

Esther 06 - Ahasuerus Reads About Mordecai's Heroism; Ahasuerus Compels Haman to Honor Mordecai

II. Deliverance of the Jews (Esther 6:1—10:3)

(1) Haman forced to honor Mordecai (Esther 6:1-14)

(A) Ahasuerus becomes aware of how Mordecai thwarted the earlier assassination attempt (6:1-3)

(a) Ahasuerus' sleeplessness (6:1a)

(b) Ahasuerus discovers Mordecai's good deed upon reading the archives (6:1b-3)

(B) Ahasuerus compels Haman to honor Mordecai (6:4-14)

(a) Ahasuerus asks Haman how a man should be honored (6:4-6)

(b) Thinking he would be the recipient, Haman suggests a lavish reward (6:7-9)

(c) Ahasuerus commands Haman to bestow this reward upon Mordecai (6:10)

(d) Haman honors Mordecai (6:11)

(e) Haman expresses his grief before his family and friends and his wife predicts his demise (6:12-13)

(f) Haman is invited to Esther's second banquet (6:14)

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1 During that night the king could not sleep, so he gave an order to bring **the book of records, the chronicles**, and they were read before the king.

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1 On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

- "During that night" - on the night between the 1st and 2nd banquets

- "...the book of records, the chronicles" - historiographers followed the king wherever he went (Cf. Ezra 6:2f). When the king couldn't sleep, he asked for his book of records to be read to him.

- God's providence is demonstrated three times in the first two verses alone: the king's insomnia during the night between the two banquets; his choice of books to read; and, that the content of the reading was about the heroism of Mordecai to save the king's life.

- The reading was undoubtedly designed to put the king to sleep, as had probably been done on many previous occasions. But the content of the reading on this night caused the king to leap into action.

2 And it was found written what Mordecai had reported about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who were doorkeepers, that they had sought to attack King Ahasuerus.

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2 It was found recorded there that Mordecai had reported about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the entrance to the restricted areas of the palace, and that they had conspired to assassinate King Ahasuerus.

2 And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

- Of all the texts that could have been selected by the librarian, from the records of Ahasuerus' 12 years of rule up to that time, the one that contained the account of Mordecai's uncovering the assassination plot (about five years before; Cf. 2:16 with 3:7) was read to the king (Cf. 2:21-23). What a providence!

- Normally Ahasuerus quickly rewarded people who did him special services. Heroditus gives us two examples of Ahasuerus doing this on other occasions [8.85, 9.107].

- So when the king discovered that he had overlooked Mordecai's favor, he moved quickly to rectify the oversight

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."

3 The king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" Then the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

3 So the king asked, "What honor and distinction was bestowed on Mordecai for this?"

The young men who served the king answered, "Nothing was done for him."

3 And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

- Five years had passed without recognition. Undoubtedly a bureaucratic oversight had occurred.

— If Mordecai had been immediately rewarded for saving the king, there would have been no opportunity for the elaborate plan which would soon be carried out by the king through the mouth of Haman (v6-10).

- Why did Esther ask for a delay before telling the king her request (Cf. 5:7)? The reason was now clear: God was going to elevate Mordecai and prepare the king to react unfavorably to Haman.

(B) Ahasuerus compels Haman to honor Mordecai (6:4-14)

(a) Ahasuerus asks Haman how a man should be honored (6:4-6)

4 So the king said, "Who is in the courtyard?" **Now Haman had *just* entered** the outer courtyard of the king's palace in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the wooden *gallows* which he had prepared for him.

4 So the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows which he had prepared for him.

4 The king said, "Who is in the courtyard?" Now Haman had just entered the outer courtyard of the palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the pole he had set up.

4 And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

- "...Now Haman had *just* entered" - his early morning haste to effect Mordecai's destruction led to his being deputized to do him the highest honor! Just another providential arrival at the exact right time.

5 So the king's servants said to him, "Behold, Haman is standing in the courtyard." And the king said, "Have him come in."

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

5 The king's young men told him, "Look, Haman is standing in the courtyard."

The king said, "Let him come in."

5 And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.

6 Haman then came in and the king said to him, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

6 So Haman came in and the king said to him, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

6 After Haman came in, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" Haman told himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

6 So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?

- Haman's pride preceded his fall (Prov 16:18)

(b) Thinking he would be the recipient, Haman suggests a lavish reward (6:7-9)

7 Therefore Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king desires to honor,

7 Then Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king desires to honor,

7 Haman answered the king, "For a man whom the king desires to honor,

7 And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour,

8 have them bring a royal robe **which the king has worn**, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal turban has been placed;

8 let them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown has been placed;

8 let them bring royal robes that the king has worn and a horse on which the king has ridden, with a royal crown placed on its head.

8 Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:

- "...which the king has worn" - to wear apparel previously worn by the king was, under normal circumstances, a breach of Persian law [Plut. "Vit. Artax.," § 5], but the king could allow it [Heroditus vii. 17].

