



The Book of Esther

Simi Hills Sunday School • 2017

Class 4

Sleepless in Susa

Esther 5:1 through 7:10

- Let's review the situation that Esther is in before we begin...

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- 1) To speak to the King, Esther has to break a law which has a **DEATH PENALTY**

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- 2) To make her appeal to the King, Esther has to confess that she **DECEIVED** him

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- 3) To save the Jews, Esther has to convince the King to reverse an **IRREVERSIBLE** Law

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- 4) To make this work, Esther has to oppose Haman, one of the most **POWERFUL** people on the planet at that time

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5) To succeed, Esther is pursuing a plan that will strike a serious blow to the King's **PRIDE**

- The King will have to admit that he made a mistake in exalting Haman to power and that he has been duped by Haman
- Kings don't like to admit that they made mistakes...
- Let's see how Esther does

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- Esther 5:1-4

- 1) On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, in front of the king's quarters, while the king was sitting on his royal throne inside the throne room opposite the entrance to the palace.
- 2) And when the king **saw** Queen Esther standing in the court, **she won favor in his sight**, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

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- 3) And the king said to her, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom."
- 4) And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the **king and Haman** come today to a feast that I have prepared for the king."

- Imagine the pressure she was under
- My wife gets a little worked up choosing which dress to wear to a wedding
- Imagine the thought that went into choosing which dress she was going to wear?
- Which shoes, which perfume, which hairstyle
- It appears that her relationship with the King is based solely on outward appearance
- The King sees her and it says that she won favor in his sight

- Here's the amazing part, really...
- She doesn't just blurt out her request like you or I would have
- She invite the King and Haman a banquet
- Notice that she's already prepared the banquet
- A whole other grueling process of decisions... Deciding on the menu, which wines, etc.
- I'm thinking that the King is smart enough to know that something is troubling her
- He knows about the risk involved in someone coming before him unbidden
- I'm sure that it doesn't happen very often, and it would be rare to see her standing there
- Surely, she didn't risk her life to invite him to Lunch
- He's curious as to what's up, and her delaying the request makes him even more interested
- But, why delay?
- His opening remark is, *"What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom."*
- I would have been such a ball of nerves, that if I had heard that, I would have spat it out
- No one knows why...
- Maybe she was trusting in her feminine wiles to get what she wanted
- We know that what she is asking will be most difficult to grant
- Let's look at the first banquet
- **SLIDE**
- Esther 5:5-8

5) Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, so that we may do as Esther has asked." So the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared.

- 6) And **as they were drinking wine** after the feast, the king said to Esther, “What is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.”

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- 7) Then Esther answered, “My wish and my request is:
- 8) If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my wish and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come to the feast that I will prepare for them, and **tomorrow** I will do as the king has said.”

- Banquets seem to play a major role in the story of Esther
- There were four banquets in Chapters 1 and 2, and she chooses to host another in order to make her request
- These feasts are occasions for drinking, and much is made of the use of wine
- The King seems eager to go, it appears that she timed it just before mealtime
- He asks for Haman to come quickly, and they head off to eat
- As they are sitting there afterward, drinking their wine and relaxing, he pushes her to come out with what she wants
- Once again, she declines to make her petition
- Now, even I’m starting to get nervous
- Intrigue and anticipation are effective, but you don’t want to upset a busy man
- Again, we don’t know why she delays...
- But, it ends up being very important that she does!

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- Esther 5:9-14

- 9) And **Haman** went out that day **joyful** and **glad of heart**. But when Haman saw **Mordecai** in the king's gate, that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was **filled with wrath** against Mordecai.
- 10) Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and brought his friends and his wife Zeresh.
- 11) And Haman **recounted to them the splendor of his riches**, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the servants of the king.

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- 12) Then Haman said, "Even Queen Esther let **no one but me** come with the king to the feast she prepared. And tomorrow also I am invited by her together with the king.
- 13) Yet **all this is worth nothing to me**, so long as I see **Mordecai** the Jew sitting at the king's gate."
- 14) Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then go **joyfully** with the king to the feast." This idea **pleased** Haman, and he had the gallows made.

- The story then moves to Haman
- He's feeling pretty good!
- We don't know Esther's intentions by inviting him, but it's clear what the effect was on him
- Haman is not a nice guy... He's proud, arrogant, deceitful and wicked
- Being invited to a private banquet with the King and Queen is almost too much for him
- You literally see him skipping out of the palace that evening on the way home
- Until he gets to the gate
- There is old Mordecai who won't give him any of the respect that he is due

- All of those good feelings are overcome with bad feelings
- But, he rallies and puts on a good face when he returns home
- He wants to impress everyone with how well things are going for him
- He gathers all of his friends and family together, and recounts the splendor of his riches
- You have to wonder how many times that this has been done in the past
- I'm sure you know people like this
- You can practically finish their sentences for them as they tell you how well they are doing
- And now he has new amazing things to share with you!
- He's now in the inner circle with the King and Queen
- But...
- In spite of all these good things, there is ONE THING that really bugs him!
- Mordecai!
- The solution seems so simple to his family and friends - do away with Mordecai
- Don't wait for the appointed day when all the Jews are to be killed
- You are "in" with the King so ask for Mordecai's head immediately
- Don't even let Mordecai ruin your banquet tomorrow – Take care of him first thing
- Great idea! So, he stays up all night and has a giant set of gallows built during that night, and he's going to talk to the King first thing in the morning...
- But, the King is having a sleepless night himself

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- Esther 6:1-14

- 1) On that night the **king could not sleep**. And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.
- 2) And it was found written how **Mordecai** had told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, and who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.
- 3) And the king said, "What **honor or distinction** has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" The king's young men who attended him said, "**Nothing** has been done for him."

