

SBC – Oct. 17, 2021
Esther 5:9-14 (NKJV)
“Haman’s Plot Against Mordecai”

10

Slide # 1

Theme: God’s providential Care For His People

Outline:

Chapter 1 – Queen Vashti Deposed

Chapter 2 – Esther Becomes Queen

Chapter 3 – Haman’s Plot Against the Jews

Chapters 4-7 Esther’s Courage – Haman’s Plot Backfires

Chapter 8 The Jews Avenged

Chapter 9 The Feast of Purim Instituted

Chapter 10 Epilogue – Mordecai Exalted

The Jewish people and the land of Israel go together like soul and body. When the Jews refused to go into the land of promise because of the giants in the land God judged that whole generation and they all died in the wilderness with the exception of Joshua and Caleb (the men of faith).

In Scripture when the Jews are out of the land it is a sign of God severe judgment. They belong in the land. That is where God intends for them to be. Through Jeremiah God told His people the Jews that they in judgment would be out of the land for 70 years but after that He would bring them back.

Slide # 2

Jeremiah 29:10 (NKJV)

10 For thus says the LORD: **After seventy years** are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and **cause you to return to this place.**

After 70 years God brought judgment upon Babylon and the Persians took over. A Persian king by the name of Cyrus then made this decree.

Slide # 3

2 Chronicles 36:22–23 (NKJV)

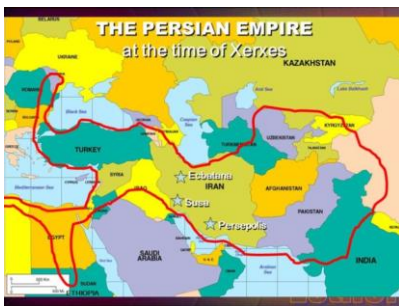
22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up

the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,
23 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? **May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!**

The problem was that many of the Jews did NOT go back to their homeland in the promised land but rather remained in Persia. That is the setting for the book of Esther.

The kingdom of Persia was massive at this point consisting of 127 provinces.

Slide # 4



Into this context a man by the name of Haman who by heritage was of the Amalekites (the age old cursed enemies of the Jews – cf. [Exodus 17:8–13](#); [1 Samuel 15:2](#); [Deuteronomy 25:17](#)) was elevated to second highest position in the Persian empire. That is a very heady position. And he had the big head to prove it.

In the providence of God there were also 2 Jews who quietly (secretly) also found themselves in a very high position in Persia. They were Esther the queen and her cousin Mordecai who served in the kings court in some official capacity.

When Haman was exalted to second in the land the king also gave a command that all should bow before him and pay homage. Because he was a Jew Mordecai refused to do it. When Haman was told this he was enraged and plotted how he might seek to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom and then with the kings blessing a law was made that on a certain day the Jews should be exterminated.

Mordecai then appealed to Esther to seek intervention with the king on behalf of her people saying, “who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Est. 4:14).

Up to this point neither the king nor Haman knew that she was Jewish. There were just a couple of problems Esther going into to see the king. Number one the king hadn't called to see Esther in over a month and second to intrude into the court of the king called for the death penalty unless he held out the golden scepter.

Esther asked that her people fast for her (with the assumed idea of prayer as well) and said that she would then go in and seek an audience with the king.

Slide # 5

Esther 4:16 (NKJV)

16 “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and **fast for me**; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I **will fast likewise**. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and **if I perish, I perish!**”

Esther at this point showed real courage – willing to lay it all on the line for the sake of her people.

As she went in the king received her and offered to grant her petition up to half of his kingdom. She deferred and asked the king and Haman to come to a banquet she had prepared. At the banquet the king again asked what her petition was and she again put him off – and once again invited both him and Haman to yet another banquet on the following day.

Why the delay? Well, as we saw last time there are many guesses but the text doesn't definitively say. I think a good guess is she just didn't feel quite right about asking yet and perhaps was looking for a confirmation sign to go ahead. Whether or not this was the case a major providential SIGN did happen between the 1st and 2nd banquet as recorded in chapter 6.

But what we have in chapter 5:9-14 is what is happening between the first and the second banquet – especially in relation to Haman and his plot to kill Mordecai.

Tonight we pick the narrative up in 5:9 right after the time of the first banquet Esther had for the king and Haman.

Esther 5:9–14 (NKJV)

9 So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai.

Haman was really feeling good about himself. He had just had a banquet with the king and the queen. Give Esther credit she did not let on at all that she had any problem with Haman at this point. He is thinking he is really in her good graces. She was good in not letting on what she was really thinking.

