

Haman

An Extremely Arrogant Leader

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Overview

HAMAN WAS AN EXTREMELY ARROGANT LEADER

Haman's story is told in the book of Esther. The most arrogant people are often those who must measure their self-worth by the power or influence they think they have over others.

Haman was an extremely arrogant leader. He recognized the king as his superior, but could not accept anyone as an equal.

When one man, Mordecai, refused to bow in submission to him, Haman wanted to destroy him. He became consumed with hatred for Mordecai.

He was already filled with racial hatred for all the Jewish people because of the long-standing hatred between the Jews and Haman's ancestors, the Amalekites. Mordecai's dedication to God and his refusal to give homage to any human person challenged Haman's self-centered religion.

Haman saw the Jews as a threat to his power, and he decided to kill them all. God was preparing Haman's downfall and the protection of his people long before Haman came to power under Xerxes.

Esther, a Jew, became queen, and Mordecai's role in exposing an assassination plot indebted the king to him.

Not only was Haman prevented from killing Mordecai, he also had to suffer the humiliation of publicly honoring him.

Within hours, Haman died on the gallows he had built to hang Mordecai, and his plan to wipe out the Jews was thwarted. In contrast to Esther, who risked everything for God and won.

Haman risked everything for an evil purpose and lost.

Haman

Prime minister of Ahasuerus

Esther 3:1

Plotted against Esther and the Jews; thwarted by Esther and Mordecai

Hanged

Esther 3:1-6

Haman Seeks to Destroy the Jews

Mordecai refused to reverence Haman. The religion of a Jew forbade him to give honours to any mortal man which savored of idolatry, especially to so wicked a man as Haman.

By nature all are idolaters; self is our favourite idol, we are pleased to be treated as if everything were at our disposal. Though religion by no means destroys good manners, but teaches us to render honour to whom honour is due, yet by a citizen of Zion, not only in his heart, but in his eyes, such a vile person as Haman was, is contemned, Ps 15:4.

The true believer cannot obey edicts, or conform to fashions, which break the law of God. He must obey God rather than man, and leave the consequences to him. Haman was full of wrath.

His device was inspired by that wicked spirit, who has been a murderer from the beginning; whose enmity to Christ and his church, governs all his children.

Haman obtains a decree against the Jews

Esther 3:7-15

Without some acquaintance with the human heart, and the history of mankind, we should not think that any prince could consent to a dreadful proposal, so hurtful to himself.

Let us be thankful for mild and just government. Haman inquires, according to his own superstitions, how to find a lucky day for the designed massacre! God's wisdom serves its own purposes by men's folly. Haman has appealed to the lot, and the lot, by delaying the execution, gives judgment against him.

The event explains the doctrine of a particular providence over all the affairs of men, and the care of God over his church. Haman was afraid lest the king's conscience should smite him for what he had done; to prevent which, he kept him drinking.

This cursed method many often take to drown convictions, and to harden their own hearts, and the hearts of others, in sin.

All appeared in a favourable train to accomplish the project. But though sinners are permitted to proceed to the point they aim at, an unseen but almighty Power turns them back.

How vain and contemptible are the strongest assaults against Jehovah! Had Haman obtained his wish, and the Jewish nation perished, what must have become of all the promises?

How could the prophecies concerning the great Redeemer of the world have been fulfilled? Thus the everlasting covenant itself must have failed, before this diabolical project could take place.

The Jews Lament Their Danger

Esther 4:1-4

Mordecai avowed his relation to the Jews. Public calamities, that oppress the church of God, should affect our hearts more than any private affliction, and it is peculiarly distressing to occasion sufferings to others.

God will keep those that are exposed to evil by the tenderness of their consciences.

Esther Undertakes to Plead for the Jews

Ester 4:5-17

We are prone to shrink from services that are attended with peril or loss. But when the cause of Christ and his people demand it, we must take up our cross, and follow him.

When Christians are disposed to consult their own ease or safety, rather than the public good, they should be blamed. The law was express, all knew it. It is not thus in the court of the King of kings: to the footstool of his throne of grace we may always come boldly, and may be sure of an answer of peace to the prayer of faith.

We are welcome, even into the holiest, through the blood of Jesus. Providence so ordered it, that, just then, the king's affections had cooled toward Esther; her faith and courage thereby were the more tried; and God's goodness in the favour she now found with the king, thereby shone the brighter.

Haman no doubt did what he could to set the king against her. Mordecai suggests, that it was a cause which, one way or other, would certainly be carried, and which therefore she might safely venture in. This was the language of strong faith, which staggered not at the promise when the danger was most threatening, but against hope believed in hope.

He that by sinful devices will save his life, and will not trust God with it in the way of duty, shall lose it in the way of sin. Divine Providence had regard to this matter, in bringing Esther to be queen.

There is wise counsel and design in all the providences of God, which will prove that they are all intended for the good of the church.

We should, every one, consider for what end God has put us in the place where we are, and study to answer that end: and take care that we do not let it slip.

