

### Mordecai is Exalted and Haman is Humbled

#### Esther 6

**Esther 6** - *“That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.”<sup>2</sup> And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.<sup>3</sup> 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.”<sup>4</sup> So the king said, “Who is in the court?” Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king’s palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.<sup>5</sup> The king’s servants said to him, “Haman is there, standing in the court.” And the king said, “Let him come in.”<sup>6</sup> So Haman came in, and the king asked him, “What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?” Now Haman thought in his heart, “Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?”<sup>7</sup> And Haman answered the king, “For the man whom the king delights to honor,<sup>8</sup> let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head.<sup>9</sup> Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: ‘Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!’”<sup>10</sup> Then the king said to Haman, “Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king’s gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken.”<sup>11</sup> So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!”<sup>12</sup> Afterward Mordecai went back to the king’s gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.<sup>13</sup> When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him.”<sup>14</sup> While they were still talking with him, the king’s eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.”*

#### Background Notes

In Esther 5, the stage was set for the surprising turn of events that would take place in chapter 6. On behalf of the Jewish people, and at the risk of her own life, Esther had gone uninvited before King Xerxes. (Ahasuerus is the Hebrew form of the Persian name Xerxes.) The king had held out his golden scepter to Esther, and asked her to name her request, but she had delayed in making the plea for her people by inviting the king and Haman to a banquet. At the banquet Esther again delayed her request, and invited King Xerxes and Haman to another banquet.

Meanwhile, Haman gloated over his exalted position of success and favor with the king and queen. There was only one “fly in the ointment” for Haman - just one problem that kept him from fully enjoying his evil schemes. What was it? It was Mordecai the Jew, who sat in the king’s gate. (This may indicate that he held some sort of government job.) But Mordecai would not bow to Haman as Haman passed through the gate. In that culture, bowing would have been an acknowledgement that Haman was more than a mere man, and that he was a sort of god. So Mordecai would not bow.

This made Haman so furious that he had a very high gallows constructed on which to hang Mordecai. In fact, he built the gallows and planned to ask the king if he could get rid of Mordecai the very next day, before the second banquet, so that he could thoroughly enjoy himself at the feast with the king and Queen Esther. So, very early the next morning, Haman came to the palace to ask the king for permission to eliminate Mordecai.

But God was working out a different scenario through all of Haman’s schemes.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. God delights to surprise the righteous with reward.

Esther 6 could be entitled “Sleepless in Susa!” It “just so happened” that King Xerxes couldn’t sleep well that night. (I wonder why?) So Xerxes did what a lot of people do when they have insomnia - they read a good book until they can drift off to sleep again. Xerxes called for some reading material - the official Persian records - to be brought and read to him. If anything will put you back to sleep, it’s reading official records!

Before Xerxes was able to drift back to sleep, he heard the official account of Mordecai’s good deed when he uncovered the plot to kill the king. Esther 2:21-23: *“In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king’s gate, two of the king’s eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.<sup>22</sup> So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai’s name.<sup>23</sup> And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.”*

At this point Xerxes asked what had been done to honor Mordecai for his loyalty, and the answer was “Nothing.” At that precise moment, Haman “just happened” to enter the royal courts, ready to make his request for permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows. When the king heard that Haman was just outside the court, he thought that Haman was just the man he was looking for to carry out his plans to reward Mordecai. So he brought Haman in.

When Haman entered, the king said to him, *“What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?”* Of course Haman thought to himself that **he** was the man the king wanted to honor, and so he came up with an elaborate

plan in which he would be paraded through the city on the king's horse, clothed with the king's royal robes, and applauded by all the people. "Good," said the king. "Do all this for Mordecai." What a surprise! What a reversal of position! (There's no doubt that God has a sense of humor!)

If we were acting out the book of Esther as a melodrama, everyone would cheer at this point. Mordecai, who did the right thing, was rewarded. Can you imagine Mordecai's surprise at this amazing turn of events?

We, too, will be surprised when the Lord rewards the righteous ones, both in this life and certainly at the judgment seat of Christ in the future. In Matthew 10:41 the Lord spoke about "a righteous man's reward." 1 Corinthians 2:9 says, "*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things with which God has prepared for those who love Him.*" God delights to surprise the righteous with reward.

## **2. God determines to surprise the wicked with humiliation.**

Verses 12-14: "*Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.* <sup>13</sup> *When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."* <sup>14</sup> *While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.*"

Haman's humiliation began when he had to honor Mordecai openly through all the streets of Susa, but little did he know that the worst was yet to come. But his wife and friends realized that the tables had been turned, and that it was only a matter of time before Haman would fall from his position of power and favor. A few short hours later, Haman would fully reap what he had sown.

This is true of anyone who practices evil, and all who exalt themselves through wicked ways. Proverbs 6:14-15 says, "*The wicked person devises evil continually. He sows discord. Therefore, his calamity shall come suddenly. Suddenly, he shall be broken without remedy.*"

Remember the rich man and the beggar in Luke 16? The evidence of the rich man's unbelief in this life was not that he was rich, but that he thought only of *himself* and of *his* pleasure and *his* selfish lifestyle. From God's perspective, that was wicked - and when the rich man died he experienced a surprising reversal of his fortunes.

In Ezekiel 33:11 God said that He "*takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their evil ways and live.*" However, if those who are wicked will not turn from their evil ways, God is determined to bring them down in humiliation. No one who practices wickedness and exalts himself through evil ways will get away with it. God determines to surprise the wicked with humiliation.

Once again in this chapter there is a prophetic foreshadowing of the future. Like Haman, all those who have plotted evil against the Jewish people - God's chosen people – have been brought down in defeat and humiliation. For example, what happened to Hitler's "glorious Third Reich" in Germany? Where is it now?

And in the end times God will humiliate the nations who plot against the believing remnant of Jews. Zechariah 12 says that all nations will be gathered together against Jerusalem, but God Himself will defeat those nations that attempt to defeat Jerusalem and His people! All those nations that plot against God and against His chosen people, and seek to exalt themselves by wicked ways, will be brought down in humiliation and defeat. God has determined to surprise the wicked with humiliation.

## **Practical Application**

### **If you're a Christian, don't use the word "coincidence!"**

In this chapter we've seen that Xerxes "just happened" to have insomnia. Xerxes "just happened" to call for the official Persian records, and he "just happened" to hear about Mordecai's good deed. Then Haman "just happened" to come into the court right at that time.

All of this was coincidence, right? Wrong! All through the book of Esther God was working behind the scenes to accomplish His purpose.

Nothing happens "by chance" or "by coincidence." Ephesians 1:11 says, "*God works all things after the counsel of His will.*" This was true in Esther's day, and it's true today. It is true in your life and in my life.

So - don't use the word "coincidence" if you're a Christian!