

"Esther's Surrender"**Part 3****Esther 5-6**

Introduction: The last time we were together in Esther she was standing in the presence of the king in the royal throne room. She remained true to her promise to Mordecai to go into the king on the third day and to intercede for her people. This was probably the three hardest days of her life as she lived in anticipation of the meeting. If he did not extend the golden scepter she would die because she was not invited. Esther had reached the place where she was willing to die serving the Lord instead of trying to escape the death sentence while living in the shadows.

Esther 4:16

¹⁶ Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

I. The First Banquet**Notice Esther 5:3-4**

In verse three we see that the king's heart is moved by God to the point that he throws the door wide open for Esther. But instead of presenting her request she invites both the king and Haman to a banquet which she has prepared. I want to raise a question here, "Why does she not just present the situation to the king at this moment as he seems to be open to any request she would make?"

I believe Esther was being very cautious. She wanted to be sure the king was prepared to hear what she had to say. She was doing all she could to win the king's favor. Let us keep in mind there are many lives at stake here.

Notice Esther 5:5-8

Haman was called and he and the king sat at the table which Esther had set. But she then invites them both to another banquet on the next day. Did she lose her courage? Did she sense that something was not right? There are many questions that we could raise here but truly we do not have the answers. But there is something that we can be sure of and that is that whatever the reason was that caused Esther to delay her request, God was behind it. He somehow caused her to not reveal her request because He still needed to be

sure that Mordecai was rewarded for revealing the earlier plot to kill the king. If we step back and we examine this scene we can clearly see the hand of God in this entire situation.

Notice the words of Wiersbe as he points out three evidences of the sovereignty of God:

First, the Lord restrained Esther from telling Ahasuerus the truth about Haman. *While there may have been fear in her heart, I don't think that's what held her back. The Lord was working in her life and directing what she said, even though she wasn't aware of it. God was delaying the great exposure until after the king had honored Mordecai.*

We also see the sovereign hand of God at work in the way the king accepted the delay and agreed to come to the second banquet. *Monarchs like Ahasuerus aren't accustomed to being told to wait.*

Proverbs 16:1

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

Proverbs 19:21

²¹ *There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.*

Whatever plans Ahasuerus had made for the next evening were canceled to make time for the queen's second feast.

A third evidence of God's sovereignty is that none of Esther's attendants who knew that she was a Jewess tried to convey this important information to Haman. *Had Haman known the queen's nationality, he would have immediately devised some plan to prevent her from interfering. Palace intrigue is a dangerous game, and any of the attendants could have profited by telling Haman what they knew.*

Application:

Let us pray that we too may be as sensitive to God's leading as was Esther. Let us also learn not to make haste in certain matters but instead let us give the Lord time to work. How many times have we desired something so much that we spoke at the first opening and then later discovered that we should have waited to get better direction from the Lord? There are many people today who are living with regret because they committed too quickly and now, they realize they should have exercised more patience and allowed God to move before they committed to the situation.

Let me show you one such case.

Joshua 9:3-6, 14-15

³ *And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,*

⁴ *They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;*

⁵ *And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.*

⁶ *And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.*

¹⁴ *And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.*

¹⁵ *And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.*

Let us notice the words of Criswell on the delayed banquet and the invitation to another banquet.

"This is a magnificent expression of the sovereignty of God, whereby God inevitably and without exception accomplishes His will and purpose through free-willed agents acting freely but responsibly. Man must be a free agent to be in the image of God, and God must be immutable, i.e., unchanging, in order to be God (Mal. 3:6). Permitting or overruling the acts of man without infringing upon his freedom or interrupting His responsibility is an awesome expression of God's providence."

II. Haman's Pride

Notice Esther 5:9

Haman exited the first banquet full of joy and feeling rather good about himself, but then he had to walk by Mordecai who refused to stand or to move for him. Then was Haman full of indignation against Mordecai. Haman was honored by both the king and the queen but that was not enough. His inflated ego desired that everyone would bow to him and here we see that while he should have been content with the honor of the king and queen, it takes only one man to cause him to be miserable. The disapproval of one person robs him of all the joy.

