

Esther Chapter 6

Verses 1-3: "The book of records of the chronicles" was the source from which the king's honors list was drawn, and as a general rule, special services were promptly rewarded. Since Mordecai's good deed in saving the king's life had been overlooked something must be done and done quickly.

Esther 6:1 "On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king."

"The book": Five years (compare 2:16 with 3:7) had intervened since Mordecai's loyal, but as yet unrewarded, act (compare 2:23). At exactly the proper moment, God providentially intervened so that the king suffered insomnia, called for the book of records, read of Mordecai's unrewarded deeds 5 years past, and then desired to reward him (compare Dan. 6:18).

During a sleepless night, the king decided to use the time to review court business. The text here suggests there was an extended reading of "the book of records," and the passage about Mordecai was reached at daybreak, when Haman appeared in the outer court.

The prayers of those who had been fasting have been heard of God. This was the only explanation for the king to suddenly want to look at the book of records, because he could not sleep. The king had the historical record read to him.

Esther 6:2 "And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus."

Upon reading, and in which there was also a peculiar hand of Providence. Directing to the reading of that part of them in which the affair of Mordecai was registered.

"That Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the King Ahasuerus" (see Esther 2:21). And it was usual in such diaries to record the names of persons, who, by any actions, had deserved well of the king, that they might be rewarded as there was an opportunity for it. And such, in the Persian language, were called Orosangae, as Herodotus relates.

Mordecai had saved the life of the king, when his two chamberlains who kept his bedroom door, had plotted to kill him.

Esther 6:3 "And the king said, What honor and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him."

He judged it an action worthy of regard, and what ought to be rewarded, as it was the saving of his life. But had forgot whether any royal favor had been shown to the person for it.

"Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him": The lords of his bedchamber then in waiting.

"There is nothing done for him": Not on that account, nothing more than what he had": He had an office at court before, but was not advanced to anything higher on this account.

The king would certainly want to reward the man, Mordecai, who had saved his life. He found no record where that had been done and after asking the reader of the record about it, he said nothing had been done to reward him.

Esther 6:4 "And the king said, Who [is] in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him."

"Who is in court": The drama intensified as Haman arrived at just the wrong time and for just the wrong reason.

The timing of Haman's arrival at the palace is one of the story's wonderful ironies. The king had just been reminded of Mordecai's heroic deed and could not wait until morning to reward him. Haman could not wait until morning to get permission to kill him.

God has a sense of humor, as we will see in these next few verses. The intentions of Haman were to hang Mordecai, not to honor him. Haman was a friend of the king, and was in the palace at the time.

Esther 6:5 "And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in."

In the outward court; for into the inward court none might enter without being called, for which he was waiting.

"And the king said, let him come in": Into his bedchamber; and it was of God, no doubt, that Haman should be on the spot at this very time, when the king was of the mind to do honor to Mordecai, and by him.

The king brought Haman in for an entirely different reason than what Haman supposed.

Verses 6-7: Haman ironically defined the honor to be given to Mordecai at Haman's expense. To his potential wealth from the Jewish plunder, he thought public acclaim would be added.

Esther 6:6 "So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself?"

But was prevented from speaking with the king about the business he came with by the following speech of the king.

"What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" He mentions not the name of any man, that he might the more freely, and unbiasedly, and disinterestedly give his advice. Nor might the king know of any resentment of Haman to Mordecai.

"(Now Haman thought in his heart, to whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself?). Who had been advanced above all the princes and nobles of the realm, and was now in such high honor both with the king and queen, with whom he was to be at a banquet that day. And he might conclude, that by putting this question to him, he could have in view none but himself. Aben Ezra observes, as some from hence forth, that this book was written by the spirit of prophecy, because none could know the thoughts of the heart but God. But though he believes it to be written by the Holy Ghost, yet, as he observes, Haman might disclose this thought of his heart to his friends afterwards.

Haman was so self-centered that he never once thought that the man the king wanted to honor could be anyone, except himself.

Verses 7-10: Haman's response to the king was definitive, perhaps because he had frequently anticipated this moment. The "royal robe" was a sign of the king's special favor (1 Sam. 18:4), as was the "parade" on one of his decorated horses. So nothing could have been more distasteful to Haman than to publicly honor Mordecai in the way that he had hoped to be honored.

Esther 6:7 "And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honor,"

At once, being very prompt to suggest the honors he hoped to have done to himself.

"For the man whom the king delighteth to honor": Let the following things be done.

