

Esther 5-7 Commentary

Esther 3-4

Esther 8-10

Click to Enlarge Timeline
[Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
[Swindoll's Intro and Overview Chart](#)
[Van Dine's Analysis of Esther](#)
[MacArthur's Intro to Esther](#)

CHRONOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP OF EZRA-NEHEMIAH-ESTHER									
538-515 BC		483-473 BC		457 BC		13 Year Gap	444-425 BC		
Ezra 1-6		Book of Esther		Ezra 7-10			Book of Nehemiah		
First Return of Jews from Babylonian Exile		58 Year Gap		Second Return of Jews from Babylonian Exile			Third Return of Jews from Babylonian Exile		
ESTHER: THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD									
Esther 1 Es 1:1-22	Esther 2 Es 2:1-23	Esther 3 Es 3:1-15	Esther 4 Es 4:1-17	Esther 5 Es 5:1-14	Esther 6 Es 6:1-14	Esther 7 Es 7:1-10	Esther 8 Es 8:1-17	Esther 9 Es 9:1-32	Esther 10 Es 10:1-3
Esther's Exaltation		Haman's Cunning Plot		Haman's Humiliation			Mordecai's Exaltation		
Feast of Ashasuerus		Fast of Mordecai		Feast of Esther			Feast of Purim		
Exaltation		Persecution		Preservations			Commenoration		
Jewish Existence Threatened			Jews Spared						
Gentile Setting	Jewess Elevated	Threat to Jews	Influence of a Jewess				Deliverance of Jews		A Jew Exalted
Feast of Ahasuerus				Feast of Esther and Purim					
Location of Events: Persian									
10 Years (483-473BC)									
Timeline of Ezra-Nehemiah-Esther-See page 38 Timeline of Esther related to Ezra & Nehemiah - Parallel lines for Medo-Persian Kings & Daniel, Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi - see page 15									

Key Passages: Esther 4:14, 16, Esther 8:17, Esther 9:26, 31

Key Words: See list under "Precept Ministries Inductive Study on Esther"

The Book of Esther is unusual - God's Name is not mentioned once, yet God's "Hand" is clearly present and active throughout the book, to the extent that many see the book of Esther as a veritable "treatise" on the doctrine of Divine Providence (see separate study)

- [Purim Music Video - Purim with a beat. Give it a listen as you ponder "For such a time as this!"](#)
- Marty Goetz and Misha's song - [For Such A Time As This \(Esther's Song\)](#)

Esther 5:1 Now it came about on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace in front of the king's rooms, and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room, opposite the entrance to the palace.:

ESTHER'S RESOLVE PROVEN BY PERFORMANCE

As **Lawson** says "Esther was not one of those who resolve and promise well, but do not perform."

THOUGHT - Beloved, are you good to your word like Esther? Do you say you will do something (like pray for someone) and follow through on your promise? May God grant that our yes be yes and our no be no, for the sake of our good and His glory. Amen.

Sidlow Baxter writes...

That word "**providence**" comes from the Latin *provideo*, which means that I see a thing beforehand (*pro* = before; *video* = I see); so that the root meaning of **providence** is foresight. Inasmuch, however, as foresight always occasions activity in relation to that which is foreseen, providence comes to have the acquired meaning of activity arising from foresight resight. Strictly speaking, there is only One who has foresight, and He alone, therefore, is able to act on the basis of foreknowledge. Providence, then, in its one absolute sense, is the Divine foreknowledge and the Divine activity which arises there from; and such providence implies that God wields absolute power over all the works of His hands. It is this which we see demonstrated in the Book of Esther. The crisis about which the book is written is **providentially anticipated** and then **providentially overruled** just at the crucial moment. No miraculous intervention is resorted to. All the happenings recorded are the outworking of circumstances in their natural sequence.

Yet while there is no miracle recorded, the whole thing, in its ultimate meaning, is a mighty miracle - the mighty miracle whereby a sovereign Deity so manipulates all non-miraculous events as to bring about a predetermined outcome; and this miracle is all the more miraculous just because it achieves the predetermined outcome without the need for using miracles!

Truly, this mysterious reality which we call providence, this sovereign manipulation of all the ordinary, non-miraculous doings which make up the ordinary ongoing of human affairs, so as to bring about, by natural processes, those results which are Divinely predetermined, is the mightiest of all miracles; and it is this, we repeat, which is strikingly demonstrated in this Book of Esther. It is this which explains why the name of God does not occur in the Book of Esther. (Explore the Book)

Comment: The 1828 Webster's Dictionary defines **providence** - "In theology, the care and superintendence which God exercise over His creatures. He that acknowledges a creation and denies a providence, involves himself in a palpable contradiction; for the same power which caused a thing to exist is necessary to continue its existence. Some persons admit a *general providence*, but deny a *particular providence*, not considering that a *general providence* consists of *particulars*. A belief in *divine providence*, is a source of great consolation to good men. By *divine providence* is often understood God Himself."

Now it came about (came to pass) - This time phrase occurs 65 times in the NAS. It is like a marker of the providential workings of God in history (His story).

Now it came about (KJV = now it came to pass) - Ge 6:1; 8:13; 21:22; 22:1, 20; 26:32; 27:1, 30; 30:25; 34:25; 42:35; 48:1; Ex 2:11, 23; 4:24; 6:28; 12:29; Lev 9:1; Josh 1:1; 5:1, 13; 9:1; 10:1; 23:1; Jdg 1:1; 6:7; 9:42; 19:1; Ru 1:1; 1Sa 1:12; 18:1, 10; 20:35; 23:6; 28:1; 2Sa 1:1; 7:1; 13:23; 15:1, 7; 16:16; 21:18; 1Ki 6:1; 9:1; 13:20; 17:17; 21:1; 2Ki 6:24; 14:5; 18:1; 25:27; 1Chr 19:1; 20:4; 2Chr 8:1; 20:1; 21:19; 24:4; 25:3; Neh 4:1; Est 5:1; Isa 7:1; Jer 52:4, 31; Ezek 1:1; 11:13.

(**KJV** "now it came to pass" 24 times = Josh 10:1KJV; Ru 1:1KJV; 1Sa 14:1KJV; 2Sa 1:1KJV; 2Ki 18:1KJV; 1Chr 17:1KJV; 1Chr 19:1KJV; 2Chr 24:11KJV; 2Chr 25:3KJV; 2Chr 25:14KJV; Neh 6:1KJV; Neh 7:1KJV; Neh 13:3KJV; Esther 1:1KJV; Esther 3:4KJV; Esther 5:1KJV; Isa 36:1KJV; Jer 26:8KJV; Jer 36:16KJV; Jer 41:1KJV; Jer 41:13KJV; Ezek 1:1KJV; Lk 8:22KJV; Lk 10:38KJV)

McEwan has an interesting comment on "**now it came about**"...

These words call for special notice in a book which strikingly illustrates the providence of God both in regard to nations and individuals. **They remind us that there is nothing stationary--that what comes is moving on.** Seasons of trial and perplexity would be overwhelming if they had the character of fixedness. It is happily not so. As you have stood gazing on a mountain, bathed in sunlight, you may sometimes have observed a dark shadow creeping along the side of it, as though hastening to accomplish its mission, and quickly gliding away out of sight, leaving the landscape all the more beautiful because of your remembrance of it. So is it with what is painful and sad in providence. Events of this kind have come at intervals, but it was only to pass--not to abide--like the floating of little clouds between us and the sun, and when past, giving to human life, as to nature, a greater richness and variety. Biographies are but commentaries on these familiar words. Indeed, men themselves but come to pass. (Biblical Illustrator)

THOUGHT: Beloved, are you experiencing a season of suffering? May these words "now it came about" (came to pass - i.e., it will "pass!") remind you that suffering and affliction is momentary and for believers is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison (2Cor 4:17+, which means we need to depend on the Spirit to give us the eyes to see the eternal in the momentary (2Cor 4:18+).

On the third day - In Esther 4:16 they had fasted for **3 days** so this event would coincide with the third day. And remember that it has also been 33 days since King Xerxes has seen Esther. What might she look like after 3 days of no eating or drinking? While we are not to put on a gloomy face when we fast, we still might physically look less attractive then when we are fully fed. This was apparently of no concern to Esther. In Daniel God granted he and his 3 friends **favor and compassion** (Da 1:8-9) when they sought to not eat the king's royal food. Notice the commander's fear about their appearance, specifically that their faces might be "**looking more haggard.**" (Da 1:10). And notice what their appearance looked like after 10 days of eating vegetables and drinking water (Da 1:15). Why? God showed them **favor and compassion**.

Ryrie explains...

A part of a day was counted as a whole day, explaining how the fast could extend for three days, night and day (Esther 4:16), and yet terminate on the third day.

Put on her royal robes (Literally "put on royalty" robes is not in Hebrew) - What had she been doing? Fasting, but now that the fast was over she donned her best apparel. **John Brug** quips "After she had prepared herself spiritually with fasting....Esther prepared herself physically for her encounter with the king."

In a much less dangerous context, we see Ruth at Naomi's suggestion also preparing herself to meet her kinsman redeemer Boaz (Ru 3:1-4)

Paul Ferguson writes that Esther's approach Ahasuerus was particularly difficult and fraught with danger because...

- (1) Esther has to break the law in which the penalty for doing so is death.
- (2) Esther has to admit that she has been deceiving Ahasuerus about her ethnic background for five years.
- (3) Esther has to persuade the proud Ahasuerus to effectively reverse an irreversible law in so doing he will lose a huge amount of promised revenue.
- (4) Esther has to oppose and overcome one of the most cunning and powerful foes in Persia Haman.
- (5) Esther has to lead Ahasuerus down a path in which he will inevitably lose face.