Haman left the banquet full of joy and gladness of heart, but then on his way out of the palace he saw Mordecai the Jew in the king's gate and his emotions changed on a dime. And what really bothered him and filled him with indignation is that Mordecai showed him no regard. He didn't bow before him. He didn't even stand, and he didn't tremble at all. He wasn't nervous.

Earlier recall that Mordecai had been in sackcloth and ashes but 4:1-2 records he did not enter into the king's gate in this fashion because it was forbidden. Now obviously he had removed his sackcloth and was dressed appropriately for the king's gate.

Evidently he had heard that the king had received Esther into his presence with favor. He had been praying and fasting for 3 days and now was ready to **BOLDLY** go forward and see what God would do.

The word trembled is a strong word denoting trembling produced by fear.

Slide # 6

Daniel 5:19 (NKJV) [Daniel addressing king Belshazzar]

19 And because of the majesty that He gave him [Nebuchadnezzar], all peoples, nations, and languages **trembled** and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. (cf. Dan. 6:26)

But there is no fear in Mordecai at this point. He was very bold in the presence of the second most powerful man in this great kingdom. And the man that the king himself had commanded that all bow before. You have to admire a man of conviction that refuses to bow and does so boldly.

I love the position of being a godly nonconformist. Note, I said godly. There is an ungodly nonconformist position and then there is standing on principle. It would appear as a Jew Mordecai is standing on principle at this point in refusing to bow before this arch enemy of God's people. And that was the right position. For all of his compromise as seen earlier, at this point (whatever all the motives involved were) he does stand for what is right and so did Esther – and that is commendable.

Also, note that while Haman looked really BIG and strong behind his gov't position, in person he didn't have the guts to take on Mordecai. I think if he would have Mordecai would have taken him out right there. He was like a lot of yellow people who hide behind the position they have but personally they are cowards. Mordecai on the other hand had everything going against him and stood strong in his convictions which were rooted in God.

10 Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh.

Haman was full of self-joy with the one dark cloud of Mordecai – nevertheless he restrained himself and went home and called for his friends and wife to celebrate his good fortune that has come to him. It was all about HIM after all – or so he thought.

11 Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.

Haman loved to talk about himself. His whole life and being was all about SELF. My bet is that even his friends tired of hearing about him and his all the time. Yet, when you are second in command in the land of course they are going to pretend to be very interested simply because they are so close the powers that be.

Haman went on and on about his great riches, his big family. In chapter 9 we see he had 10 children (cf. 9:7-10, 12). He bragged on how the king had promoted him and put him in an advanced position over all the other officials and servants of the king. He went on and on ad nauseum and it was all about SELF!

It sort of reminds you of the parable Jesus told about the rich man who was so self-absorbed with everything that he had. And then Jesus ended the parable with this application:

Slide # 7**Luke 12:20–21 (NKJV)**

20 But God said to him, **'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you;** then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

21 "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Just like the rich fool who bragged on all that he had not knowing that he would die that night, so Haman is carrying on like he has the good like by the horns and it looks good for as far as the eye can see.

However, as we will see the narrative was about to change overnight.

Life is like that. We don't know what a day will bring forth. Circumstances can change over night. Better invest in God, better invest in eternal values. Nothing here is certain! (cf. 1 Tim. 6:6-8).

Yet human pride tends to think in the moment. It tends to think about self and not God. And pride is a blinding thing. And frankly it is a killer as we will see in our study.

Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV)

18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

12 Moreover Haman said, **"Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king."**

On top of all his riches, on top of all his children, on top of his advanced position, on top of all this he had special favor with Queen Esther. How is that for dropping a name. He bragged on how the Queen in all her glory had invited no one but HIM and the king to a special banquet on the morrow. He is so enamored with this that he states it twice!

He is really feeling good about himself. Everything is going his way, but there is one cloud in his life that really bugs him.

Although Esther's attendants knew of her relation to Mordecai (cf. 4:4-8), Haman obviously did not. This ignorance of one vital fact proved, in God's perfect providence and justice, to be his undoing.

– **John Whitcomb**

13 Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

The thing that ate at him was seeing Mordecai the Jew sitting in the king's gate and showing him no respect. In fact, he said all these other status symbols meant nothing to him as long as Mordecai was on the scene.

And note he specifically said, "Mordecai the Jew". He had a real deep seated hatred for the Jews and Mordecai in particular.

What we have here is an expression of hatred that the Bible refers to as MALICE.

Slide # 8

Dictionary Definition of MALICE: desire to inflict injury, harm, or suffering on another, either because of a hostile impulse or out of deep-seated meanness: the malice and spite of a lifelong enemy.

What we see in Haman is a terrible case of malice!

