

ESTHER

Chapter 6

The King Honors Mordecai

On that night the king could not sleep. And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, **the chronicles, and they were read before the king.** 2 **And it was found written how Mordecai had told about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, and who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.** 3 **And the king said, "What honor or distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?"** The king's young men who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him." 4 **And the king said, "Who is in the court?"** Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him. 5 **And the king's young men told him, "Haman is there, standing in the court."** And the king said, "Let him come in." 6 **So Haman came in, and the king said to him, "What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?"** And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" 7 **And Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, 8 let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse that the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown is set. 9 And let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials. Let them dress the man whom the king delights to honor, and let them lead him on the horse through the square of the city, proclaiming before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.'**" 10 **Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry; take the robes and the horse, as you have said, and do so to Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned."** 11 **So Haman took the robes and the horse, and he dressed Mordecai and led him through the square of the city, proclaiming before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."** 12 **Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. 13 And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of the Jewish people, you will not overcome him but will surely fall before him."**

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 robes be brought.* 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 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)

Esther Reveals Haman’ Plot

14 While they were yet talking with him, the king’s eunuchs arrived and hurried to bring Haman to the feast that Esther had prepared.

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)