In the book of Esther there are a number of places where the Septuagint has Greek text which does not correspond to the Hebrew Masoretic text. While I feel we must base our observations primarily on the Hebrew, it is nevertheless interesting to read the English translation (of the Greek)...

when she had ceased praying (**Ed:** Never stated in the Hebrew in Esther), that she put off her mean dress, and put on her glorious apparel. And being splendidly arrayed, and having called upon God the Overseer and Preserver of all things, she took her two maids, and she leaned upon one, as a delicate female, and the other followed bearing her train. And she was blooming in the perfection of her beauty; and her face was cheerful, and it were benevolent, but her heart was straitened for fear. And having passed through all the doors, she stood before the king: and he was sitting upon his royal throne, and he had put on all his glorious apparel,

covered all over with gold and precious stones, and was very terrible. And having raised his face resplendent with glory, he looked with intense anger: and the queen fell, and changed her colour as she fainted; and she bowed herself upon the head of the maid that went before her. But God changed the spirit of the king gentleness, and in intense feeling he sprang from off his throne, and took her into his arms, until she recovered: and he comforted her with peaceable words, and said to her, What is the matter, Esther? I am thy brother; be of good cheer, thou shalt not die, for our command is openly declared to thee, Draw nigh.

Comment: What are we to make of this commentary added by the scholars who translated the Hebrew text into Greek? Frankly, I do not know. It is interesting, even intriguing, but I think we must be cautious in arriving at any definitive conclusions based on the Septuagint. I suppose we will have to wait that day when we know fully just as we have fully known! (1Cor 13:11)

Ron Mattoon on the third day...

On the third day, Esther puts on her royal apparel and stands at the inner court of the king's house where the king was sitting upon his throne. The third day in the Bible is the day of resurrection life, blessing, and glory.

- On the third day of Creation, the submerged earth came out of the waters and brought forth vegetation.
- Hezekiah was sick unto death. He cried out to God in tears, begging for deliverance and healing. The Lord answered his prayer and on the third day he would go up to the house of the Lord (2 Kings 20:5).
- Jonah preached repentance to Nineveh after three days in the whale motel.

Resurrection, life, and blessing were about to come to pass for Israel because Esther was willing and ready to give herself as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). We have the hope of resurrection because Jesus Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins! ([Treasures from Esther](#))

Esther 5:2 When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favor in his sight; and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter which was in his hand. So Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter.:

Esther Before Ahasuerus

We must not miss how much conviction and courage Esther displayed in this situation. Would we be willing to stand for our convictions in the face of evil? Chuck Swindoll asks...

Do you teach your children to stand up for what they believe? Are you teaching your grandchildren how to be people of character, regardless? That is the way they will learn it. Let me probe one question deeper. Are you modeling authentic character? That leaves the message permanently etched in their minds. (Esther: a woman of strength and dignity)

She obtained favor in his sight ("received grace" Young's Literal) - Hebrew reads "she obtained grace in his eyes." **Favor** is shown repeatedly to Esther 2:9, 15, 17, 5:8, 7:3, 8:5 Esther also was the recipient of favor. Surely these multiple bestowals of favor reflect the providential hand of God working behind the scenes (seen).

John MacArthur on the phrase "she obtained favor"...

This actually means that Esther first found favor with the God of Israel (cf. Pr 21:1, cp Da 5:23).

The king extended to Esther the golden scepter - Esther 4:11 explains that entering the king's presence without having been summoned is tantamount to taking one's life in their hands. Is this not the **providence** of God working to preserve His chosen people from annihilation? If the king had chosen to not receive Esther, the Jews would have had to be delivered by some other means. But the king's heart was disposed toward Esther for as King Solomon writes us...

The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD. He turns it wherever He wishes. (Pr 21:1) ([Proverbs 21:1-2 Comments by J Vernon McGee](#), Proverbs 21:1 - F B Meyer; [Proverbs 21:1 - George Lawson](#)) (Read of God's sovereignty over a king in Ezra 6:22)

So Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter - Surely Esther's heart trembled as she waited for the uplifting of the scepter! How different is the believer's access to the Throne of Grace! "Perfect love casts out fear." (1Jn 4:18) Paul writes...

Therefore (term of conclusion based on Ro 4:25-note) having been justified (declared righteous, in right standing before God) by faith, we have (present tense = our continual possession is) peace (eirene) with God

through (the Mediatorial role of) our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through Whom (His Mediatorial role = 1Ti 2:5) also **we have obtained our introduction** (See word study on this great Greek word - **prosagoge**) **by faith into this grace in which we stand** (perfect tense = pictures this as our permanent privileged position!); and we exult in hope of the glory of God (Future glory when we are glorified and made like Christ - Titus 2:13-note, 1Pe 1:13-note). (Ro 5:1-2-note)

The writer of **Hebrews** repeatedly invites believers to draw near boldly (confidently, without fear of rejection like Esther must have entertained) to God's Throne...

Let us therefore (based on Jesus' sinlessness and His mediating Priesthood - Heb 4:15-note) **draw near with confidence** to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (Heb 4:16-note)

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such
None can ever ask too much.
-John Newton

Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh (**Ed**: The supernaturally Rent Veil in the Temple as Christ gave up his spirit on the day of crucifixion [Mt 27:45, 50, 51; Mk 15:38, Lk 23:45, cp Ep 2:13-14-note] was a clear sign of the dawn of the "new age", the inauguration of the New Covenant in His blood! [Lk 22:20, 1Co 11:25]), 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 **let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb 10:19-21-note, Heb 10:22-note)

THOUGHT - These truths beg several questions. Esther drew near to "intercede" for her people -- Are you availing yourself of the privileged opportunity to draw nigh to the Throne of Grace (not the "throne of law" to which Esther drew near)? Are you interceding for the lost...in your family, your school, your sphere of influence, etc? Are you begging God to send revival and a third great awakening to America before He irrevocably "withdraws His scepter of grace and mercy" so to speak? Esther was willing to risk her life declaring "If I perish, I perish." (Esther 4:16) Are you willing to lose your life, to die to self and to selfish interests, for the sake of the Gospel, the power of God to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek? (Mk 8:34, 35)

Esther 5:3 Then the king said to her, "What is *troubling* you, Queen Esther? And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you."

- **What:** Esther 5:6 Esther 7:2, 9:12 1Ki 2:20 3:5 Mt 20:20-22 Lk 18:41

THE RIGHT TIME
THE RIGHT PLACE
THE RIGHT RESULT

What is *troubling* you - **Troubling** is added by the NAS translators but is not in the original Hebrew text. The Hebrew literally reads "What to you?" The **ESV** accurately renders it "What is it, Queen Esther?"

What is your request - Notice that she deferred her real wish until Esther 7:2, 3.

Even to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you (cp Herod's similar offer Mk 6:23, see also frightened Belshazzar's offer to Daniel - Da 5:9, 16) - This statement is a **hyperbole** or exaggeration and was not intended to be interpreted literally, but was a rhetorical statement meant to create a strong impression. In this case it meant that the king would be generous.

Herodotus describes Ahasuerus making such an offer, but on a different occasion. I think commentators who take this literally like J Vernon McGee are wrong ("*To make her feel at ease, he hands her a blank check and invites her to fill in the amount*" - McGee)

Guzik rightly observes that...

Esther showed tact by not blurting out her ultimate request right away. She wanted to first win the king's

confidence in her - and she wanted Haman at the banquet to ultimately expose his wickedness.

John Brug observes that...

Xerxes' promise reminds us of one made by King Herod Antipas to a dancing girl. Herod also promised, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom" (Mark 6:23). What that girl asked for—and got—was the head of John the Baptist on a platter!

The historian Herodotus records another occasion on which Xerxes made a rash promise to a young woman whom he desired. Herodotus characterizes Xerxes as a rash, impetuous man with a roving eye, who was easily swayed by feminine beauty. The Lord used even the flaws of Xerxes' character to set up the situation in which God would provide deliverance for his people. (The People's Bible)

Esther 5:4 Esther said, "If it pleases the king, may the king and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared for him.":

The banquet that I have prepared - This is banquet #1 (Esther 5:4-8) which would be followed by banquet #2 (Esther 6:14-7:1) between which God would providentially interject the events of Esther 6:1-2ff! God is behind the scenes and controls the scenes He is behind, including every act, every scene, every moment of our lives! If you truly believe this (for it is true), it will be a source of great comfort amid the variegated slings and arrows that fly in each of our lives, many times when we least expect them. It is then that the great truth that the Great God is in control of these slings and arrows that our heart can rest and be at peace in Him. Hallelujah!

And Haman - She is setting him up for his climatic calamity!

Sidlow Baxter notes that...

As a matter of fact the name of God does occur in this Book of Esther, in a most remarkable way. The name "Jehovah" is secretly hidden four times in an acrostic form, and the name Ehyeh ("I am that I am") once. In several ancient manuscripts the acrostic consonants which represent the name are written larger, to make them stand out, as though we might write it in English thus - **JeHoVaH**. There are no other acrostics in the book, so that the intentionalness of these five is clear. The five places where the acrostics occur are Esther 1:20; 5:4,13; 7:7,5 (Explore the Book)

Comment: The significance of this observation is unclear and since I don't read Hebrew, I cannot comment on the veracity (although it mentioned by other commentaries). In short, this information is included only for completeness, but in my opinion does not add to the profundity of the divine providence in a narrative that otherwise has no clear mention of Jehovah.

Esther 5:5 Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly that we may do as Esther desires." So the king and Haman came to the banquet which Esther had prepared.:

QUEEN ESTHER'S FIRST BANQUET

Quickly (04116) (**mahar**) means to hasten or make haste. It is interesting that a proverb uses this same word (mahar) to describe evil men like Haman as those whose "feet run to evil, and they **hasten** to shed blood." (Pr 1:16) This Hebrew word is also used in God's list of seven things He hates "A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run **rapidly** to evil." (Pr 6:18)

King Ashasuerus uses the same word in Esther 6:10 calling on Haman to do **quickly** all that he had recommended for the man whom the king would honor.