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- 4) And the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to **speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged** on the gallows that he had prepared for him.
- 5) And the king's young men told him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."
- 6) So Haman came in, and the king said to him, "**What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?**" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?"

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- 7) And Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor,
- 8) let **royal robes** be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse that the king has ridden, and on whose head a **royal crown** is set.
- 9) And let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials. Let them dress the man whom the king delights to honor, and let them lead him on the horse through the square of the city, proclaiming before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.'"

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- 10) Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry; take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to **Mordecai the Jew**, who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned."

- 11) So **Haman** took the robes and the horse, and he dressed Mordecai and led him through the square of the city, **proclaiming** before him, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.”

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- 12) Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman hurried to his house, **mourning** and with his **head covered**.
- 13) And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of the Jewish people, you will not overcome him but will surely fall before him.”
- 14) **While they were yet talking with him**, the king’s eunuchs arrived and **hurried** to bring Haman to the feast that Esther had prepared.

- Whoa...
- Talk about how your life can change literally overnight
- I always wonder if the King was kept awake that night by the sound of people sawing and hammering all night long on a giant 75 foot tall gallows that they are hurriedly building...
- The best part of the whole story is that it’s Haman who gets to unwittingly choose the reward for the man he hates the most
- Then it’s Haman who has to carry it out
- Dressing him in richly garments and walking before him throughout the entire city saying “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor”
- Like I mentioned earlier, I think it’s telling of Mordecai’s character that he readily accepts this honor from a Pagan and King and Official
- The very same kind of honor that he refuses to give to Haman, he is happy to accept
- This is the definition of Hypocrite
- He is willing to receive that which he is unwilling to give – Honor to the one whom the King chooses to honor
- Look at what it says after that...
- Haman **hurried** to his house, **mourning** and with his **head covered**

- He doesn't come skipping home that night...
- And his friends are brutally honest with him
- "You're Toast," is their basic response
- And now he has to head off to the second banquet

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- Esther 7:1-10

- 1) So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther.
- 2) And on the second day, as they were **drinking wine** after the feast, the king again said to Esther, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."
- 3) Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, **let my life be granted me** for my wish, and my people for my request.

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- 4) For we have been **sold**, I and my people, to be **destroyed**, to be **killed**, and to be **annihilated**. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king."
- 5) Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "**Who is he**, and where is he, who has dared to do this?"
- 6) And Esther said, "A foe and enemy! **This wicked Haman!**" Then Haman was **terrified** before the king and the queen.

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- 7) And the king arose in his wrath from the **wine-drinking** and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to **beg** for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king.
- 8) And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the word left the mouth of the king, **they covered Haman's face**.

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- 9) Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Moreover, the gallows that **Haman has prepared for Mordecai**, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman’s house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.”
- 10) So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated.

- Again with the wine...

- So, as they sat sipping their Red, the King makes the same offer, “Anything, even to the half of my Kingdom”
- Imagine Haman’s feelings as Esther’s story unfolds
- He thought that she liked him!
- She’d invited him over to feast two days in a row!
- But, as he hears her talk about her people being annihilated, his throat becomes dry
- Esther points to him, “**A foe and an enemy, this wicked Haman!**”
- I love how the servant chimes in... “You know, Haman did just build a giant gallows in order to kill that man that the King honored this morning...”
- And the story of Haman ends...

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- Some Positive Lessons for us!

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- 1) The **SOVEREIGNTY** of God

- God has a plan, a plan which he purposed before the earth existed, and He is constantly working out that plan in history
- He employs pagans, whose motives are far from righteous, to accomplish his plan

- God is in control, even when men do their best to deny God and His Promises

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2) The **PROVIDENCE** of God

- God's Sovereignty of God refers to His independence from Men to achieve His Purpose
- God's Providence refers to way in which God works out that Purpose
- Providence is God's invisible hand working that which accomplishes his Purpose
- God's Providence can only be seen through the eyes of Faith
- Haman and Ahasuerus would have seen it as a restless night and some bored reading
- The eye of Faith sees that as God's Providence working out His Plan
- We need to look at our lives with the eye of Faith to see God and His Angels actively at work in our life

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3) God does what we **CANNOT DO**

- It comes up so many times in Esther:
 - Esther and Mordecai had no control over the King's original "oversight" of Mordecai
 - They did not orchestrate his sleepless night
 - They did not determine which chronicles would be read to him that night
 - They didn't tell Haman to fall all over Esther at the moment the King enters the room
 - They didn't prompt Harbonah to suggest to use Haman's own gallows to execute him
- What men could not, and did not do is what determined the outcome of Esther's appeal
- For some unknown reason Esther chose to wait until the second day to make her request, and she had no idea that the King would have a sleepless night that night
- God can accomplish great things through us, even if we are not flawless in our obedience or motivations

- God uses what we do, doing what we cannot, to achieve His Purpose

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4) God's **TIMING** is Perfect

- So many times in this story, the timing is crucial, and every time it's perfect
- God's timing in our life is also always perfect
- It may not feel like it when it's actually going on around us, but have faith that it is

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5) What a Difference a **DAY** makes

- Don't get frustrated
- Don't think that the entire rest of your life is going to be just as bad as today
- You simply don't know what you are going to wake up to tomorrow

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6) Trust in **DIVINE RETRIBUTION**

- We are often tempted to take things into our own hands to make sure that someone learns the lesson that they should learn
- We don't want them to "get away with it," we want them to "get what they deserve"
- That is not our Job
- The Book of Esther makes it clear that God will avenge
- We need to trust in that and not pursue vengeance ourselves

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7) Trust in **DIVINE DELIVERANCE**

- In spite of the faithlessness and Godlessness of the Jews, God spared them from destruction
- God will Deliver
- That is what He does best
- Have some Faith in that in your life!