— Wearing clothing that the king had worn and riding on a horse that the king had ridden on were the highest mark of honor that could be shown to a subject (Cf. 1 Kings 1:32-49)

- Haman, thinking that the king is referring to him and not Mordecai, wanted as much as possible to appear like the king himself in the honors that he recommended to Ahasuerus. — Requesting these things, as Haman did (thinking they were for himself) was tantamount to asking for the kingship

9 then *order them* to hand the robe and the horse over to one of the king's noble officials, and have them dress the man whom the king desires to honor, and lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, 'So it shall be done for the man whom the king desires to honor.'"

9 and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes and let them array the man whom the king desires to honor and lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, 'Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.'"

9 Then give the robes and the horse to one of the king's most noble officials. Let them put the robes on the man whom the king desires to honor, and let them put him on the horse in the main square of the city. Then let them announce in front of him, 'This is what is done for the man whom the king desires to honor.'"

9 And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

- Haman responded by mentioning several things that should be done for the person the king wished to honor:

1. Such a man should have the appearance of royalty, by wearing a kingly robe and riding a royal steed, one the king had already ridden (v9)
2. The honored man should be served by one of the most noble princes (v10)
3. The princes were to take the man through the city on this horse, clearing the way before him and pointing out to all who watched that this man was honored by the king (v10; Cf. Pharaoh honoring Joseph, Gen 41:42-43).

Haman did not need money (Cf. 3:9). He craved respect from his peers and from the population at large (Cf. 5:11). Even though he was fabulously wealthy and had more power than anyone outside the royal family (3:1), he wanted even more respect from the people of the city. Haman's lust for respect from Mordecai is what got him into trouble in the first place (Cf. 3:2,5; 5:9,13).

(c) Ahasuerus commands Haman to bestow this reward upon Mordecai (6:10)

10 Then the king said to Haman, "**Quickly**, take the robe and the horse just as you have said, and do so for **Mordecai the Jew**, who is sitting at the king's gate; do not fail to do anything of all that you have said."

10 Then the king said to Haman, "Take quickly the robes and the horse as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king's gate; do not fall short in anything of all that you have said."

10 Then the king told Haman, "Quick! Take the clothes and the horse just as you have suggested and do this for Mordecai the Jew who sits in the king's gate. And don't let anything you've suggested fall through the cracks."

10 Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

- "...Quickly" - the delay in recognizing Mordecai for his heroics had already been too long...

- "...Mordecai the Jew" - apparently the very phrase used in the historical records. This indicates that King Ahasuerus knew Mordecai was Jewish, but he was not aware that Haman had planned to kill all the Jews until Esther later revealed that fact (Cf. 7:4).

— This is the first of 5x Mordecai is called "The Jew" (Cf. 8:7; 9:29,31; 10:3), apparently to highlight the fact that a Jew, though opposed by Haman, was given a prominent position in Susa in the Persian Empire.

(d) Haman honors Mordecai (6:11)

11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, and dressed Mordecai, and led him *on horseback* through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "So it shall be done for the man whom the king desires to honor."

11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and led him *on horseback* through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor."

11 So Haman took the clothes and the horse, dressed Mordecai, and put him on the horse in the main square of the city. He cried out in front of him, "This is what is done for the man whom the king desires to honor."

11 Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delights to honour.

- Mordecai was "honored" by Haman, the very man he wanted to destroy at the very time he had planned to supervise Mordecai's impalement

— He who wanted respect from Mordecai had to give respect to Mordecai. Haman himself had to carry out the king's order even though it embarrassed and angered him greatly.

(e) Haman expresses his grief before his family and friends and his wife predicts his demise (6:12-13)

12 Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate, while Haman hurried home, mourning, **with his head covered**.

12 Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried home, mourning, with his head covered.

12 Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate, while Haman hurried to his house, mourning and hiding his face.

12 And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hastened to his house mourning, and having his head covered.

- "...with his head covered" - the irony continues...before the day is over, Haman's "head will be covered" in a way he doesn't anticipate

13 And Haman informed Zeresh his wife and all his friends of everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin, you will not prevail over him, but will certainly fall before him."

13 Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him."

13 Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. His wise friends and his wife Zeresh told him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is one of the Jewish people, you won't prevail against him. Instead, you will surely fall before him."

13 And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.

- His friends and wife evidently realized that unseen forces were maintaining the blessing that they had observed that followed the Jews (Cf. Num 23:9,21,23; 24:9,17,19; Joshua 2:9-13)

— Their superstitious outlook proved prophetic...they had a predisposition to superstitions, fates, omens, etc.

(f) Haman is invited to Esther's second banquet (6:14)

14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and quickly brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

14 While they were still talking to him, the king's eunuchs arrived, and they quickly took him to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

14 And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

- "While they were still talking" - while his wife and wise men were "consoling" him, he was late for dinner

— Haman started the day elated to be invited to a 2nd banquet with the king...how things change! He probably wasn't as excited at this point...

Haman stands as a prototype of all anti-God activists who oppose God's people. These historical figures emerge as symbols of much larger proportions. Israel's history is replete with examples when men had tried to set aside God's promises to their nation and had failed. In the future God will do the same. "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps 121:4)