

LESSON 6. Mordecai Is Honored By The King

Esther 6

MEMORY VERSE: “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Galatians 6:3).

THE KING REMINDED HOW MORDECAI SAVED HIS LIFE

The night before Esther’s second banquet, the king could not sleep. He asked a servant to bring the book of records of chronicles and read to him from the record. The servant read the account of how Mordecai had saved the king when two chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, had planned to kill the king. The king asked his servants if any reward had ever been given to Mordecai for uncovering the plot and saving his life. The servants told him that Mordecai had been given no reward nor honored in any way.

By this time, morning had arrived. As the king pondered on the reward to give Mordecai for saving his life, Haman came into the outer court of the palace. He planned to request that the king have Mordecai hanged. Neither Haman nor the king knew what the other was thinking. When the king found out that Haman was in the court, he was pleased. He needed advice on how to honor Mordecai. The king told his servants to bring Haman to see him.

HAMAN DECEIVED BY PRIDE

Before Haman could make his request that Mordecai be hanged, the king posed a question to Haman. He asked, “What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?” (Esther 6:6). Forgetting Mordecai momentarily, Haman thought about the question. He wondered just who could the king possibly want to honor more than him - after all, he was the highest ranking prince in the kingdom. He and the king were the only guests that the queen had invited to both of her banquets. The king had given him his signet ring to seal the decree to get rid of the Jews, and even told him to keep the ten thousand talents of silver he had offered for the king’s treasury. Yes, full of pride, Haman was sure that he was the one the king wanted to honor!

HAMAN TRAPPED BY HIS OWN PLAN

Thinking of how he would like to be honored, Haman outlined a plan that he felt would provide him great honor. He suggested that the king reward the man by having one of his most noble princes dress him in one of the king’s royal robes, and then set the man on one of the king’s royal horses that has a royal crest on its head. Haman proposed that the prince should then lead the horse and parade its rider through the city square, with the prince proclaiming, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour” (Esther 6:9).

The king was pleased with Haman’s plan. He told Haman to take the robe and horse and do all that he had suggested for Mordecai, and not to leave anything out! Haman must have been stunned. He was not the one to be honored! The man the king wanted to honor was Mordecai, the man he hated most. Even worse, since he was the highest ranking prince in the kingdom, Haman had trapped himself into being the one that was to bring this great honor to Mordecai.

HAMAN HUMILIATED BEFORE ALL THE CITY

Haman had to obey the king. He took the king's robe, put it on Mordecai, sat him on the king's horse and led it through the street, telling everyone that Mordecai was a man that the king was delighted to honor. This was a most humiliating experience for Haman! Mordecai, the man who refused to bow or honor him was now being treated like a king. To make it worse, Haman had made it all possible by the plan he had suggested to the king. He had misjudged the king's thoughts. It is likely that Haman's rage equaled his embarrassment as he led the king's horse and its rider through the streets, telling everyone of the king's desire to honor Mordecai.

After his ride through the city, Mordecai seemed to have been unaffected by the honor bestowed upon him by the king. He went back to his usual place, sitting at the king's gate. Perhaps, Mordecai knew that man's honors were temporary, but obeying God would bring an eternal reward. The writer of Hebrews tells how by faith Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin. "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he [Moses] had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Hebrews 11:23-25). We can look forward to the same reward that Moses did, if we "esteem" suffering for Christ more valuable than worldly possessions and pleasures.

HAMAN'S FALL PREDICTED

After his ordeal of carrying out the king's order to honor Mordecai, Haman hurried back to his own house in anguish and mourning. He covered his head so that no one could see the humiliation on his face. Haman had begun the day with the anticipation of getting rid of his enemy, Mordecai. The day ended with his own embarrassment and humiliation before the whole city. Arriving at home he told his wife and friends about the terrible things that had happened that day. This brought the prediction by his wife and friends that he could not prevail against Mordecai, and would fall before him (Esther 6:13).

Still pouting and mourning about the humiliation he had suffered, Haman was discussing the day's events with Zeresh and his advisors when the king's chamberlains came to get him for the second banquet which Esther had prepared. As bad as the day had been, events were soon to become much worse for Haman.

HAMAN'S EVIL HEART

Haman's heart was evil. He hated the Jews - the sin of prejudice (James 2:9). His ego had caused him to assume too much - the sin of pride. He was jealous of Mordecai - the sin of envy. He wanted all the Jews killed - the sin of murder. Solomon wrote, "For as he [man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

Sometimes as we are honored for a feat, or hear our friends brag about us, we are tempted to think too highly of ourselves as Haman did. It is important to remember that man's praise is fleeting. We instead should seek to be humble in the sight of man and God. James tells us that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). We must always keep our thoughts pure and remain humble regardless of the situation. We become what we allow to dwell in our hearts.

TRUE OR FALSE

- _____ 1. Mordecai was upset because the king had never honored him for saving his life.
- _____ 2. Haman had gone to see the king to get him to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had built.
- _____ 3. Haman assumed that the king wanted to honor him.
- _____ 4. Haman's wife and friends said he would fall before Mordecai.
- _____ 5. The king told Haman to do all of what he had suggested to honor Mordecai.
- _____ 6. The king was having trouble sleeping on the night before Esther's second banquet.
- _____ 7. The king asked the servants to read to him from the books of the law of Moses.

MATCH

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ___ 1. That night the king | a. was to wear the king's robe |
| ___ 2. God resists | b. back to the king's gate |
| ___ 3. Haman thought the king | c. was unable to sleep |
| ___ 4. A noble prince was to lead | d. the horse |
| ___ 5. The one to be honored | e. the proud |
| ___ 6. Haman was to do all this | f. with his head covered |
| ___ 7. Mordecai went | g. for Mordecai the Jew |
| ___ 8. Haman hurried home | h. wanted to honor him |

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. Haman thought in his _____, "To whom would the king _____ to do _____ more than to myself?" (Esther 6:6).
2. After it was over, _____ went back to the king's _____, and Haman hurried to his house _____ and with his _____ covered (Esther 6:12).
3. The king's chamberlains came to take Haman to _____ banquet.
4. Haman planned to ask the king to _____ Mordecai.
5. By faith _____ chose to suffer with God's _____ rather than enjoy the temporary pleasures of _____.

POINTS TO PONDER

1. How can we control our own ego and pride? (James 4:6).
2. Mordecai's good deed of saving the king had occurred some time before this, without his being rewarded. Have you ever done a good deed which no one seemed to appreciate?
3. Do we forget to show our love and appreciation to Jesus for what He has done for us?
4. How did the honor given Mordecai affect his behavior? Should "wins" affect our attitude toward others, or our faith in God?
5. How does this lesson fit in with James' statement that God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble?