

March 8, 2020 -

Esther 5: 1-14 -

“Esther Elaborates a Strategy”

Introduction

In Israel there is a Holocaust museum located in Jerusalem called Yad Vashem it is the official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. It is dedicated to preserving the memory of the dead; honoring Jews who fought against their Nazi oppressors and Gentiles who nobly aided Jews in need. It is here that the names of the Righteous among the Nations are perpetuated. The museum created a walled list of those described as Gentile protectors of Jews during the Holocaust. In their honor 2,000 trees have been planted all over the Mount of Remembrance to venerate the bravery of the many who acted on behalf of the Jewish people.

These people all reminded me of Queen Esther. The queen was convinced to act even under the threat of death when her cousin begged her to **not** remain silent about her Jewish heritage because she had been placed in this position “for such a time as this”. This would fall upon her so by faith...

I. Esther approaches the King - (5:1-5)

1. Esther waited, and because of the 3 day interval of fasting and prayer Esther was able to approach the moment of truth. As strange as it may seem to us, Esther was facing the death penalty for appearing before the king uninvited. While Esther and other Jews were fasting and praying God was filling her thoughts with a plan...She stepped into the presence of the king wearing her royal robes, calmly and confidently. **Prayer changes things! --- Frank B.**

2. In verse one the King is station at his throne facing the entrance of the inner court. In verse two it tells us that Esther found “favor” in the sight of the king. *The word translated as “favor” **Chen** means “grace,” “graciousness” or “acceptance.” --- Gospel.

It’s the same word used in Genesis 6:8, where “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.” So when the king saw her standing in the court, and realized how pleasing she was to him, he extended his golden scepter to her. He was please by God’s design to see her and offered her up to half the kingdom.

The Greek historian Herodotus remarks that this is an empty gesture but a willingness to be generous. (ex. your husband ask what’s for dinner; whatever you want.) He noted that Xerxes made such an offer before while married to Queen Vashti to his daughter-in-law who was his niece and his secret lover. It ended with Queen Vashti murdering both his brother and sister-in-law.

3. Esther showed diplomacy by wearing her royal clothing and then by not blurting out her ultimate request right away and touching the golden scepter. She wanted to first win the king's confidence in her - and she wanted Haman at the banquet (feast/meal) to ultimately expose his wickedness. We note that Haman had a plan an evil one and Esther now has a plan; two plans are in motion however it is only the third one that counts and that one is God’s plan.

---**Proverbs 19:21 & 21:1**

II. Esther's request at her first banquet. - (5:7-9)

1. Xerxes knows that Esther must have a very important request, because she would never have risked coming into his presence unless she had a very good reason. It appears that Esther made preparations for the banquet while she was fasting and praying. Esther prepared for the banquet because she trusted that God could do the improbable, even the impossible.

2. So once they were enjoying the banquet, the king restated the question he asked earlier. Now Esther could have brought up the issue right then, but for some reason, she sensed that one more day of preparation was needed. For some reason, as we will soon learn, God's timing required one more day. So Esther replied, "There is something important I need to say, but I will tell it to you tomorrow at a banquet that I want to have with you and Haman. What is that old saying?, "the way to a man heart is through his stomach".

3. John Gill an English Baptist pastor and biblical scholar, in his Exposition of this chapter concluded that Esther delayed her request partly in hope of increasing his affection to her, and partly to prepare him to expect an important request. Suspends!

Application:

This unexpected plan reminds us of the truth in **Isaiah 55:8-9** that God's ways are not like our ways. God's plans have often been most unexpected. We need to trust them over our own.

4. Haman goes out all puffed up after this experience with the queen. It looks to him as though he has won the king and the queen both to his side. He's got this in the bag. As he comes out his temperament is jubilant. The only thing that sticks in his craw is that outside the gate he sees Mordecai who will not honor, stand or fear before him. He was full of indignation against Mordecai. "The flesh lusts against the spirit" (Galatians 5:19-21) the only relief Haman can find is to indulge in a celebration of self-praise. He is a man full of pride and on a dangerous path.

Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips. --- **Proverbs 27:2**

III. Haman's plot against Mordecai. (5:10-14)

1. Haman tells them about what he's worth, how many sons he has, and most importantly, his special relationship with the king and queen, and how she has honored him by making him the only other guest along with the king at two parties. You would think that Haman would be satisfied with all his success, wealth, and power? No the Bible says that Haman told his wife: "But all this gives me no satisfaction (*no sha'va / profit*) as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate." (vv.13)

Application:

Pride is never satisfied without more. *Pride is essentially competitive. It gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next guy. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others.

*C.S. Lewis wrote the best explanation of pride I have ever seen. Here is just a little of what Lewis said: "There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except

Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty themselves. . .

2. So after listening to all this, Haman's wife and friends said: "Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy." This suggestion elated Haman, and he had the gallows built. Basically Haman's wife and friends said, "We're tired of hearing you complain about Mordecai, why you don't do something about it." They told him, "Why wait for the edict to be put into effect at the end of the year, build a huge gallows right now and hang Mordecai on it tomorrow."

3. So Haman took their advice and he had gallows built that were 75 feet high. The thing is seven-and-a-half stories tall. The gallows he had built were not the type from an old Western movie with a noose and a trap door, rather we are talking about a huge pole or stake for someone to be impaled upon. He was willing to kill this man just because his ego was bruise.

4. Notice that the plot was based on advice from ungodly people. (It is almost always a big mistake to get advice from ungodly people. (Psalms 1) And if you know the end of the story, you know that ungodly plotters plant the seeds of their own destruction. But the main thing to notice here is that ungodly plots are ultimately doomed to fail.

Conclusion:

Pride and conceit can be an evil thing. It drove Haman to embark on genocide. We have no scriptural evident that he ever place others interest before his own. Don't be a Haman! Pride can cause us to think we are better than others that they don't matter but God word teaches differ. --- Galatians 6:3