Esther 5:6 As they drank their wine at the banquet, the king said to Esther, "What is your petition, for it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done.":

As they ate and drank - The king, queen and Haman. How this must have bolstered his ego as if it needed any inflating!

This is the king's second query to Esther regarding her **petition** and **request** and his offer of up "to half of the kingdom" which would encourage her that increase her assurance that the king would grant her request.

Ahasuerus knew Esther did not risk her life for a dinner date.

Henry Morris comments...

With such a carte blanche promise from the king, it seems surprising that Esther did not immediately make the appeal for her people, instead of requesting a second banquet. Whether or not she temporarily lost her courage, **the delay was providential** (Ed: In other words, it was not an "accident" but God was in the details!) for it was on the sleepless night in between that Ahasuerus learned of Mordecai's earlier report to Esther which had saved the king's life (Esther 2:21-23; 6:1,2).

Esther 5:7 So Esther replied, "My petition and my request is::

Warren Wiersbe sees three evidences of God's providence in this section...

At the banquet, we see three more 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. "To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the reply of the tongue" (Pr 16:1NIV). "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails" (Pr 19:21NIV). 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. (Be committed. An Old Testament study. Ruth and Esther)

Spurgeon comments on Esther's failure to ask the King at the first banquet...

Being told to ask what she pleases, she invites the king to come to a banquet, and bring Haman with him **He comes, and for the second time invites her to ask what she wills to the half of his kingdom.** Why, when the king was in so kind a spirit, did not Esther speak? He was charmed with her beauty, and his royal word was given to deny her nothing, why not speak out? But no, she merely asks that he and Haman will come to another banquet of wine to-morrow.

O, daughter of Abraham (Esther), what an opportunity hast thou lost! Wherefore didst thou not plead for thy people? Their very existence hangs upon thy entreaty, and the king has said, "What wilt thou?" and yet thou art backward! Was it timidity? It is possible. Did she think that Haman stood too high in the king's favor for her to prevail? It would be hard to say. Some of us are very unaccountable, but on that woman's unaccountable silence far more was hanging than appears at first sight. Doubtless she longed to bring out her secret, but the words came not.

God was in it; it was not the right time to speak, and therefore she was led to put off her disclosure (Ed: I think Spurgeon is "spot on" -- Compare Pr 16:9) I dare say she regretted it, and wondered when she should be able to come to the point, but the Lord knew best. After that banquet Haman went out joyfully at the palace gate, but being mortified beyond measure by Mordecai's unbending posture, he called for his wife and his friends, and told them that his riches and honors availed him nothing so long as Mordecai, the Jew, sat in the king's gate. They might have told him, "You will destroy Mordecai and all his people in a few months, and the man is already fretting himself over the decree; let him live, and be you content to watch his miseries and

gloat over his despair!" **But no, they counsel speedy revenge. Let Mordecai be hanged on a gibbet (gallows) on the top of the house, and let the gallows be set up at once, and let Haman early in the morning ask for the Jew's life, and let his insolence be punished. Go, call the workmen, and let the gallows be set up at a great height that very night.**

It seemed a small matter that Haman should be so enraged just at that hour, but it was a very important item in the whole transaction, for had he not been so hasty he would not have gone so early in the morning to the palace, and would not have been at hand when the king said, "Who is in the court?" (**Ed**: God's Providence!) (A Good Start: A Book for Young Men and Women)

Esther 5:8 if I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and do what I request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king says.":

QUEEN ESTHER REQUESTS A SECOND BANQUET

If I have found favor in the sight of the king and if it pleases the king - Favor is the Greek word **charis** or **grace** which is unmerited favor. Esther is very careful and diplomatic with King Xerxes. Yes, she has been allowed to touch the golden scepter, but she knows that the king is still potentially volatile.

Come to the banquet which I will prepare for them - A second banquet. In the providence of God, the events of Esther 6 resulting in Mordecai's being honored by the King occur before Esther's second banquet.

Why does Esther put off her request until the second banquet? While we cannot be absolutely dogmatic there are some reasonable considerations. (1) God is behind the scenes controlling the scenes He is behind - there are other events God has planned that will influence the king's response to Esther's request (See Esther 6). (2) Haman is the second most powerful person in the world at that time. (3) This revelation will strike a serious blow at King Xerxes' pride for he will realize that Haman has deceived him and used him which makes the king look foolish. So the timing has to be "perfect" for Esther to make a request that directly challenges the powerful Haman.

As **Solomon** writes...

**The mind of man plans his way,
But the LORD directs his steps.**

(Proverbs 16:9)

[\(William Arnot on Pr 16:9 Providence\)](#)

Criswell Comments: This is a magnificent expression of the sovereignty of God, whereby Yahweh 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 (e.g., the brothers of Joseph in Gen. 37:26-28; 45:5) is an awesome expression of God's providence.

Esther 5:9 Then Haman went out that day glad and pleased of heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate and that he did not stand up or tremble before him, Haman was filled with anger against Mordecai.:

Glad and pleased of heart - Haman was like "The famous actor John Barrymore (who) said, *"One of my chief regrets during my years in the theater is that I couldn't sit in the audience and watch me."* (Wiersbe)

The **proverbs** warns us that...

**A man's pride will bring him low,
But a humble spirit will obtain honor.**

(Pr 29:23)

[\(Arnot's discussion of Humility Before Honor\)](#)

He did not stand up or tremble before him (this clause is not found in the Septuagint) - In Esther 3:4-5 Mordecai would not bow, but now he won't even **stand up**! Think about this for a moment - Haman is in essence the prime minister, second in command of the mightiest country in the world. And Haman refuses to stand. When a judge enters the court, all stand, as a measure of respect. Mordecai's message to Haman is clear -- "I have no respect for you!"

Haman was filled with anger (rage, wrath) - His anger controlled him. The Lxx uses the word thumoo which means to be provoked to anger. The root word thumos speaks of agitated, vehement anger that rushes out unrestrained.

Guzik comments...

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 (Ephesians 1:6), accepted before God because of who we are in Jesus.

Ferguson writes

A bigger man would have ignored it, but a man's size is seen by the significance of the things that irritate him. As one writer put it

Haman couldn't stand the thought of this one man's refusal to obey him. Like a bubble, the more an ego swells the more fragile it becomes. By this point, Haman's ego was so inflated and fragile that Mordecai's action drowned out the applause of the crowd. Those who live like Haman, in deliberate pursuit of self-importance, will live perpetually on Haman's emotional roller coaster. Soaring high when honored, bottoming out when not, Haman and all those like him will forever be enslaved to the whims of others. They can never have the security of joy and peace that Jesus promises us in His kingdom.

Remember that what fills your heart and mind will control your attitudes, your actions and especially your tongue.

Esther 5:10 Haman controlled himself, however, went to his house and sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh.:

Haman controlled himself (cp Esther 3:6) - Did Haman refrain himself from killing Mordecai on the spot? That is possible but clearly he is still filled with anger as his subsequent actions attest (cp Esther 5:13) I think **Guzik** is correct when he writes that...

This is a remarkable evidence of the hand of God. God would not allow the fury of Haman to take action until all the proper pieces were set in place to ultimately defeat his plan.

Controlled (0662)(**'apaq**) means to restrain oneself, to hold back, to exhibit self-control (Ge 43:31, 45:1 - both describing Joseph's self control). It is interesting that this word is used to describe the Lord's holding Himself back! (Isaiah 42:14, Isa 63:15, Isa 64:12)

Davis writes that...

The Scripture notes that Haman "restrained himself" (wayyit'appaq) rather than let his own anger toward Mordecai get the best of him. The use of this verb in Scripture generally suggests a sense of struggle, an overcoming of what might naturally be expected to happen in a particular situation. Cassel indicates that this term may even convey the idea of wrestling with something, in this case, oneself.²⁰ Haman thus finds his emotions more difficult to control here than he did in 3:6. This increased difficulty may account for Haman's readiness to act immediately (5:14) to eliminate his problem, whereas previously (3:6, 7, 12) he had been willing to delay the initiation of his revenge. (Ruth & Esther: God behind the Seen)

Esther 5:11 Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, and the number of his sons, and every instance where the king had magnified him and how he had promoted him above the princes and servants of the king.:

- **Glory of his riches** - Esther 1:4 Ge 31:1 Job 31:24,25 Ps 49:6,16,17 Isa 10:8 Jer 9:23,24 Da 4:30 Mk 10:24 Lk 12:19,20 1Ti 6:17
- **His sons** - Esther 9:7-10,12,13 Job 27:14,15 Ho 9:13,14
- **Promoted** - Esther 3:1)

His - Note the repetition of masculine pronouns in Esther 5:10-11. Haman is like the rich man in the parable whose favorite word was "I" (Lk 12:16-21)!

Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches - This is always a dangerous "move" to make in the eyes of the Almighty Who alone is glorious and Who is jealous for His Name. Haman's pride is bursting at the seams so to speak! He should have read the Scriptures...

Pride goes before destruction (ruin, affliction), **and a haughty** (literally something tall, figuratively here and in Ps 10:4 = explains the root of foolish pride = no fear of God!, Jer 48:29) spirit before stumbling (a fall, trip on something ~ tripping over one's self exaltation, sense of self worth and falling, experiencing calamity). (Pr 16:18 - see William Arnot's exposition of [Proverbs 16:18](#), Joseph Parker on [Proverbs 16:18 Pride](#)) (See also 1Cor 10:12, Gal 6:3)

William Barclay commented - Pride is the ground in which all the other sins grow, and the parent from which all the other sins come.

Realistically the pride of man is utterly foolish for as Puritan William Jenkyn said, "Our father was Adam, our grandfather dust, and our great-grandfather—nothing."