Notice the words of Guzik on Haman:

"Miserable Haman! Honored by both the King and Queen of Persia, the disapproval of one man makes him feel worthless. This is an accurate description of how empty the rewards of this world are. Haman's deep-seated insecurities and need to be honored by everybody means that he can never be happy; God meant this hunger for acceptance in each of us to be ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ - because we are accepted in the Beloved, accepted before God because of who we are in Jesus."

Ephesians 1:6

⁶ *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

The Truth that we are accepted in Jesus Christ should cause our joy to be full. There are going to be people in this world that despise us for our stand, but our joy is not to be sought in the acceptance of man. True joy comes from our relationship with the Lord. If you are looking to people for joy, you will find that life will prove to be rather miserable at times.

Notice Esther 5:10-12

Haman was fuming but we see here that he controlled himself for the moment. This too is clearly the sovereignty of God at work in Haman's life. God would not allow Haman to act until all the pieces were in place to bring about Haman's destruction. Haman makes his way home because he cannot wait to boast of his own glory.

When he gets home, he calls his family in, and he begins to relate to them all that has come to pass. We do not know how much time he spent boasting but I am sure the people listening had their fill when it was over. It was all about him and how great he was. The pride and the arrogance drips from these verses.

Notice Esther 5:13

Haman tells them that while all of this is great, when he thinks about Mordecai it takes away all of his joy and he cannot even celebrate.

This is a good place to be reminded of what the Bible teaches about pride.

Proverbs 16:18-19

¹⁸ *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

¹⁹ *Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.*

Proverbs 18:12

¹² *Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.*

Proverbs 29:23

²³ *A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

We see this Truth transpire in the life of Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 4:30-33

³⁰ *The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that **I have built** for the house of the kingdom by **the might of my power**, and for the honour of **my majesty**?*

³¹ *While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.*

³² *And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

³³ *The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.*

Haman was on a path that would lead to his death, and it was pride that had placed him on this path. He was however confident that he was set for life. But little did he know that death would soon overtake him. We read of another situation in which death came suddenly.

Daniel 5:1-4, 30-31

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

² *Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.*

³ *Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.*

⁴ They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

³⁰ In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

³¹ And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Notice Esther 5:14

His family and friends suggested that Haman had gallows built 75 feet high and then have the king give permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows the next day. Let us remember this is not "gallows" as we think of today. This is a pole or a spear that is placed in the ground. They did not hang their victims by a rope, but they impaled them in a pointed pole. The victim was pulled by the legs down over the pointed end as the point would pass up through the body and out the neck area. They would then hang until they died.

Haman's hatred now consumed him to the point that only the death of Mordecai would satisfy him. Notice the words of Clarke:

Haman's problem wasn't Mordecai, it was the emptiness in his own heart. Even if he solved the "Mordecai problem," it would not fill the emptiness in his heart. i. "The soul was made for God, and nothing but God can fill it and make it happy."

The writer of Proverbs speaks of evil men such as Haman.

Proverbs 5:21-23

²¹ For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

²² His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

²³ He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

Application:

Be very careful as to where you get your advice. Haman's wife and friends advised him to build gallows upon which he will die. Let us be sure that our advice comes from those who know our Lord. Let us make sure in the days in which we live that we look to spiritual leaders for Godly advice.

Let us remember the warning found in 1 Kings 22 which Micaiah the prophet revealed.

1 Kings 22:19-23

19 And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.

20 And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.

21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.

22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

23 Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.

Conclusion:

Those who suppress the Truth of God set themselves up to be under the influence of demonic spirits. We certainly do not want to take our advice from those who have their minds and their thoughts controlled by demons. How do we know who they are? They are the people who have rejected God and His moral laws.