

March 7

Scriptures: Read Esther 5 & 6

Key Verse: “What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?” (Esther 6:6b)

Overview

After three days of prayer and fasting, Esther was determined to do the will of God and do everything in her power to save her people. Nothing, however, was done in her own strength, but in the strength of the Lord. By approaching the king, she put her life at stake, yet her life was, as is ours, in the hands of the Lord. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes” (Proverbs 21:1). How relieved and thankful to God she must have felt when the king held out his sceptre to welcome her into his throne room! The Lord turned the king’s heart to show her this initial favour, which was a partial answer to her prayer and the prayer of the whole Jewish community.

Ahasuerus knew Esther’s request must have been extremely urgent and he said, in effect, he would grant her anything. Wisely, Esther requested that the king and Haman come to her banquet the next day. While there, the king once again asked Esther about her request, but the Lord must have laid it on her heart to postpone it until the next day, for He was still working on the king’s heart.

Haman felt so honoured to be invited to yet another private dinner party with the king and queen. Yet his high spirits were dampened when, on his way home, he saw Mordecai once again defying him. All his greatness and success could not fully be enjoyed because of the hatred and bitterness in his heart. It is evident that Haman’s wife also hated the Jews, for it was she who suggested building the gallows (she was likely also from the Amalekite people). Little did she know, however, who would hang on it. They obviously had no idea that Esther was a Jewess; it was a well kept secret. Only Esther’s closest attendants knew of her relationship to Mordecai.

Having resolved to hang Mordecai, Haman thought he would be better able to enjoy Esther’s second banquet, for the thorium his flesh would finally be gone. He could not wait until the twelfth month to see Mordecai die. He demanded immediate satisfaction.

That night, while Haman was having the high gallows made, Ahasuerus was having trouble sleeping and asked for the royal chronicles to be read to him. God, the great King and keeper of Israel, however, “shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Psalm 121:4). He was watchful and at work, no matter, what the time of day or night, to bring justice (Psalm 37:6). Ahasuerus’ insomnia was providential, for he learned that Mordecai had never been rewarded for saving his life.

Early that next morning, Haman came to the king for permission to hang Mordecai. His feet were “swift to shed blood” (Romans 3:15) and murder the innocent, like his father Satan (John 8:44). At that same time, the king was seeking the advice of one of his nobles; Haman “just happened” to be there, but this was not coincidental, for the Lord had this in His plan. The story is masterfully written, and the irony of the whole situation is almost humorous.

Haman's pride led him to believe the person to be honoured was himself, and his response seems almost rehearsed. How shocking it would have been for him to learn that the person to be honoured was Mordecai. Although it was the king's decision, once again the Lord was ultimately the One in control. God was honouring Mordecai for his faithfulness and trust in Him. As we have seen numerous times before in the Bible, the Lord rejoices to honour those who honour Him (cf. 1 Samuel 2:30; John 12:26).

Humiliated after parading Mordecai through the city, Haman went home in shame, only to learn that his superstitious personal advisors told him it was the beginning of the end for him. Like a sheep to the slaughter, Haman went again to Esther's palace.

Prayer

Lord, You declared, "Them that honour Me, I will honour." We honour You and proclaim Your greatness. Be exalted, O Lord!