Warren Wiersbe - Someone has said that pride is the only known disease that makes everybody sick except the person who has it. Unless cured, pride is a sickness unto death.

His sons - Ten sons (Esther 9:13)

Esther 5:12 Haman also said, "Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king.:"

- **Tomorrow** - Job 8:12,13 20:5-8 Ps 37:35,36 Pr 7:22,23 27:1 Lk 21:34,35 1Th 5:3

Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet- Haman is confident he is in good graces with the king and queen.

Paul Ferguson writes that...

The fact that Haman was invited to this private banquet fed his pride and confidence. To his mind both the king and queen regarded him higher than the rest. Seemingly he was now set for life. Other than the king and servants, it was unusual for any man to be in the presence of the queen. What Haman does not know is that this banquet will be the means of his death. One of life's paradoxes is that the way up is often the way down. He will learn the truth of Psalm 7 concerning the wicked man

He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, And has fallen into the hole which he made. His mischief will return upon his own head, And his violence will descend upon his own pate. (Psalm 7:15-16-[note](#))

Haman was stepping ever closer to the edge of the precipice for **Solomon** writes...

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered. (Pr 28:26, read Jesus' parable of the rich man = Lk 12:16-21)

As **Warren Wiersbe** puts it...

Haman was confident that he was set for life, when in reality he was just a few hours away from death.

Two other men come to mind whose false confidence led to their death: King Belshazzar and Judas Iscariot. King Belshazzar held a great feast during which he blasphemed the God of Israel; and by sending handwriting on the wall, God announced his doom. That very night Babylon was conquered and Belshazzar was slain (Da 5).

Judas, an apostle of the Lord, was not a true believer (John 6:70-71) but a traitor and a thief (Jn 12:6). In the Upper Room, he sat in the place of honor at the table, and none of the other disciples knew what was in his heart. But Jesus knew what Judas was and what Judas would do, and He hid this knowledge from the disciples. In fact, Jesus even washed Judas' feet! Confident that he had everything under control, Judas betrayed Jesus to the enemy and ended up committing suicide (Mt 27:1-10).

The only safe place to put your confidence is in the Lord (Ibid) **AMEN!**

Esther 5:13 "Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

HAMAN GOES FROM "WALKING ON AIR" TO BEING BROUGHT DOWN TO EARTH!

NLT - Then he added, "But all this is meaningless as long as I see Mordecai the Jew just sitting there at the palace gate."

Yet - term of contrast (remember that terms of contrast like but, yet always signal a "change of direction" so be sure and examine the context for added insight on the passage) contrasts all the world has to offer with Haman's anger against Mordecai. The point is clearly that the things of this world cannot satisfy our soul.

Guzik...

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." (Clarke)

Wiersbe sees Haman's heart attitude as harboring **malice** toward Mordecai...

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. **Malice** has a good memory for hurts and a bad memory for kindnesses. In 1Corinthians 5:8, Paul compared **malice** to yeast, because, like yeast, **malice** begins very small but gradually grows and finally permeates the whole of life. **Malice** in the Christian's heart grieves the Holy Spirit and must be put out of our lives (Eph 4:30–32; Col 3:8). The insidious thing about **malice** is that it has to act; eventually it must express itself. But when you shoot at your enemy, beware! For the ammunition usually ricochets off the target and comes back to wound the shooter! If a person wants to self-destruct, the fastest way to do it is to be like Haman and cultivate a malicious spirit.

All of this does not satisfy me (For "satisfy" Lxx has **aresko** = to please, give pleasure) - Haman cannot even enjoy his time of boasting and glorying in his presumed prestige and position! Haman's deep discontent even in face of worldly prestige and wealth (at least that is what he thought) reminds us of Solomon's wise words (learned from his experience of "having it all!")...

Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity....I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind. (Eccl 1:2, 14)

Paul Ferguson writes that...

This is a profound illustration of the dissatisfaction of the things of this world. There is always a fly in the ointment. We may think such people have everything from our outward observation, but they are often the most miserable people on the earth. One of our great problems is we weigh things with the wrong scales.

Treasury of Scripture Knowledge note...

Pride will ever render its possessor unhappy. Haman, though possessed of immense riches, glory, and honour, and the prime favorite of his king, is wretched, because he could not have the homage of that man whom his heart even despised! Oh, how distressing are the inquietudes of pride and vanity.

Mordecai the Jew - First time this specific phrase is encountered (6x - Esther 5:13, 6:10, 8:7, 9:29, 9:31, 10:3)

Sitting at the king's gate - How did the king know? It does not say. The implication is that the king knew about Mordecai and/or that Mordecai had some official capacity in Xerxes' administration. Alternatively the king's chronicles could have recorded this detail (Esther 2:21-23).

Esther 5:14 Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows fifty cubits high made and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it; then go joyfully with the king to the banquet." And the advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made.:

BEWARE OF ADVICE FROM UNGODLY FRIENDS & WIFE

His wife - Ferguson observes that "This shows the dangers of having ungodly friends and an ungodly wife e.g. Solomon's wives, Jezebel, Job's wife. Two wives are working at either end of this drama Esther and Zeresh. Only one of them has God on her side."

He had the gallows made - Little did Haman know, he was making the very gallows on which he would hang, preparing his own execution!

Gallows (cp Esther 2:23) - This was not like we normally picture gallows, but was a stake on which the victim would be impaled unto death!

Adam Clarke describes the "hanging"...

A pointed stake is set upright in the ground, and the culprit is taken, placed on the sharp point, and then pulled down by his legs till the stake that went in at the fundament passes up through the body and comes out through the neck. A most dreadful species of punishment, in which revenge and cruelty may glut the utmost of their malice. The culprit lives a considerable time in excruciating agonies.

The **ESV Study Bible** notes that this is "a dangerous development. Events may be moving too swiftly for Mordecai to be saved."

Fifty cubits high - This is about 75 feet high which equates with a building 8 stories high! Woe! How they could have built this structure so quickly is amazing. Perhaps it was a building that already existed on top of which was placed a stake to impale Mordecai. A towering gallows matches Haman's "towering" rage!

In the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it - Here is the most important line - "ask the king" which prepares us for God's moving the heart of the king like channels of water in Esther 6:1ff. This new development helps us understand the providential importance of Esther's delay in offering her petition to the king, because after the events described in Esther 6:1-10, it would obviously be impossible for Haman to get permission to kill Mordecai!

In First Kings, King Ahab became sullen (1Ki 21:5) because Naboth would not sell him his vineyard (1Ki 21:6). Ahab's wife Jezebel gave him advice similar to Haman's wife -- to kill the one who was making them discontent and sullen. (1Ki 21:8-16).

Guzik...

The same irrational, violent hatred that made Haman want to see Mordecai hang to his death is the same irrational, violent hatred that made man want to hang Jesus on a cross.

God's Word in proverbs speaks about evil, conniving men like Haman...

For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, And He watches all his paths. 22 His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin. 23 He will die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he will go astray. (Pr 5:21-23)

Ferguson comments...

Never had things looked so dark for the children of God outwardly. Suspense is heightened, as the curtain closes upon yet another scene. Will evil prevail? However, the greater the evil the greater will be the effect of the deliverance. The greater glory also will be reflected on God. The message from Esther is that the plan of God always succeeds, even without thunder and lightning. The seemingly invisible God is always invincible. If God be for us then no one can stand against us. John Newton said well so long ago in his hymn,

Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know.

Esther 6:1 During that night the king could not sleep so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.:

DIVINELY INDUCED

INSOMNIA

During that night - Which night? The same night that Haman was having a gallows constructed for Mordecai's death! This was 5 years after Mordecai had uncovered the plot to kill the king (compare Esther 2:16 and Esther 3:7) in Esther 2:21-23.

The king could not sleep - Literally the Hebrew reads "the king's sleep fled away." This is the night before Esther's banquet (Esther 5:8). So here we see once again God overruling and bringing about a remarkable instance of the veiled providential control of God over circumstances of human history. From a human standpoint, on a king's insomnia lay the fate of the Jewish race, the coming of the Redeemer, and the entire work of redemption of mankind. And yet the outcome was never in doubt, for God was in control of the details, making the most trivial of events work together for Haman's defeat and Israel's preservation.

Spurgeon quipped that...

Ahasuerus is master of one hundred and twenty and seven provinces, but not master of ten minutes' sleep.

SLEEPLESS IN SUSANNA

Why couldn't King Ahasuerus sleep? Clearly the king's somnolence represents God's hand of providence interweaving events in such a way as to bring recognition to Mordecai thus saving his life from Haman's murderous plot.

God uses the mundane to bring about the miraculous. In Daniel 2 God disturbed King Nebuchadnezzar's sleep with a "supernatural nightmare" which proved to be a summary not only of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom but of all subsequent world history (focusing on the human kingdoms of the world that interacted significantly with Israel) until the Second Coming of the Messiah....

Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. (Da 2:1)

Comment: Similarly, in the story of Joseph we find that his personal fortunes were reversed because of the pharaoh's dreams (Ge 41:1-45), dreams that were clearly related to the providential hand of God moving the heart of the king like channels of water (Pr 21:1).

So - A term of conclusion- How important is this conclusion to mankind?

He gave an order to bring the book of records - Such a seemingly small detail. Instead of counting sheep, the king requests the book of records which you suggest they might be quite boring. The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge however has this note on the records...

As chronicles were composed among the Persians, a more instructive and interesting work could not be brought before the king; because they were all written in verse, and were generally the work of the most eminent poets of the empire.

Book of records - The Hebrew literally reads "the book of remembrances, the words/matters of the days." This book was a written record of facts and events that were important to the kingdom of Persia (Esther 2:23; cf. Ezra 4:15 Mal 3:16). It is futile to speculate on the cause of the king's sleeplessness, but we know for certain that God was behind it. The entire chapter shows how a series of seemingly trivial circumstances fit together to overrule the evil intentions of Haman.

