followers of Christ must be willing to identify with the people of God even if that means persecution or opposition – sometimes, the Lord will ordain for mercy to apply; sometimes he will not; but we must be faithful regardless of the outcome**

Esther Reveals Haman’s Plot

c. the revelation of the queen (7:6)

1. the revelation to the king of Haman's plot now puts Haman in a very bad position
 - a. he is the direct enemy of Esther and her people
 - b. he is the direct enemy of Mordecai and his people
 - c. he is (now) the direct enemy of the king himself – the revelation has destroyed his position

III. The King Hangs Haman (Esther 7:7-10)

Content

a. the king leaves in anger while Haman pleads for his life before Esther

1. it is *likely* that the king leaves in order to think about what to do next (**i.e.** against his own edict)
2. **irony**: Haman has to beg for his life before a woman he thought (a few minutes ago) was his respecter

b. the king discovers Haman in a compromising position

1. **humor**: the king returns to find Haman "*falling on the couch*" of the queen, and assumes that Haman is assaulting the queen

c. the king has Haman hanged on his own gallows

1. **ultimate irony**: the king has Haman hanged on the very gallows he himself had built!
2. **application: not all circumstances in life are as they appear**