Having solemnly commended our souls and our cause to God, we may venture upon his service. All dangers are trifling compared with the danger of losing our souls. But the trembling sinner is often as much afraid of casting himself, without reserve, upon the Lord's free mercy, as Esther was of coming before the king.

Esther's Application Received

Esther 5:1-8

Esther having had power with God, and prevailing, like Jacob, had power with men too. He that will lose his life for God, shall save it, or find it in a better life.

The king encouraged her. Let us from this be encouraged to pray always to our God, and not to faint. Esther came to a proud, imperious man; but we come to the God of love and grace. She was not called, but we are; the Spirit says, Come, and the Bride says, Come.

She had a law against her, we have a promise, many a promise, in favour of us; Ask, and it shall be given you. She had no friend to go with her, or to plead for her; on the contrary, he that was then the king's favourite, was her enemy; but we have an Advocate with the Father, in whom he is well pleased. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace.

God put it into Esther's heart to delay her petition a day longer; she knew not, but God did, what was to happen in that very night.

Haman Prepares to Hang Mordecai

Esther 5:9-14

This account of Haman is a comment upon Prov 21:24. Self-admirers and self-flatterers are really self-deceivers. Haman, the higher he is lifted up, the more impatient he is of contempt, and the more enraged at it. The affront from Mordecai spoiled all.

A slight affront, which a humble man would scarcely notice, will torment a proud man, even to madness, and will mar all his comforts. Those disposed to be uneasy, will never want something to be uneasy at.

Such are proud men; though they have much to their mind, if they have not all to their mind, it is as nothing to them. Many call the proud happy, who display pomp and make a show; but this is a mistaken thought.

Providence Recommends Mordecai to the King's Favour

Esther 6:1-3

The providence of God rules over the smallest concerns of men. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without him. Trace the steps which Providence took towards the advancement of Mordecai.

The king could not sleep when Providence had a design to serve, in keeping him awake. We read of no illness that broke his sleep, but God, whose gift sleep is, withheld it from him.

He who commanded a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, could not command one hour's sleep.

Haman's Counsel Honours Mordecai

Esther 6:4-11

See how men's pride deceives them. The deceitfulness of our own hearts appears in nothing more than in the conceit we have of ourselves and our own performances: against which we should constantly watch and pray.

Haman thought the king loved and valued no one but himself, but he was deceived.

Haman is struck, when the king bids him do honour to Mordecai the Jew, the very man whom he hated above all men, whose ruin he was now designing!

Haman's Friends Tell Him of His Danger

Esther 6:12-14

Mordecai was not puffed up with his honours, he returned to his place and the duty of it.

Honour is well bestowed on those that do not think themselves above their business. But Haman could not bear it.

What harm had it done him? But that will break a proud man's heart, which will not break a humble man's sleep. His doom was, out of this event, read to him by his wife and his friends.

They plainly confessed that the Jews, though scattered through the nations, were special objects of Divine care. Miserable comforters are they all; they did not advise Haman to repent, but foretold his fate as unavoidable.

The wisdom of God is seen, in timing the means of his church's deliverance, so as to manifest his own glory.

Esther Accuses Haman

Esther 7:1-6

If the love of life causes earnest pleadings with those that can only kill the body, how fervent should our prayers be to Him, who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell!

How should we pray for the salvation of our relatives, friends, and all around us! When we petition great men, we must be cautious not to give them offence; even just complaints must often be kept back.

But when we approach the King of kings with reverence, we cannot ask or expect too much. Though nothing but wrath be our due, God is able and willing to do exceeding abundantly, even beyond all we can ask or think.

Haman Hanged On His Own Gallows

Esther 7:7-10

The king was angry: those that do things with self-will, reflect upon them afterward with self-reproach. When angry, we should pause before we come to any resolution, and thus rule our own spirits, and show that we are governed by reason.

Those that are most haughty and insolent when in power and prosperity, commonly, like Haman, are the most abject and poor-spirited when brought down.

The day is coming when those that hate and persecute God's chosen ones, would gladly be beholden to them.

The king returns yet more angry against Haman. Those about him were ready to put his wrath into execution.

How little can proud men be sure of the interest they think they have! The enemies of God's church have often been thus taken in their own craftiness.

The Lord is known by such judgments. Then was the king's wrath pacified, and not till then.

And who pities Haman hanged on his own gallows? Who does not rather rejoice in the Divine righteousness displayed in the destruction his own art brought upon him?

Let the workers of iniquity tremble, turn to the Lord, and seek pardon through the blood of Jesus.

Mordecai Is Advanced

Esther 8:1-2

What Haman would have done mischief with, Esther will do good with. All the trust the king had reposed in Haman, he now placed in Mordecai: a happy change.

See the vanity of laying up treasure upon earth; he that heapeth up riches, knoweth not who shall gather them.

With what little pleasure, nay, with what constant vexation, would Haman have looked upon his estate, if he could have foreseen that Mordecai, the man he hated above all men in the world, should have rule over all that wherein he had laboured!

Key verses:

“When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. Yet having learned who Mordecai’s people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai’s people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes” (Esther 3:5-6).

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

Matthew Henry Concise Bible Commentary