Guzik...

And it was found written: This was a remarkable example of Providence in action. King Ahasuerus can not sleep, and he can choose 20 different diversions to fill his sleepless night - but he commands that a book be brought to him and read. The one commanded to bring the book could have brought any one book of the records of the chronicles, but he brought one particular book. The book could be opened to any page, but it was opened to the exact page telling the story of Mordecai and how he saved the King from assassination. God guided every step along the way.

Spurgeon asks...

What caused the monarch's restlessness? Why did it happen on that night of all others? Ahasuerus is master of one hundred and twenty and seven provinces, but not master of ten minutes' sleep. What shall he do? Shall he call for soothing instruments of music, or beguile the hours with a tale that is told, or with a merry ballad of the minstrel? No, he calls for a book. Who would have thought that this luxurious prince must listen to a reader at dead of night. "Bring a book?" What book? A volume perfumed with roses, musical with songs, sweet as the notes of the nightingale? "**No, bring the chronicles of the empire.**" Dull reading, that! But there

are one hundred and twenty seven provinces,—which volume shall the page bring from the recorder's shelves? He chose the record of Shushan (Susa) the royal city. That is the centre of the empire, and its record is lengthy, in which section shall the reader make a beginning? He may begin where he pleases, but ere he closes the book the story of the discovery of a conspiracy by Mordecai has been read in the king's hearing. **Was not this a singular accident? Singular if you like, but no accident. Out of ten thousand other records the reader pitches upon that one of all others.** The Jews tell us that he began at another place, but that the book closed and fell open at the chapter upon Mordecai (**Ed: There is no evidence of this from the Scripture. It embellishes the story, which really needs no embellishment!**). Be that as it may, this is certain, that the Lord knew where the record was, and guided the reader to the right page. Speaking after the manner of men, there were a million "chances" against one that the king of Persia should, in the dead of the night, be reading the chronicle of his own kingdom, and that he should light upon this particular part of it. **But that was not all, the king is interested, he had desired to go to sleep, but that wish is gone, and he is in haste to act.** He says, "This man Mordecai has done me good service, has he been rewarded?" "No." Then cries the impulsive monarch, "He shall be rewarded at once. Who is in the court?" It was the most unlikely thing in the world for the luxurious Ahasuerus to be in haste to do justice, for he had done injustice thousands of times without remorse, and chiefly on that day when he wantonly signed the death warrant of that very Mordecai and his people. For once, the king is intent on being just, and at the door stands Haman,—but you know the rest of the story, and how he had to lead Mordecai in state through the streets.

It seems a very small matter whether you or I shall sleep to-night, or toss restlessly on our beds, but God will be in our rest or in our wakefulness; we know not what His purpose may be, but His hand will be in it, neither doth any man sleep or wake but according to the decree of the Lord.

Daniel records King Darius' failure to sleep because of anxiety over Daniel's almost certain death in the lion's den...

Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him. (Da 6:8)

Sidlow Baxter sums up God's providence in chapters 1-5...

Whatever else we may see in Esther 1-5, we miss their supreme significance if we fail to see in them a most remarkable providential predisposing of all contributory factors in anticipation of a foreseen crisis. (**Ed:** If you are like me, you probably need to read that statement again). The feast of Ahasuerus to his lords and satraps, his inebriate (drunken) jollity (cheerful, cp Est 1:10) and indecent request, Vashti's valorous refusal and her dethronement - these things seemed far from having any connection whatever with the as-yet-undreamed-of peril to the Jews which was to head up through the anti-Jewish hatred of Haman, who at this time had not even risen to public eminence. Yet these things were being so overruled as to subserve the unsuspected Divine preparation for that which was to come later. Indeed, the crisis had been anticipated years before ever Ahasuerus's feast-making took place, in the bestowment of an extraordinary feminine beauty upon Mordecai's cousin; and now, as a result of the vacancy created by Vashti's deposal, the matchless Esther is elected to be queen, so that she is in the place of influence when the critical moment comes, to avert the seemingly inescapable disaster, and to turn the tables on Israel's wicked enemies.

Oh, this wonderful fore-planning of providence! It is here brought vividly out to view so that through our seeing it thus clearly demonstrated in this one notable episode we may believe in the fact of its operation through all the vicissitudes of our life, and through all the history of the human race, and especially in those trying times when rampant evil seems to have snatched the reins of government from higher control. (Explore the Book)

Esther 6:2 It was found written what Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who were doorkeepers, that they had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.:

It was found written what Mordecai had reported - No accident here! Notice he is not referred to as Mordecai the Jew in this or the next passage.

Have you ever felt like the good you have done has gone unrecognized just as Mordecai's had seemingly been ignored for almost 5 years? Then be encouraged by the words to persecuted saints in the book of Hebrews...

For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and still ministering to the saints. (Hebrews 6:10-note)

GOD'S MULTICOLORED

PROVIDENCE

Esther 6:1-2

(1) **King's Insomnia** - God was awake (Ps 121:3-4 [note](#)) and wanted Ashasuerus awake so He could "speak" to him.

(2) **King's Choice** - Not concubines from the harem or court musicians but a book!

(3) **King's Choice of the Specific Book** - The king's chronicles were undoubtedly only one of many possible choices.

Wiersbe comments: Can God direct in the books that people pick up and read? Yes, He can. Late in February 1916, a British student bought a book at a used-book stall in a railway station. He had looked at that book and rejected it at least a dozen times before, but that day he purchased it. It was Phantastes by George MacDonald, and the reading of that book eventually led to that young man's conversion. Who was he? **C. S. Lewis**, perhaps the greatest and most popular apologist for the Christian faith of the middle-twentieth century. He wrote to a friend that he had picked up the book "by hazard," but I believe God had directed his choice. God can even direct what we read in a book.

A young man in North Africa sought peace, first in sensual pleasures and then in philosophy, but only became more miserable. One day he heard a neighbor child playing a game and saying, "**Take it and read! Take it and read!**" The young man immediately picked up the Scriptures and "happened" to open to Romans 13:13-14; and those verses brought him to faith in Christ. We know that young man today as **Augustine**, Bishop of Hippo, and author of numerous Christian classics. (Be Committed)

(4) **The King's reader turned to the specific page** which recorded Mordecai's role in saving the king's life about 5 years earlier.

(5) **The King's delay in honoring Mordecai** - "God's delays are not denials!" Even the King's question in Esther 6:3 emphasizes that it was the practice to bestow honor for favors done on the king's behalf! And yet it had not occurred in Mordecai's case. What if Mordecai had already been rewarded 5 years earlier? It is distinctly unusual that Mordecai had not been rewarded five years earlier as was the usual practice in among the Persians as it was a way to maintain loyalty. This reminds us of **Joseph's** life when after befriending the Pharaoh's butler, he assumed he would be released from prison, but instead had to wait 2 more years for God's perfect timing (Ge 40:23, Ge 41:1, 9-25). In Exodus we see that God had ordained a specific day for the Jews to leave Egypt (Ex 12:40-42). **David** had come to understand God's providential control of the days of our life writing...

My times are in Your hand;

Deliver me from the hand of my enemies
and from those who persecute me.

(Ps 31:15, see context Ps 31:1-14 [note](#))

Spurgeon comments: The sovereign Arbiter of destiny holds in His own power all the issues of our life; we are not waifs and strays upon the ocean of fate, but are steered by infinite wisdom towards our desired haven.

Providence is a soft pillow for anxious heads, an anodyne (comfort) for care, a grave for despair. **Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.** It is lawful to desire escape from persecution if it be the Lord's will; and when this may not be granted us in the form which we desire, sustaining grace will give us deliverance in another form, by enabling us to laugh to scorn all the fury of the foe.

Wiersbe comments: In writing "my times are in Your hand," David teaches us several lessons. First, time is important. If you waste time, you're wasting eternity. If you waste time, you're wasting opportunity. All I can give to God is my body, my ability and my time. And if I don't give Him my time, He can't use my body or my ability. Time is valuable--don't waste it. Invest it.

Second, David reminds us how important surrender is. Who controls the available time we have when we're not working or doing the things that must be done to maintain life--that unregistered, undirected time? If we surrender to the Lord, He can control that time. I learned many years ago to turn my entire day over to Him at the beginning of every day. If I have interruptions, He's in control. If my plans are changed, He's in control.

Third, this leads to God's blessings for us. When our times are in His hand, we can trust Him; He has blessings especially prepared for us. "Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You"

(Psalm 31:19). God has some wonderful blessings prepared for you today. But you are not going to enjoy them unless you truly say, "Lord, my times are in Your hand."

Time is perhaps your most basic resource. How you use God's gift of time has a profound effect not only on your life but on the lives of others. It's important that you surrender your time to His care. When you give God your time, you surrender it to His control. He will bless you for it ([Prayer, Praise and Promises](#))

From Hints for Pastors regarding Ps 31:15...

1. The character of the earthly experience of the saints, "My times," that is, the changes I shall pass through, etc.
2. The advantage of this variety.
 - a. Changes reveal the various aspects of the Christian character.
 - b. Changes strengthen the Christian character.
 - c. Changes lead us to admire an unchanging God.
3. Comfort for all seasons.
 - a. This implies the changes of life are subject to the divine control.
 - b. That God will support his people under them.
 - c. And, consequently, they shall result in our being abundantly profited.
4. The deportment which should characterize us. Courageous devotion to God in times of persecution; resignation and contentment in times of poverty and suffering; zeal and hope in times of labour.

(6) Haman just happens to enter the outer court - Haman was there to seek permission to hang Mordecai, not knowing he would soon be forced to honor him.