Malice is that deep-seated hatred that brings delight if our enemy suffers and pain if our enemy succeeds. Malice can never forgive; it must always take revenge. – **Warren Wiersbe**

Even Christians, who still have the flesh are warned against the leaven of malice. It starts as a small cancer but it can grow into a killer!

Slide # 9

1 Corinthians 5:8 (NKJV)

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, **nor with the leaven of malice** and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Ephesians 4:31 (NKJV)

31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with **all malice**.

1 Peter 2:1 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, laying aside **all malice**, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,

Someone has said that you can always tell the size of a man by the things that irritate him. If little things irritate him, he is a little man. If it takes big things to irritate him, he is a big man. – **J. Vernon McGee**

Let us put it in terms of Spirit-filled versus Flesh filled. The flesh is all about hatred and malice this is what defines the unbelievers but it is not to define us. Instead we are to be led by the Spirit and yield to the Spirit with the result being the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Slide # 10

Titus 3:3 (NKJV)

3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, **living in malice** and envy, hateful and hating one another.

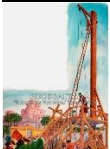
This is how we use to live, but we are not to live there anymore. Don't be a Haman. We all recognize his ugliness on the pages of Scripture, but how sad when it happens in the lives of true believers. And it can happen. That is why we are warned and commanded to not live this way.

14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet.” And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.

In trying to console Haman regarding the ONE thing that really bothered him, the one thing in his life that wasn't quite going the way he wanted, his wife and friends came up with this idea.

They suggested that Haman have a gallows made 50 cubits high – which is 75 feet high. That is a really high gallows. Commentators are not sure whether this signified death by hanging or impalement. Either way the idea was that the dead body of Mordecai by strung up 75 feet in the air for all to see. That will show everybody just how great Haman is and that absolutely no one can mess with or diss him.

Slide # 11



We don't know the specifics of what was involved in building these gallows. Some suggest it was built on top of a high wall – so not a lot of building was required. Other think perhaps it was fastened to the top of a tall tree. We are not told – only that it was to be 75 feet high so all could see.

And the plan was that after the gallows were built today then early in the morning Haman (the most favored one with the king) go into the king and “suggest” to him that Mordecai be hanged on it. And of course the presumption is that with his pull the king will of course go along with it.

And then in all their depravity they said and “then go merrily with the king to the banquet.” This is some kind of HARD humanity! They had no regard for the sacredness of human life – and certainly not that of a Jew.

And Haman heartily approved of this murderous plot. It pleased him and so he ordered the gallows be made immediately.

How ruthless to plot a political assassination so that he can then ENJOY the banquet without being distracted by this bothersome person. That speaks of a deep level of depravity and it appealed to Haman.

His wife and friends coaching him smacks of personal weakness. And it also echos another wicked wife in the OT by the name of Jezebel. Recall her husband Ahab wanted the vineyard of Naboth who didn't want to sell it. So Jezebel wickedly suggested a plot to have Naboth killed which Ahab then carried through on.

But they forgot one thing: God saw it all. And God had a message for Ahab through His prophet Elijah.

Slide # 12

1 Kings 21:19 (NKJV)

19 You shall speak to him, saying, ‘**Thus says the LORD:** “Have you murdered and also taken possession?” ’ And you shall speak to him, saying, ‘**Thus says the LORD:** “In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours.” ’ ”

Now in the providence of God we see that Mordecai was spared and escaped the plot of Haman, but what about Naboth? Did the providence of God escape him? Of course not! Both died in the providence of God. We don't always know the will and the ways of God.

Slide # 13**Hebrews 11:33–36 (NKJV)**

33 who **through faith** subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

And the text goes on to say these all were people of faith! Sometimes in the providence of God He spares our life and sometimes in the providence of God He takes us home! But in the sovereignty of God it's all good.

Slide # 14**Romans 8:28 (NKJV)**

28 And we know that **all things work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Romans 8:36–37 (NKJV)

36 As it is written: "**For Your sake we are killed all day long**; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

37 **Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors** through Him who loved us.

As the events unfold, the reader is reminded of seemingly insignificant or forgotten events that the skillful narrator had previously mentioned but had not highlighted. God was sovereignly at work behind even such a hateful act as building a gallows (cf. Acts 2:23; 4:27–28). – ***The Bible Knowledge Commentary***

The suspense has now reached the ultimate – "Esther has not yet spoken to the king about the pogrom; the king still does not know Mordecai saved his life; and now a gallows has been set up for Mordecai. Never have things looked worse. – ***John Whitcomb***

But God in His providence was about to make some moves that changed everything: He sometimes uses insomnia. And a night can change everything! Stay tuned.