

Esther 6

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[0 : 00] That it does not go unnoticed. We'll see a little bit of that illustrated for us this evening as we're in the book of Esther. Esther chapter 6. Side note, complete side note. I just want to tell on myself right here, okay?

I love the way the Hebrew Bible titles Esther because they title it E-S-T-E-R. When I see that H, I want to make the sound, and it messes with me.

Maybe it's just my whatever. But so I always say, no, Hebrew scripture is E-S-T-E-R. Esther. That's how you say it. I just have to tell myself just because I just see it that way. I'm like, why is there a T-H in there?

But it is. It's there. It's completely, completely off subject. But just so you know it. All right. 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.

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

[1 : 00] 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.

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.

The king's servant said to him, behold, Haman is standing in the court. And the king said, let him come in. 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? Then Haman said to the king, for the man whom the king desires to honor, 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.

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.

[2 : 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.

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.

Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried home, mourning with his head covered. And 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.

While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived, and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared. Esther chapter 6. If you recall, in the fifth chapter, Queen Esther has risked her life and stood before the king, though she had not been summoned.

[3 : 16] After three days of prayer, she had put on her royal robes and her attire, and she presented herself before the king. The king had extended the royal scepter, or the golden scepter that was in his hand, and he looked upon her with favor.

So much favor was given to her that he asked, What would you request? Up to half of my kingdom, I will give it to you. And the simple request of Esther that day was, I desire that the king and Haman would come to the banquet which I have prepared for them.

When they came to the banquet, the king knew that there was something more, so he asked again, What would you have me to give you? Up to half of my kingdom. And she said, If the king and Haman would come to the banquet which I prepare for them tomorrow, then tomorrow I will disclose to the king what is on my heart.

And we have seen how that was a little bit odd, that there was a delay. Why not, at the first banquet, did Esther desire or really disclose her desires to the king, therefore, in petition in life for the life of the Jewish nation?

But yet she hesitated. We have the privilege of looking at things as they are behind us and seeing the fullness of the story.

[4 : 28] We see not only the patience of Esther taking the three days of prayer and fasting, along with Mordecai and all the Jews in the capital city of Susa, but we also see that she did not hastily make her request known on the first day, for if she had done so, then she probably would not receive the benefit that happens the second day, because the Lord was going before her.

And as he went before her, he prepared during the nighttime two wonderful things, one of them wonderfully treacherous on the outside, but will be wonderfully used by him later, and the other the disturbance in the king's life.

For when Haman left the first banquet, feeling proud of himself and really the puffed-up personality, which gave him this pride, because he alone had been invited to this banquet.

He did not know that this banquet would be his failure, but he left in such pride that when he passed through the king's gate, it all stood to honor him and revered him, but yet here is Mordecai who refused to do so.

And he was disturbed, and he was angry, and he was so furious that he went home, and he gathered his sons and Zeresh, his wife, and his wise men, and he began to talk about all of his pomp and all of his glory and how the king had promoted only him and only he had been brought.

[5 : 50] And so there, there was a plan made to erect a gallows on which to hang Mordecai. Get rid of this one that is bothering you.

And so that night, they raised it, and that night it was prepared. In the mind of the enemy, it was being prepared for Mordecai, but in the sovereignty of God, it was being prepared for Haman.

And yet, it is prepared. And on that very night, we are told, the king could not sleep either. For after he had built the gallows, and after he had erected this means of ending his hatred towards Mordecai, Haman went to bed, but he rose early.

But again, the Lord God was going before him. It is something that we have disclosed over and over again, that the book of Esther never mentions the name of God, but yet we cannot read it without acknowledging the presence of God.

We cannot read it, even in a casual observance, and say, wow, this is such a unique series of events. Look at the coincidences that take place here.

[7 : 02] Rather, we must admit, first and foremost, how God has moved through a hand of sovereign leading.

Notice this hand of sovereign leading. For it says, For on that very night, on that very night, that night in which the enemy had conspired the greatest, that night in which the enemy had seemingly built the torture device that would end Mordecai's life, that night in which the enemy was at his greatest work, on that night, I love the original language.

It says that sleep fled from the king. It's not that he couldn't sleep. Sleep was taken away from him. For there is but one that gives rest and sleep.