Illustration of Providence - In 1937 Walt Disney released the first full-length animated movie: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Producing an animated movie was a gargantuan task. Disney artists drew over one million pictures. Each picture flashed onto the screen for a mere one-twenty-fourth of a second. As we watch the movie run at regular speed, it seems so simple. We have no idea all that goes into it. Our lives are like that movie. God puts infinite thought, skill, and careful attention into every detail. Yet as our lives run at "regular speed," we have no idea how much God's providence fills every single second. (750 engaging illustrations for preachers, teachers & writers)

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) states

God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

Benjamin Franklin...

The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of man; and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?

Solomon writes that...

**There is no wisdom and no understanding
And no counsel against the LORD.
(Pr 21:30).**

Esther 6:3 The king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" Then the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him.":

Nothing has been done for him - As noted above, to not bestow a reward or honor was distinctly unusual and undoubtedly reflects the hand of God in the affairs of men, including kings (Pr 21:1).

Esther 6:4 So the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows which he had prepared for him.:

Guzik...

If this Book of Esther shows us anything, it shows us that God manages the affairs of men, even without their knowledge. God knows what He is doing and in the courts of heaven there are no coincidences or surprises. Esther wasn't **lucky** to be queen; Mordecai wasn't **lucky** to have overheard the assassination plot; it wasn't **luck** or **chance** that made Haman enter the royal courts at this time with this heart. All of these events were orchestrated by God and not by **luck**.

This becomes difficult, of course, when bad things happen to us. It is easy to see God's management of all things when we see good things happen. But what about the bad? Even then, we must trust God's total plan, realizing that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). We understand that Paul says all things work together; any one event, taken in isolation may seem to make no sense, but when we see all things working together we then see the ultimate wisdom of God's plan.

So the king said, "Who is in the court?" - Why was Haman at the King's court so early in the morning? Because he was enraged at Mordecai, had constructed a gallows and wanted to speak to the king about hanging him. But he was too late! God's timing had been perfect as it always is! The King's restless night and record reading re Mordecai's saving his life and not being yet rewarded had been orchestrated by the hand of God.

Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace - Why was Haman there? Because he wanted to hang Mordecai. Haman was in a hurry to carry out his evil plan, which reminds us of the proverb...

**A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that run rapidly to evil
(Proverbs 6:18)**

In order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows - Haman is a few minutes too late. God beat him to the punch! God always does!

Esther 6:5 The king's servants said to him, "Behold, Haman is standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in.":

Let him come in - Presumably now he has been allowed into the king's bed chamber.

Swindoll sets the scene...

Is this a great moment or what? The sun is barely over the horizon, and here comes Haman, rushing to the palace as early as he can so he will be the first to have an audience with the king and finish off his hated enemy. Suddenly, out of the inner court, comes the voice of the king, "Call him in. Call Haman in." The king is calling for him. This will be even easier than he anticipated. Now is my chance, he thinks. He glances out the window with a sinister sneer, Just a minute, gallows, somebody will be on you. And with the stride of a peacock he struts into the court of the king.

Esther 6:6 So Haman came in and the king said to him, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?":

What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor? - Who is Haman going to immediately think of but himself!

Haman said to himself (Hebrew = "said to his heart") - Haman was deluded. He was deceived by his own pride and sense of self worth and thought that surely the king was describing him. In God's ironic providence, He ordains that Haman would actually specify the manner in which Mordecai would be honored and Haman who would be hanged! Solomon was right...

**The righteous is delivered from trouble,
But the wicked takes his place.
(Proverbs 11:8)**

In another set of Proverbs **Solomon** describes first Haman, then Mordecai...

**Before destruction the heart of man is haughty,
But humility goes before honor.**
(Pr 18:12)

**A man's pride will bring him low,
But a humble spirit will obtain honor.**
(Pr 29:23)

To paraphrase Warren Wiersbe...

"On which side of the commas do you live?"

Whom would the king desire to honor more than me? - "God often allows fallen man to set his own trap; allowing Haman to make his pride and arrogance be the cause of his ultimate humiliation." (Guzik)

Esther 6:7 Then Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king desires to honor;

Ferguson comments...

Invited to advise the king in such an intimate setting could only have stoked the inflated ego of Haman. Doubtless he strutted in like a peacock. Haman was intoxicated with vanity and blinded by pride. It seemed a day of double blessing Mordecai dead and he honored. Ahasuerus hid the identity of Mordecai in just the same way Haman had done so to the king over the Jews. Haman is beginning to reap what he sowed.

For the man whom the king desires to honor - This is fascinating. Clearly Haman thinks he is getting to describe his own reward. Clearly he is going to go for the proverbial "gusto" and get all he can get! What if the king had asked what is to be done for Mordecai the Jew? Surely Haman's suggestions would have been toned down substantially! **Is this too not Divine providence, for the king now knew Mordecai's name? The more we observe these details, the more we see God's hand behind the seen (scene)!**

Esther 6:8 let them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown has been placed;:

On whose head a royal crown has been placed - This is not referring to a crown on the honoree's head but on the horse's head. Thus the NET Bible refers to a royal horse "one bearing the royal insignia!" NIV renders it "a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head." New Jerusalem Bible "a horse from the king's stable, sporting a royal diadem on its head."

Ferguson comments...

Haman could not have thought of anything more imaginative to promote self. It was said that the Persians regarded the royal robe as having magical properties. Haman had money and power so what he craved was to be honored like the king. Maybe he thought it would allow him to be Ahasuerus's successor. We are never satisfied with the things of this world. Without God's peace it is all ultimately vanity.

Esther 6:9 and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes and let them array the man whom the king desires to honor and lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, 'Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.'":

To one of the king's most noble princes - Little did Haman know he was guaranteeing that he would be the one to carry out these honors.

Esther 6:10 Then the king said to Haman, "Take quickly the robes and the horse as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king's gate; do not fall short in anything of all that you have said."":

As you have said...do so - The king could have sent one of his eunuchs. Instead he chooses to send his second in command to carry this out. Is God in control or what? The one who virtually cursed Mordecai's name must now proclaim it as he leads him through the city!

Mordecai the Jew - Second use of this specific phrase (6x - Esther 5:13, 6:10, 8:7, 9:29, 9:31, 10:3). King Ashasuerus clearly knows Mordecai's ethnicity! Does he not know that Haman's decree would include Mordecai?

Sitting at the king's gate - King repeats Mordecai's location. It is as if the king is accentuating Mordecai's loyalty by repeating the phrase "king's gate" (Found 12x in 11v in Esther 2:19, 21; 3:2, 3:3; 4:2, 4:6; 5:9, 5:13; 6:10, 6:12). Does this not give us a picture of a man who is loyal to the king?

Do not fall short in anything of all that you have said - God so ordains these events that Haman the one who sought to curse Mordecai and his people would end up blessing Mordecai with his words and deeds!

This reminds me of Romans 12 where we read God's charge to believers to...

17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but **leave** (aorist imperative) room for the wrath of God, for (term of explanation) it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS UPON HIS HEAD."

21 **Do not be overcome** (present imperative with a negative) by evil, but **overcome** (present imperative) evil with good. (Ro 12:17-note, Ro 12:18-note)

Esther 6:11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.":

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND!

So - A term of conclusion- What is being concluded?

Haman took the robe and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai - Note the striking irony of this picture. Haman the **enemy of the Jews** being forced to royally robe and honor **Mordecai the Jew**!

Led him on horseback through the city square - As Haman leads Mordecai through the streets the people honor the very one who refused to honor Haman!

Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor - The very thing Mordecai would not do for Haman (bow down), evil Haman was now forced to tell others to do for Mordecai! One can only imagine what went through Haman's mind as he was forced to reap the bitter fruit of the evil seeds he had sown!

Guzik...

The ultimate humiliation was for Haman to honor Mordecai in such a public way; humiliation is only really humiliation when it is public.

Notice how Haman's fate parallels the NT teaching that all who reject Christ will one day be forced to honor Him, even as Haman was forced to honor Mordecai! Paul writes...

Therefore (term of conclusion = the conclusion is based on the truths in Php 2:5-8-note) also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:9-11-note, cf Rev 1:7-note)

MOURNING, WARNING AND HASTY DEPARTURE TO ESTHER'S BANQUET

Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate - How did the pomp and circumstance impact Mordecai? Did it go to his head? In fact Scripture does not record that Mordecai uttered a word regarding this great honor. And so it does not surprise us that he returned to his place at the king's gate! He continued in the role he had before he was honored.

Why was Mordecai not ecstatic? He was still a Jew. He was still under sentence of a Persian law that could not be repealed!

Wiersbe rightly observes that...

Applause doesn't change truly humble people, for their values are far deeper. God can trust His blessings with the humble because they seek to honor only the Lord. (Ibid)

Alexander Raleigh

How clearly the character of the man comes out in that single touch of description--that one item of information given us, that he came again to the king's gate. A proud ambitious man would have said to himself, "No more of the king's gate for me! I shall direct my steps now to the king's palace, and hold myself ready for honour, office, emolument (compensation), which surely must now be at hand." Mordecai seems to have said with himself, "If these things are designed for me in God's good providence, they will find me. But they must seek me, for I shall not seek them. Those who confer them know my address: 'Mordecai, at the king's gate,' will still find me. Let the crowd wonder and disperse. I have had enough of their incense. Let Haman go whither he will, he is in the hands of the Lord. Let my friends at home wait; they will all hear all in time . . . I can wait best at the old place and in the accustomed way—*at the king's gate.*" ([The book of Esther, its practical lessons](#))

Chuck Swindoll applies this to our lives asking...

Have you recently been promoted? Has God's providence smiled on you so that your name is now honored in circles where you were once not even known? Have you come to a place of popularity and prosperity? Are you now esteemed in the eyes of others? If so, the real question is: **Are you still comfortable at the king's gate, or must you now live at the palace?** Must you now be treated with special care and be given kid-glove treatment and not bothered with everyday problems?

