

ESTHER STUDY 7

This Vile Haman!

“It is easy to anticipate that this year will be very much like last and the one before it, when in fact, chances are good it will be altogether different. So when events begin to turn, realize that none of it is merely coincidental...Nothing is coincidental! “Luck” has no place in a Christian’s vocabulary.”¹ In Esther Chapter Seven, we see the mighty hand of God working through Esther once again. Luck truly has no place at the second banquet table. Only the great tact and wisdom granted to her by a God who loves His people intensely could have turned the heart of the king so dramatically.

During the wine course of the second Banquet, King Xerxes once again asks what Esther’s petition is. She responds directly to the King this time, “If I have won the King’s favor.”² Esther wisely used intimate language that immediately connected the king and queen on an intimate level, as husband and wife. She proceeds to tell the King that she and her people, the Jews, were sold to be destroyed, killed, and annihilated. As one commentator notes: She understands full well the delicate and precarious nature of her position. The threat against her and her people has two perpetrators, Haman and the king, and both are present with her. She must somehow fully expose the culpability of Haman while at the same time never appearing in any way to be bringing any charges against the king. Hence, her response is extremely well thought out and presented with the utmost tact.³

The king’s passivity had made him just as responsible for the deadly decree but Esther framed the situation to appear as though he was victimized as well. Using the three words, “destroyed, killed, and annihilated,” would help the king remember the decree and using the word “sold” presented the decree as something he was deceived or bribed into.

The king’s response is astonishing; the English translation cannot come close to disclosing the amount of emotion, anger, and rage conveyed when he commands Esther to reveal who this man may be. Things continue to crescendo as Esther matches the king’s emotion and boldly declares, “The adversary and enemy is this vile Haman!”⁴ “Brilliantly, she left out Haman’s identity in verse 3 so she could put a bow and arrow in Xerxes’ hands before she pointed him toward the target. Had he known from the beginning that the culprit was his own right hand man; the king might have protected him. What could he do but follow through?”⁵ Once again, we see Esther’s great wisdom as she uses the perfect place, time, audience, and words to deliver the truth. This day could have resulted in disaster just as easily as triumph. Esther put her life on the line again at this banquet hoping, praying, and believing the king would be favorable to her over Haman and he was. Her moment arrived and she did not hesitate to reveal the truth.

Pre-Article Questions:

1. Have you ever had a moment when you could finally tell the truth about someone or something that you had to keep a secret for a long time? How did it go or how did you feel leading up to the moment, in the moment, and after the fact?

1. Swindoll, Charles.

2. Esther 7:3

3. Commentator found in Beth Moore’s Esther Study.

4. Esther 7:6

5. Commentator found in Beth Moore’s Esther Study.

As the chapter proceeds, the king runs out and Haman falls to his knees in terror, begging Esther for his life. She did not move, although surely her heart was breaking in that moment. Imagine having a desperate man pleading with you for his life, all the while knowing full well the torturous death he will suffer if you remain silent. But if she had spared Haman, he would always have been a threat to the Jews, herself, and Mordecai. "To say here that Esther was merciless and unfeeling is to misinterpret the entire situation. Thus, while her heart might have prompted her to be merciful, logic and prudence restrained her." ⁶ Moreover, we must remember the history of Haman's people and God's heart toward them. From the beginning, Haman was an enemy of God and of His people. The job one Jewish man, King Saul, failed to finish, one Jewish woman, Queen Esther, finally accomplished.

In only a few minutes, Haman's life finally ended. What a scene, what a great God, and what a brave woman! "All the time Haman was having the gallows built, he could see - enthusiastically anticipate - Mordecai impaled there. Now, he is condemned to die there himself. We call this irony. Theologians call it sovereignty."⁷

Esther 7, NIV

1 So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, 2 and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." 3 Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. 4 For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king." 5 King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?" 6 Esther said, "An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. 7 The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life. 8 Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?" As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. 9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits stands by Haman's house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king." The king said, "Impale him on it!" 10 So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.

Prayer

Dear Father God, thank You that we can ask for wisdom in any situation we are facing and You will grant it to us. Thank You that You know the perfect words to say and actions to take always. Help us to know how to use wisdom and tact when discussing the truth with those You are calling us to. Help us to not shrink back in fear or doubt about what others will think about us if we are vulnerable about ourselves and our needs. Help us to confess our sins and receive the encouragement we need from other brothers and sisters in Christ. We see Your sovereignty in the Book of Esther and how You removed the enemy from her life and delivered the Dear Father God, thank You that we can ask for wisdom in any situation we are facing and You will grant it to us. Thank You that You know the perfect words to say and actions to take always. Help us to know how to use

6. Commentator found in Beth Moore's Esther Study.

7. Swindoll, Charles

(Prayer Continued)

wisdom and tact when discussing the truth with those You are calling us to. Help us to not shrink back in fear or doubt about what others will think about us if we are vulnerable about ourselves and our needs. Help us to confess our sins and receive the encouragement we need from other brothers and sisters in Christ. We see Your sovereignty in the Book of Esther and how You removed the enemy from her life and delivered the

Scripture Questions:

1. How do you think Esther must have felt going into this second banquet? Can you give any evidence that she was prepared to answer the question, "What is your petition, up to half the kingdom?"
2. Reread verse 4. Esther used a disclaimer that if they were being sold as slaves, she would not have bothered the king. How did this aid her in winning his attention and favor at that moment?
3. Why do you think the king ran out of the building once Esther accused Haman? What do you think was running through his mind at that moment?
4. How did the king's false assumption that Haman was molesting or coming on to Esther aid in the decision to impale Haman?

Application Questions:

1. Reread Esther 7:5-6 and glance at the subject matter in 2 Samuel 11 then read 2 Samuel 12:1-7a. How are these two stories similar in identifying the wrongdoing of a reluctant confessor?
2. The name Satan means adversary, Read the following scriptures that describe the character of Satan and compare his character to Haman who Esther describes as an enemy and adversary as well: 1 Peter 5:8, Ezek. 28:17, Isa. 14 13-14, Luke 4:13, John 8:44.
3. Has there been a time in your life or recently where you experienced any attack from Satan in any of the ways listed above? What helped you to overcome the attack or receive a breakthrough?
4. Telling the truth about ourselves costs us. It makes us vulnerable. Beth Moore states, "Sometimes you simply decide that people are worth telling on yourself." Our small group is a safe place to fall. Is there an area in your life you'd like to share about that you currently need encouragement from us this week?
5. For the first time Esther and Xerxes stood together on a matter. This was so powerful it produced a result immediately. When was the last time you were unified with another believer in prayer for someone or something? How did that prayer time go? Have you seen the result? Let's take some time to pray together as a small group for each other and for God to deliver us and our loved ones, "one of us can put a thousand to flight but two of us can send the legions fleeing."

Prayer Partner Assignment:

This week you will be meeting with a girl from your small group to memorize scripture, re-read the text for this week, and discuss what God is speaking to you through the Chapter. Please use this time to pursue the Lord together and deepen your relationship as sisters.

1. Memory Verse: 1 Peter 5:8
2. Please re-read Esther Chapter Seven