The word of God says, The sleep of the righteous will be sweet. And you know how I know that is, because before I gave my life to Christ, every night I would lay awake, and I would have all this tossing and turning, and all these what ifs in my mind.

And I remember that one of those nights, no longer could I deal with that. So I got up from my bed. I couldn't sleep. Sleep had been taken away from me. I hit my knees there at 201 Canova Park in Shelbyville.

[8 : 18] You know it. And I cried out. I said, Lord, I just give you everything. And I went to bed. And the next morning, I opened up scripture. And I turned to the passage of scripture that says, The sleep of the righteous will be sweet. For there is one that gives sleep, but there's also one that takes

it away.

And on that very night, the king was not allowed to sleep, for the Lord God was moving through a hand of sovereign leading. And so the king says, Well, if I can't sleep, then I'm going to read. And he says, Then bring to me the chronicles, the record of the book of the kings. Now, can you imagine, by this time, King Ahasuerus has been sitting upon the throne somewhere around 12 to 14 years.

In 12 to 14 years, a number of events have taken place. Not only has he dethroned his queen, Vashti, and then he has went and fought a battle which he lost.

And there's a number of events that take place. The history annals tell us that King Ahasuerus, also known historically as King Xerxes, was not really the nicest of gods, but he waged a lot of battles, fought a lot of things, and he did a lot of miserable things as well.

[9 : 22] So there's a lot to be recorded in his life. It is not as if these 12 to 14 years have transpired, and nothing has happened, but rather multiple battles have been fought, multiple wars have been, some have won, some have lost.

But it just so happens to be that the book that they give him and the place that he opens up is the record of when some seemingly obscure Jew named Mordecai disclosed to him that there was an internal threat to his life.

Now this is not coincidence. This is sovereign leading. Not only did the Lord God take the sleep from him, the Lord God put the word before him.

It was the record of Mordecai's life that Mordecai had disclosed to the eunuchs this conspiracy that was being raised up, and it was found to be true.

Now we know that took place shortly after Esther was taking in to be the king's queen, and we know that Mordecai was daily at the king's gate, and he is now in this place of position.

[10 : 36] He's been promoted. He was in the square, and now he's sitting at the gate, and he had been faithful in his journey, and yet this is the very passage that the king reads on that night.

On that night. Notice the hand of sovereign leading. Next we see, notice the humble faithful service. For the king asks a question when he reads the account that had been recorded, and when we read that account ourselves, I said, take special note of the fact that it is recorded in the records of the annals of the king, for God will use that.

We see that historically throughout the Old Testament. It is with the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem when the enemies say, you need to quit building this. You all are revolting. That they went back, and they searched the records, and they found the records where the king had given them permission to do it, and since the king had given them permission to do it, they had to not only allow it, they had to fund it, and so it's always important what has been recorded in the book, by the way, and so whenever you read scripture, notice what is written in the book, because when it's in the book, then it's there, and it cannot be changed.

It cannot be struck out of the book. It cannot be taken away from the book, and yet what we notice here is the king asks the question, what has been done for Mordecai, this man who has just saved my life, and the attendant to the king answers, and it's really striking when we think about it, for you know the answer.

[12 : 13] What has been done for Mordecai? Nothing. Nothing. Nothing has been done for Mordecai because of the favor that he has shown the king, but where do you find Mordecai?

Even when Haman enters into the temple, and the king tells Haman to go find Mordecai, where is Mordecai? Sitting at the king's gate.

Now where was Mordecai when he found out about the conspiracy against the king's life? He was sitting at the king's gate, and he reported to the right officials of the conspiracy while sitting at the king's gate, and that was very early on.

A number of years have passed, and yet what we find is Mordecai is still sitting at the king's gate. Friend, I want to ask you something. Because sitting at the king's gate is just not where Mordecai has a bench set up, and it's a cool place to whittle cedar and hang out.

To sit at the king's gate is to have an occupation. It is to have a role and a responsibility at the king's gate. It is what we find in all of the Old Testament.

[13 : 21] An individual is sitting at the gate. That means they are making judgments. They are helping make decisions. It is to be employed in an act of service. But if you had done such a favor to your boss, or you had done such a favor to your authority, or the one who supervises you, so

much so that you had saved his or her life, and they never recognized it, would you still be sitting at the king's gate?