Haman hurried home, mourning, with his head covered (cf 2Sa 17:23 1Ki 20:43 21:4 2Ch 26:20 Job 20:5) - Covering one's head was an expression of deepest grief and trouble, a way of expressing mourning (2Sa 15:30; Jer 14:3-4). And so we see a reversal of destinies in only 3 days! Mordecai the Jew was mourning in Esther 4:1-3 and now Haman the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews is mourning!

Guzik on meaning of Haman **mourning**...

This means that Haman acted as if someone dear to him had died. In fact, his pride had been dealt a death-blow.

Wiersbe observes that the contrast between Mordecai's reaction and Haman's reaction demonstrates...

the difference between **reputation** and **character**. Haman was a famous man, a man of reputation, only because the king had made him so; but he was not a man of character. His reputation depended on his office, his wealth, and his authority, all of which could easily be taken from him. (Ibid)

Comment: Indeed, reputation is what others think you are while character is what God knows you are!

Esther 6:13 Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him.":

INVINCIBILITY OF

THE JEWS

Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends - In only 24 hours, God has turned Haman's world upside down. Recall his boastful words in Esther 5:11 **"Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches..."**

Ferguson comments...

No word of repentance or acknowledgement by this proud man that he had brought this on himself. If God humbles you, pay attention.

You will not overcome him...Surely fall before him - How quickly his own wife changed her tune from *"Kill Mordecai"* to *"Mordecai will kill you!"* While these Persian pagans likely did not know Genesis 12:3 ("The one who curses you, I will curse!"), the truth of that passage was like Persian law...irrevocable! And his wise men and wife proved to be prophetic!

Ferguson reminds us that...

God is always faithful to His covenantal promises. The eighteenth century German emperor, **Frederick the Great** asked his personal physician, Zimmermann:

Zimmermann, can you name me a single proof of the existence of God?

Zimmermann succinctly replied,

Your Majesty, the Jews!

Throughout the centuries of persecution, discrimination, and genocide, God has preserved His people.

God on His saints looks watchful down
His ear attends their cry
The wicked sink beneath His frown
Their very name shall die
But He, at length, the just will crown
With victory and joy!

Esther 6:14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.:

While they were still talking with him - Can you envision this scene? Haman does not even have time to reply nor contrive a counter plan.

The king's eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared - Only 24 hours earlier, Haman's wife had encouraged him to "go joyfully with the king to the banquet." (Esther 5:14) As the saying goes "What a difference a day makes!"

ESTHER 7

Esther 7:1 Now the king and Haman came to drink *wine* with Esther the queen.:

Came to drink - Wine is not in the original Hebrew text. The NET Note writes that "The expression is a metaphor for lavish feasting" which explains some of the other translations - "Came in to feast" (HCSB), "went in to feast" (ESV), "went to dine" (NIV)

Remember that neither the king nor Haman knew yet that Esther was a Jewess. Now can you better understand the significance of the repeated detail that she was not to make known her people (Esther 2:10, 20)? And so while Haman was undoubtedly disturbed by the previous events, he most likely thought that he was safe from any serious sequelae. After all he been restrained from asking the king for permission to hang Mordecai, and risk invoking the king's anger. He had to undergo the humiliation of honoring Mordecai, but after all he was a Jew and his death sentence was recorded by royal edict which could not be repealed. Haman would simply have to wait for his revenge. Solomon's description of the evil man in Ecclesiastes would have been fitting for Haman who thought he had escaped danger...

Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore (term of conclusion) the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil. (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

Ferguson notes that...

We now find the drama heightened at this point in the narrative. The plot is filled with danger, hesitation, courage, and deliverance. Esther is now having to stand in the gap for her people (Eze. 22:30). If she had refused this calling, she would have missed out on the blessing of being an integral part of redemptive history, but God would have found another way to complete His plan. There is an obvious parallel here between the life of Ruth and Esther. Both women yielded to God to work through them and both played a significant role in redemptive history....

Solomon tells us in the third chapter of Ecclesiastes that there is a time to keep silent but there is also the right time to speak. Somehow Esther discerned that this was the time. Did she sense the Hand of providence in the events of that day with the elevation of Mordecai? Now is that moment with Haman unnerved, Ahasuerus curious and charmed, and after God had providentially reminded the king of the faithfulness and loyalty of his Jewish subjects. Also Ahasuerus had promised three times his help to Esther so it would not be easy for him to back out of this commitment.

Esther 7:2 And the king said to Esther on the **second day also as they drank their wine at the banquet, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."**

And the king said to Esther - Obviously the king had been waiting to hear Esther's petition since the previous evening's banquet.

Second day - The day after Esther's first banquet.

What is your petition - This is the third time the king has asked Esther this question. I think **Chuck Swindoll** is accurate in his assessment of "why three times?" and why he is asking again...

He's already asked that two other times: when she first approached him and he held out his scepter, and then at the first banquet, but Esther never answered him, because the time wasn't right. Esther had a sensitive ear, a wise heart; she sensed something wasn't quite right. So, she didn't push it. She knew when to act—and she knew when to wait. **Are you as sensitive as that? Do you know when to listen? Do you know when to speak up—and when to keep quiet? Do you know how much to say as well as when to say it? Do you have the wisdom to hold back until the right moment?**

At the banquet - This is the sixth banquet in Esther!

Esther 7:3 Then Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request;:

ESTHER'S BRAVE INTERCESSION FOR HER PEOPLE

If I have found favor in your sight - **Favor** is shown repeatedly to Esther 2:9, 15, 17, 5:8, 7:3, 8:5. Notice her words - "favor in your sight...pleases the king" - she was surely aware that the king might refuse her request and so she was duly cautious, submissive and humble. The word "favor" is translated by the Greek word **charis** which is grace and speaks of unmerited favor.

Let my life be given...my people - This parallels Moses' words to Pharaoh in Exodus 7:16.

My life - Esther's wisdom is shown in the way in which she presents her petition. Notice how she first focuses the king's attention on the fact that her **life** was in danger, a tact that surely would appeal to the king's feelings for her. In other words she did not just blurt out that "*There is a man in your kingdom who plans to destroy all the Jews*" In fact, in the entire petition (vv 3-4) she does not implicate an single individual as responsible for the evil plan.

My people as my request - Some feel that Esther now reveals her people. However the text does not state clearly that she says

she is Jewish, even as Haman had hidden the identity of the people when he made his request of the king (Esther 3:8).

Esther 7:4 for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king.":

We have been sold - What did Esther mean by this statement? Recall that Haman had in essence "bought off" the king by offering to pay him a huge sum in Esther 3:9, a fact which was specifically relayed to Esther in Esther 4:7.

It is interesting that Esther wisely avoids the detail that this was "written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring." (Esther 3:12)

NET Note adds that...

The passive verb ("have been sold") is noncommittal and non-accusatory with regard to the king's role in the decision to annihilate the Jews.

Destroyed...killed...annihilated - The same phrase that is found in Esther 3:13 (cp Esther 8:11). We see Mordecai's wisdom in sending her a copy of the actual decree. Here she recounts the words of that decree.

Esther 7:5 Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would presume to do thus?":

Who is he and where is he? - As noted above, Esther never implicated a single individual (certainly not the king), but the king comes to that conclusion on his own.

Who would presume to do thus - Hebrew reads = "has so filled his heart"; NAB paraphrases it "who has dared to do this." So the king still does not connect the dots and associate Haman with this plot, nor does he see his role in this drama.

Esther 7:6 Esther said, "A foe and an enemy is this wicked Haman!" Then Haman became terrified before the king and queen.:

HAMAN COMES TO THE END OF HIS ROPE

A foe and an enemy is this wicked Haman - Haman had been referred to as **the enemy of the Jews**. And he now knows that Esther is a Jew - she had not used the name Jew, but Haman knew who was to be destroyed, killed and annihilated! One can only imagine his horror at this realization.

Then Haman became terrified (afraid, overwhelmed) - Haman's life progressed from **honor** (Esther 5:9) to **humiliation** (Esther 6:18) to **horror** (Esther 7:6) in less than 24 hours! The psalmist was right when he recorded that "Behold, He who keeps (guards, protects) Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep." (Psalm 121:4).

Solomon rightly said that...

**Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord;
Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.**
(Proverbs 16:5)

Esther 7:7 The king arose in his anger from drinking wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, **for he saw that harm had been determined against him by the king:**

Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther - The boastful bully is now reduced to a whimpering coward! Can you see the incredible irony brought about by the "behind the scenes" work of God? Haman had been filled with rage toward a Jew who had

refused to bow and now he is bowing before a Jewish woman begging for his life!

For - A term of explanation. In this case it explains Haman's groveling for his life.

Ferguson observes...

The irony here is that the man who was so angry because one Jew refused to bow to him has in the space of a few days prostrated himself before Mordecai and Esther. Haman's wife's prediction is being realized (Esther 6:13). From being a proud peacock he shows himself a whimpering coward.

Esther 7:8 Now when the king returned from the palace garden into the place where they were drinking wine, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he even assault the queen with me in the house?" As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.:

Now when the king returned - Do not miss this "time phrase," because it is significant and once again shows God providentially in control of this scene. When does the king just happen to return? It is when Haman is "falling on the couch where Esther was" and that was the final straw for the king! Haman's fate was sealed. Had Haman gone out with the king instead of staying to beg the queen, this scene would not have occurred. Even if he had not fallen on the queen's couch, he would not have been accused of trying to sexually assault her. And yet Haman did and he did it at the wrong time - just as the king entered the room! God's providence is moving to avenge His people the Jews and His timing is always perfect!

A clearly non-inspired Jewish writing says that the angel Gabriel pushed Haman so he fell on Esther's couch just as king Ahasuerus was coming back into the room.

Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was (NET = "Haman was throwing himself down on the couch where Esther was lying") The Greek verb used here is **epipipto** which means literally to fall on someone or throw one's self on someone (Acts 20:10 - Eutychus who had fallen 3 floors and was dead until revived by Paul), even to embrace (Lk 15:20, Acts 20:37, Ge 45:14). **Epipipto** means to cause pressure by pushing against or falling on. To make contact, to approach impetuously.

They covered Haman's face - In Esther 6:12 Haman covered his head in humiliation, but now others cover his head to prepare for execution! Covering one's head of a condemned prisoner was a custom in ancient times.

Women's Study Bible...

It was a Persian custom to recline during a meal. Had Haman followed harem protocol, he would have left Esther's presence with the king. Although it was a common Near Eastern gesture of contrition to seize the feet or even kiss them, such behavior was completely inappropriate with a woman of the harem, much less the queen herself! So strict was harem protocol that the king's interpretation of Haman's behavior would have probably been the same even if Haman had merely knelt before Esther with no physical contact. (Thomas Nelson Publishing)

Esther 7:9 Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who were before the king said, "Behold indeed, the gallows standing at Haman's house fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai who spoke good on behalf of the king!" And the king said, "Hang him on it.":

Harbonah (See Esther 1:10 presumably the same individual) - Somehow in the previous 24 hours it had become known to this eunuch that Haman had **made gallows** to kill **Mordecai**. Obviously Haman had made this known. It reminds me of a saying during World War II that "Loose lips sink ships!"

Mordecai who spoke good on behalf of the king - This is the king's first knowledge of Haman's plan to kill Mordecai and was the proverbial final straw.

Hang him on it - While on numerous previous occasions in the book of Esther the king had sought and followed the advice of advisers, on this occasion (surely now with even greater anger) decreed Haman's death sentence without hesitation. How wealthy was Haman? What relief could his wealth provide now? (See Ps. 49:6-8, 16-17-[note](#))

Note the progression produced by providence...

In Psalm 73 Asaph addresses the truth that the wicked may prosper for a moment, but just as quickly will swept away in judgment, even as came to pass in the life of wealthy but anti-Semitic Haman (Read Ps 73:10-20-[note](#)).

THE PRINCIPLE OF SOWING AND REAPING

Haman had sown anger against Mordecai, but now reaped **anger** from the king. The principle of **sowing and reaping** is timeless and obviously applies not just to unbelievers like Haman but also to believers...

Do not be deceived (present imperative with a negative), God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. (Gal 6:7-note, Gal 6:8-note, cp Hos 8:7-[Chuck Smith](#); [Smith -2](#); [Smith 3](#); [Calvin](#), Illustration, [Picture of Ungodly Life](#); [Charles Simeon-Consequences of Sin](#))

Job echoes this principle...

According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity And those who sow trouble harvest it. (Job 4:8)

Obadiah writes...

For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. **Your dealings will return on your own head.** (Ob 1:15)

Solomon also records that...

**He who sows iniquity will reap vanity,
And the rod of his fury will perish.**
(Pr 22:8).

Warren Wiersbe summarizes several Biblical examples of the law of sowing and reaping...

Jacob killed an animal and lied to his father, pretending to be Esau (Ge 27:1-29); and years later Jacob's sons killed an animal and lied to him, pretending that Joseph was dead (Ge 37:31-35). Pharaoh gave orders to drown the Jewish baby boys (Ex 1:22), and one day his army was drowned in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:26-28). David secretly took his neighbor's wife and committed adultery (2Sa 11:2-17), and David's own son Absalom took his father's concubines and openly committed adultery with them (2Sa 16:20-23). Furthermore, David's daughter Tamar was raped by her half brother Amnon (2Sa 13:7-17). David killed Bathsheba's husband (2Sa 11:14-25), and three of David's own sons were slain: Absalom (2Sa 18:32-33), Amnon (2Sa 13:23-36), and Adonijah (1Ki 2:13-25). Saul of Tarsus encouraged the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1); and when he became Paul the missionary, he was stoned at Lystra (Acts 14:19-20).

Comment: While the preceding is all "bad news", the truth is that sowing good seeds will also be fully recompensed in this life and/or the life to come! (Mt 10:42, Mt 25:31-46, 2Cor 5:10-note)

Esther 7:10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsided:

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES IN THE HAND OF GOD

So - A term of conclusion

They hanged Haman - Another strikingly ironic reversal, one that Solomon alluded to when he wrote that...

**The righteous is delivered from trouble,
But the wicked takes his place.**
(Proverbs 11:8)

Haman is also a fitting illustration of the truth of the wise saying of Solomon...

My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path,

For their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed blood.

Indeed, it is useless to spread the net In the eyes of any bird;

But they lie in wait for their own blood; They ambush their own lives.

So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence; It takes away the life of its possessors (Proverbs 1:15-19)

AN IMMUTABLE PRINCIPLE

Beloved, you can mark it down that every enemy that has ever tried to destroy Israel has been destroyed. This Genesis 12:3 principle applies to individuals (like Haman, like Hitler, etc) and also to nations. God always keeps His Word. Woe to the nation that begins to "curse" Israel, and that warning even applies to America who has been such a friend for so long to Israel. **Should America ever become Israel's enemy, she has just made herself God's enemy!** Woe!

Pray for America's leaders to always seek to bless Israel (1Ti 2:1-2).

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps 122:6).

Bob Deffinbaugh writes that...

Many people object to divine judgment as though it were unjust. Retribution is entirely just. Retribution sees to it that people get what they deserve, no more and no less. Justice and retribution are in perfect harmony; they are nearly synonymous. God is just, and so He judges men according to their deeds (John 5:28-29; Romans 2:5-10; Revelation 20:12-13). This means that some will suffer more in eternity than others (Luke 12:42-48). It also means that Christians will be rewarded individually, according to what they have done. When men are punished by God, God is praised for giving them what they deserve (Revelation 16:4-7). God is a God of retribution (Jeremiah 51:56), and He deals with men so that they receive what they deserve (Proverbs 1:24-33; 5:21-23; 14:14). In biblical terminology, men reap what they sow (Galatians 6:7; see also 2 Corinthians 9:6). Haman reaped what he had sown, and so shall we. ([Sleepless in Susa](#))

The king's anger subsided (abated, pacified) - The Hebrew verb for **subsided** is shalak (07918) which is used only 5 times in the OT (Ge 8:1; Nu 17:5; Esther 2:1; Esther 7:10; Jer 5:26). Shalak is used twice to describe King Ashasuerus' anger (Esther 2:1, 7:10). The first use describes the flood waters that covering the earth as "subsided."

Guzik notes that...

The death of a substitute satisfied the wrath of the king. In the case of Mordecai and Haman, it was the guilty dying in the place of the innocent; in the case of us and Jesus, it is a matter of the innocent dying in the place of guilty.

Ferguson has an excellent conclusion to the dramatic providential events in these first seven chapters...

It seemed that things had gone silent in the heavens, but God is still at work in the stillness. He is the hidden helm turning the ship beneath the waves. The book of Esther is a book of perfect timing. What is impressive is not what Esther did or did not do but what God does. The Jews were not spared because of good fortune or the quick thinking of Esther or Mordecai. It was all about God's faithfulness to His covenantal promises.

All the threads that providence is weaving can suddenly come together to bring about God's desired and determined end. Ahasuerus may have been the most powerful man in the known world, who could alter nation's histories at a whim. However, all his actions were all divinely arranged by God to achieve perfectly God's greater purpose. As Swindoll observed,

We can see the movement of God's hand throughout the lives of Esther and Mordecai. We can see His moving in the heart of King Ahasuerus. We can see Him as He works His own will even through the wicked plots of Haman.

The book of Esther is not simply an entertaining story, but also is instructive about how our God works in the world. We may be tempted to see Satan's plans as invincible and unstoppable as we read this book of Esther, but God proves that He can override even the most complex of plots.

The truths of Psalm 73 are graphically illustrated in the life and demise of Haman. Victory often comes only at

the point of apparent defeat. The Cross seemed hell's greatest victory but proved to be its greatest defeat. God is God and He will not share His Sovereignty with any creature. To cite Swindoll again,

Don't ever try to convince me that some situation in this life is absolutely permanent. God can move in the heart of a king. He can move an entire nation. He can bring down the once-impenetrable Iron Curtain. He can change the mind of your stubborn mate. He can move in the affairs of your community. He can alter the decisions of presidents and prime ministers and present-day kings and dictators. No barrier is too high, no chasm too wide for Him, because He is not limited by space or time, by the visible or the invisible.

Trapped in our limited perspective of time and finite understanding we may lose our orientation in the fogs of life, but not God. We panic and issue snap judgments on our circumstances. Discerning God's fingerprints in the silence is what spiritual maturity is all about. The wise reader of Esther is led to the obvious conclusion that these circumstances did not just happen, but were wonderfully orchestrated by an unseen power. Not everyone can behold this for as Deffinbaugh wrote,

God is the ultimate manifestation of skill. He is a wonder to behold as He works. But His work can only be seen through the eyes of faith. The Christian, whose spiritual eyes have been opened, watches God work with wonder and amazement. The unbeliever sees the same results but fails to recognize what has been done as God's work. When God works providentially, His will and His purposes are perfectly accomplished, but those without faith do not see His handiwork as anything more than the result of natural forces, of great human skill at best. Many look at the deliverance of the Jews in Esther and see no more than the cleverness of Esther at manipulating the king.

We must believe in advance what we can only discern truly with the benefit of eternal hindsight. Any other practice adopted will lead to envy, cynicism and bitterness with our circumstances. Habakkuk suffered from this till God reminded him to live by faith not by sight. It shows every reader to follow Paul's advice prayerfully,

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God (1 Cor. 4:5).

God can still be trusted! He is still on His throne!