Esther 6:8 "Let the royal apparel be brought which the king [useth] to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:"

"Royal apparel ... crown royal": An honor which involved being treated as though the recipient were the king himself (8:15). This is reminiscent of Joseph in Egypt (Gen. 41:39-45). History affirms that horses were adorned with the royal crown.

Haman really went to the extreme in the blessings he told the king to bestow upon this man, because he believed he was the man himself. He told the king to dress him as a king and put the king's crown upon his head, as if he were king. You can see from this, that Haman really wanted to be king himself.

Esther 6:9 "And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man [withal] whom the king delighteth to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

“Street of the city”: Whereas Mordecai had been there the day before in sackcloth and ashes (4:1, 6), he arrived with royal honor.

Haman was so conceited, that he could see himself as king. For him to be led around town by a high official of the government, was the height of pride. He was about to fall to the lowest ebb of disgrace. The very man he wanted to hang was to be honored the way he wanted to be honored himself.

Esther 6:10 "Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, [and] take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken."

“Mordecai the Jew” (compare 8:7; 9:29, 31; 10:3). Why the king did not remember Haman’s edict against the Jews remains unknown.

Haman hated Mordecai. The king had waited too long already to honor Mordecai, so he told Haman to hurry. This proud Haman would have to lead the horse carrying his worst enemy.

Esther 6:11 "Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

The one out of the wardrobe, the other out of the stable, and the crown also no doubt, though no mention is made of it, since the king made no objection to it. And commanded that nothing fail of what had been spoken. But this was included in the pomp and state of the led horse: and brought him on horseback through the street of the city; the most grand and public part of it, thus arrayed, and in this state. “And proclaimed before him, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor” (see Esther 6:9).

Haman had no choice in this. He had to do it because the king had commanded him to. This was the most humiliating thing that could possibly happen to him. He gave no reply to the king for fear of being demoted.

Esther 6:12 "And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hastened to his house mourning, and having his head covered."

After such royal treatment, Mordecai simply “came again to the king’s gate”. His was a far different response from Haman’s upon being invited to Esther’s dinner party (in verse 5:12). Jesus sums up this matter (in Luke 14:11), when He states that people who exalt themselves will be humbled, but those who are humble will be exalted.

“Mourning”: Deservedly, Haman has inherited Mordecai’s distress (4:1-2). What a difference a day makes! His imagined honors had quickly turned to unimaginable humiliation.

“His head covered”: An extreme sign of shame (2 Sam. 15:30; Jer. 14:3-4).

He had no sympathy when Mordecai had been mourning, now it was his turn. He hung his head in shame and went home.

Esther 6:13 "And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every [thing] that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai [be] of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him."

“Thou hast begun to fall”: Neither divine prophecy (Exodus 17:14), or biblical history (1 Sam. 15:8-9) stood in Haman’s favor. Haman’s entourage seemed to have some knowledge of this biblical history.

His wife and his friends could see the hand of God in this. The wise men here are Magicians, or star gazers. They realized that Haman would not win this battle against the Jews. Mordecai was the friend of the king. If he was a Jew, the king would turn this edict back against Haman. He was doomed. Everyone who he thought would say something good to him, have said he would surely fall.

Esther 6:14 "And while they [were] yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared."

“Haman unto the banquet”: Like a lamb led to slaughter, Haman was escorted off to his just due.

This was the second banquet that Haman and the king had been invited to attend by the queen. These chamberlains were working for Esther, and they came for Haman. Esther or the king, were not aware of the embarrassment that had befallen Haman.

Esther Chapter 6 Questions

1. When the king could not sleep, what did he command to be done?
2. What does the author believe the reason for him not being able to sleep was?
3. What did he find in the records?
4. Mordecai had saved the life of the _____.
5. What question did the king ask his servants?
6. What was the answer to the question?

7. What makes the author believe that God has a sense of humor?
8. Who did the king ask about what honor should be paid to Mordecai?
9. Who did Haman think the king was trying to honor?
10. What was Haman's suggestion for the king to do, to honor the man?
11. What was Haman having the king to do, to this man that would make it appear that he was king?
12. Who had to lead Mordecai around town and honor him?
13. After Haman had led Mordecai through town what did he do?
14. Who did Haman tell of his embarrassing situation?
15. What was a Magician?
16. What did Haman's family and friends and the Magicians tell Haman would happen to him?
17. Who came to get Haman?
18. Why did they come?
19. _____ or the _____ are not aware of Haman's embarrassment.