But see, Mordecai wasn't there for the recognition. He reported the conspiracy because it was the right thing to do.

And in his humble faithfulness, at least to the king, he held his post. No prestige had been given him.

As a matter of fact, after he had done this, Haman is promoted. The enemy was advanced after Mordecai had been faithful. So my question is, why was Mordecai not promoted?

You say, well, it's because he's a Jew. Well, at this time, the Jews are so assimilated into the Persian Empire. It really is, that's illegitimate argument because it is not until the enemy of the Jews that is Haman that is promoted that there is such a hatred towards these individuals.

[14:44] And he is living very much within the world. We don't see him praying. We don't see him, we don't see him doing anything in the name of the Lord. We don't see him offering any sacrifices. And we're not here to pick on him, but he is very assimilated to the culture he's living in, so much so that he has a position at the king's gate.

But when he does his job well, so well that he saves the king's life, no honor is given him. And rather than being disgusted and discouraged and mad, years later, we find him still sitting at the king's gate.

Why? Because it's humble faithfulness. Friend, we don't always get recognition for the things we do. But may he still find us sitting at the gate when the day comes, when he seeks to bestow honor. For the third thing that we notice is the honor that is bestowed upon the man. The honor that is bestowed upon the man.

The king hears the response that nothing has been done for him. And it is not, well, I guess it's too late now.

[16:03] No, because it's in the book. And as long as it's in the book, it had actually happened. And it's as if it had just happened the day before because it's in the book.

So we can still place honor and elevate this individual who has done such a deed. And he hears the disturbance in the outer court and the king asks his attendant, who is that that is in the court?

And the man says, it's Haman. He said, well, have Haman come in. Haman, after all, still at this time, think about it, if Esther had made her proposition the day before and if Esther had even fulfilled her proposition and Haman had been kicked out of the kingdom, then who is going to honor Mordecai?

Because who would have been there early in the morning when the king read the word? But yet it is Haman who is there. Haman has come. We know that he has come early in the morning so that he could ask for the life of Mordecai, the very man that the king has just been reading about.

The very man that the king says, what honor has been shown this man? And the answer to that is nothing. The very man who is still sitting at the king's gate, even apparently early in the morning.

[17:10] And so he said, who is that? Well, it is Haman. Ask Haman to come in. The king does not know anything regarding Haman's plots, his schemes, his hatred for the Jews.

He has given Haman his ring. He has sealed the document unbeknownst to the king that has declared the annihilation of the entire Jewish people. Haman does not know that the queen is of Jewish descent yet and Haman does not know that Esther is going to ask that very day for his life. But he is going before the king. There is one who sits upon the throne who does know all these things. It's just not King Ahasuerus. And King Ahasuerus asked Haman, what should be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?

And again, the sovereign leading of God uses the pride found in the enemy to even proclaim the exaltation. For Haman says in his own heart, who would the king want to honor more than me? And he declares, find a robe that the king has worn. Find a horse on which the king has sat and the crown has been put upon his head. It literally means that in the forehead of the horse there is a crest.

[18:17] The crest of the king is upon the head of the horse so that when the horse parades through the city, everybody knows that's the king's horse. And clothe the man whom the king wants to honor.

Set him upon your horse and lead him through the city square and declare before him, thus it shall be done for the man whom the king desires to honor. And king Ahasuerus waited not a moment and

said, go and do as you have said to Mordecai the Jew who sits at the king's gate. And now Haman has no alternative but to do it for though he is the enemy of the Jew, the king has made a decree. And even the enemy must obey the king. And so he goes. Not too long ago we saw Mordecai in the city square unfit to set at the king's gate because when we saw him in the city square he was wearing sackcloth with dust and ashes upon his head. He is mourning and wailing and weeping loudly because the decree has come out that the Jews would all die. And in a moment he's clothed with the royal robes of the king. [19 : 25] He is honored. Not because of something that he has done to earn it. He's oh, he gave up that.

