

# ESTHER

## Chapter 6

### *Mordecai Honored*

That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. <sup>2</sup> It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. <sup>3</sup> "What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?" the king asked. "Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered. <sup>4</sup> The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows he had erected for him. <sup>5</sup> His attendants answered, "Haman is standing in the court." "Bring him in," the king ordered. <sup>6</sup> When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?" Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?" <sup>7</sup> So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor, <sup>8</sup> have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. <sup>9</sup> Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!'" <sup>10</sup> "Go at once," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended." <sup>11</sup> So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!" <sup>12</sup> Afterward Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, <sup>13</sup> and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, "Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!" <sup>14</sup> While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

**Ch 6** A near-comic turning point in the plot. (TLSB)

**6:1** This verse marks the literary center of the narrative. When things could not look worse, a series of seemingly trivial coincidences marks a critical turn that brings resolution to the story. The king's inability to sleep, his requesting the reading of the annals, the reading of the passage reporting Mordecai's past

kindness, Haman's noisy carpentry in the early hours of the morning (5:14), his sudden entry into the outer court and his assumption that he was the man the king wished to honor—all are events testifying to the sovereignty of God over the events of the narrative. Circumstances that seemed incidental earlier in the narrative take on crucial significance. Just as in the Joseph story (Ge 41:1–45), the hero's personal fortunes are reversed because of the monarch's disturbed sleep (cf. Da 2:1; 6:18). (CSB)

The skeptics might call these events “luck.” We see them as a magnificent display of the providence of God. (PBC)

**6:2** The scribe was reading at the time from the annals that recorded events five years earlier (compare 3:7 with 2:16). (CSB)

Ahasuerus heard the report of how Mordecai had uncovered an assassination plot against him. (TLSB)

**6:4–6** Again, the irony is evident: Just as Haman had withheld from the king the identity of the “certain people” (3:8), so now the king unintentionally keeps from Haman the identity of the “man the king delights to honor” (v. 6). (CSB)

**6:4** *Who is in the court?* Ahasuerus wanted to consult with an adviser about how to reward Mordecai. (TLSB)

*Haman ... having Mordecai hanged.* Vicious irony. Haman arrived at the palace early in the morning, eager to tell the king that Mordecai must be executed. (TLSB)

**6:6** Ahasuerus and Haman had totally different agendas. The wording of the king's question is repeated six times in vv 6–11. The repetition becomes more humorous as Haman, swelled by his egotistical fantasies, vainly imagines that he is the one the king wants to honor. Ironically, the king keeps this person's identity secret, just as Haman had done when he requested the king to destroy a “certain people” (3:8). (TLSB)

**6:8** *royal robe the king has worn.* See 8:15; see also Introduction: Purpose, Themes and Literary Features. Cf. in the Joseph story Ge 41:41–43. Great significance was attached to the king's garment in ancient times; wearing his garments was a sign of unique favor (1Sa 18:4). To wear another's garments was to partake of his power, stature, honor or sanctity (2Ki 2:13–14; Isa 61:3, 10; Zec 3; Mk 5:27). Haman's suggestion is not only a great honor to the recipient, but it is also considerably flattering to the king: Wearing his garment was chosen instead of wealth. (CSB)

Great significance was attached to the king's garments. To wear the king's clothing was to partake of his power, stature, and fame. Haman's suggestion would not only bring great honor to the recipient but also be flattering to the king. A turban, resembling a crown, was even placed on the horse's head. (TLSB)

**6:10** *Hurry.* Repeated in vv 12, 14. Developments in chs 1–5 move rapidly to their destined conclusion. (TLSB)

*do so to Mordecai the Jew.* The king’s command must have floored Haman. That Ahasuerus should so honor a Judean suggests that he was unaware of Haman’s written decree to destroy this people (3:12–14). (TLSB)

**6:11** *Haman ... dressed Mordecai.* Sweetest irony. Haman removed Mordecai’s hair shirt and burden at about the same time Haman had planned for Mordecai’s execution. The outcome determined by Pur is reversed, revealing the powerlessness of fate and divination. (TLSB)

**6:12** *with his head covered.* A gesture of mourning (cf Jer 14:3–4) or embarrassment. (TLSB)

**6:13** See Introduction: Purpose, Themes and Literary Features. (CSB)

**6:13** Reversal of Haman’s fortunes was so shocking that his wife and friends concluded that his impending downfall was certain. They recognized the irresistible hidden force working on behalf of the Judeans. (TLSB)

**6:1–13** Ahasuerus, who is unable to sleep, hears of Mordecai’s good deed and decides to honor him. Haman happens to arrive at the court just in time to become the king’s agent appointed to honor the hated Mordecai. A skeptic might call this “luck,” but believers see these events as a display of God’s providence. A loving Father, not random chance, governs world affairs and rules all things for the good of His people. The hands that were nailed to the cross are the hands of God, who cares for you and me. • Thank You, Lord, for seeing the big picture in my life and for bringing me to this time and place. Amen. (TLSB)

**6:14** Guests were usually escorted to feasts (see in the Joseph narrative Ge 43:15–26; cf. Mt 22:1–14). (CSB)

*hurried ... to the feast.* Haman was engrossed in his own injured pride and might have forgotten the queen’s feast had he not been summoned. He must have gone with great misgivings. (TLSB)