He talked about that conspiracy. Right. But in his humility he was not working to earn the robes. He was just doing what he ought. He was being faithful in his position. And he is honored because it is the king's discretion. And now he's raised up. He's paraded through the town. He is honored, friend. There is a king that desires to honor his people. It's not King Ahasaurus. There will be a day where the people of the Lord will be clothed in the righteous white robes of the saints. It tells us in the book of Revelations. And we will be draped in the clothes of his robe of righteousness. And we will set up on horses and go behind him as he goes and fights his battle. [20 : 28] And he parades through the town squares. And he will win victorious through the sword which comes out of his mouth. And I've always found it kind of odd that in the greatest battle that's ever been fought in humanity, in the history of humanity, that we, the saints of God, will wear white to it.

But it is not our robe that will be dipped in blood, but his. For we will be clothed with his righteousness, seated upon his horses, and following that king in a moment for those who have walked faithfully before him. notice the honor that is bestowed. The honor of Mordecai brings the adverse reaction to Haman. So notice the humiliation of the enemy. The honor that is bestowed in a moment is the humiliation that pronounces the end. Haman had said in his heart, Whom would the king desire to honor more than me? Be careful when we think we deserve the robes. [21 : 47] Be careful when we think we deserve the honor. Be careful when we think we deserve to be set upon the horse. For surely, pride goes before the fall. But it also says in the book of Romans, Romans chapter 12, verse 3, Paul tells the men, Do not think more highly of yourself than you ought but to think as to have sound judgment.

But it's important to introduce that the way Paul does. According to the grace that has been given to me, I say, so Paul is speaking from a position of being a recipient of grace. Paul says, I am what I am by the grace that is given to me and since it is by grace and through faith, I cannot think more highly of myself than I ought. We've talked about this before. The more Paul writes, the more truths he disclosed of the gospel, the less Paul thinks of himself. He begins in his writing as what? I am an apostle born out of due time. We find that very early in his early writings. and we find a little bit later, he goes a little further until the very end, the end of his writing, he says, I am the chief of all sinners. [23 : 07] For the longer he walked with Christ, the less he thought of himself and the more he understood it was according to the grace that had been given to him. Be careful when the spirit of Haman says, whom would the king desire to honor more than me?

Rather, we ought to be who would the king not honor more than me? For we know who we are, but in Christ, the grace given to us, it is the gift of the king upon the throne, not the result of our works. But here, Haman, Haman sought the honor Haman sought the robe, Haman sought the horse, and everything that Haman desired was given to Mordecai. Friend, listen to me. Jesus says that he saw Satan fall from the courtroom of heaven and a third of the host of heaven with him. And if you were to go to the book of Ezekiel, in the 38th chapter, I believe it is, that it tells us that the reason Satan fell out of heaven is because of pride. [24 : 26] He wanted to ascend the throne of God. He was not content to be around the throne, rather he wanted to be on the throne. And the reason he is your enemy is because he wants to be

on the throne of your life.

When we dethrone him by accepting Jesus Christ and making Jesus our Lord and Savior, he begins to battle against us, desiring to be enthroned again in our heart and in our mind.

He wants to be our ruler and our leader. And the desire of Satan has been for all of his existence, we cannot say in eternity past because he has not existed in eternity past, but since his creation, his desire has to be upon the throne.

First, he wanted to be on the throne of heaven. And when he was cast to the earth, he wanted to be on the throne of this earth. He tells Jesus that if you will bow down to me, I will give you all the kingdoms of this world.

He wanted to be enthroned. His desire is to be enthroned and his battle against us is because he wants the throne. What does Jesus tell us in the book of Revelation? But to he who overcomes, I will grant to him that he may sit upon my throne.

[25 : 33] The desire of the enemy becomes the reward of the faithful. And what Haman so wanted is what Mordecai was given. And in that moment, where Haman's head is lifted high for he has been honored by the king, Mordecai's head is lifted high, in the moment of his exaltation, Haman leaves with his head hung and covered in humiliation.

The moment God's people are exalted, the enemy is humiliated. It is the humiliation of the enemy. And it announces his certain doom.

It's astounding how the night before, Zeresh and his wise men were saying, construct a gallows and kill Mordecai. And now, after this humiliation, they say, if you've begun to fall before Mordecai, then you will not live.

By the time the sun sets, he will be hung upon his own gallows. For this is the man exalted in a moment when the sovereign leading hand of God ensures that his people are preserved as only he can.

Found in the book of Esther, chapter 6. Thank you, my brothers. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go.

[27 : 03] Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go.

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