

ESTHER

Chapter 7

Haman Hanged

So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther, ² and as they were drinking wine on that 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, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, 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 for destruction and slaughter and annihilation. 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 the man who has dared to do such a thing?” ⁶ Esther said, “The adversary and enemy is 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 gallows seventy-five feet high stands by Haman’s house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king.” The king said, “Hang him on it!” ¹⁰ So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king’s fury subsided.

7:2 See 5:3, 6. (CSB)

7:3 See 2:15, 17. (CSB)

If ... if. Esther prefaced her request with two conditional phrases. (TLSB)

wish ... request. Ahasuerus had used these words when asking Esther what she wanted (v 2). She repeated them as she begged for her own life and that of her people, whom she did not identify. By patiently honoring her husband Esther won his sincere care—a subtheme in Esther. Consider Ahasuerus’s concern for Queen Esther in contrast with his earlier contempt for Queen Vashti. (TLSB)

7:4 *sold.* Esther refers to the bribe Haman offered to the king (3:9; 4:7); she also paraphrases Haman’s edict (3:13). (CSB)

Bribe paid by Haman to Ahasuerus. (TLSB) *destroyed ... killed ... annihilated*. Esther quoted the wording of Haman's written decree (3:13). *slaves*. May reflect how Haman deceived the king when making his original request. (TLSB)

because no such distress ... king. See NIV text note. The statement probably means either (1) that the affliction of the Jews would be less injurious to the king if slavery was all that was involved, or (2) that Esther would not trouble the king if slavery was the only issue. (CSB)

destroyed ... killed ... annihilated. Esther quoted the wording of Haman's written decree (3:13). (TLSB)

slaves. May reflect how Haman deceived the king when making his original request. (TLSB)

loss to the king. Esther intimated that the king would suffer a great loss if he executed the decree. (TLSB)

7:5 Ahasuerus was either pretending ignorance of Haman's decree or was oblivious to what he had permitted (3:8–11). (TLSB)

7:6 *A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!* In breathless excitement, Esther labeled Haman as her people's vicious adversary. (TLSB)

Haman was terrified. Haman knew there was little hope for him. The fear previously felt by the Judeans 4:3) now filled his heart. (TLSB)

6:14–7:6 Haman hid from Ahasuerus the full consequences of his murderous plan to wipe out the people of Judah. The king may be deceived, but God is not. God also sees our motives and our inner meanness. God sees our every fault, large and small, open and hidden. But if we confess our sins—also those done in secret—He will forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1Jn 1:9). • Forgiving Lord, You see my secret sins and forgive them in Christ. By Your Spirit, help me amend my life and conform it more fully to reflect Your love. Amen. (TLSB)

7:7 *king arose in his wrath*. Ahasuerus was obviously angry at Haman but may also have realized his own guilt. (TLSB)

went into the palace garden. He left the wine to pursue sober reflection on what to do in light of the changing situation. Dismissing a high official, such as Haman, would likely have significant political implications for the king. That Haman still held his office is perhaps shown by the fact that the king left Haman and Esther together. (TLSB)

beg for his life. Irony. Haman now begs a Judean for mercy. (TLSB)

7:8 *falling on the couch where Esther was reclining*. Meals were customarily taken reclining on a couch (Am 6:4–7; Jn 13:23). It is ironic that Haman, who became angry when the Jew Mordecai would not bow down (which set the whole story in motion), now falls before the Jewess Esther (see 6:13). The king's

leaving the room sets the stage for the final twist that would seal Haman's fate. (CSB)

Esther was reclining on a cushion during the feast. How ironic that Haman, who wished to slay all Judeans because of Mordecai's refusal to bow to him, now bowed to Esther the Judean. (TLSB)

assault the queen. Ahasuerus perceived Haman's action as an attack on the queen, who had revealed his ill will. Such an assault would be high treason. (TLSB)

covered Haman's face. See 6:12; see also Introduction: Purpose, Themes and Literary Features. (CSB)

In preparation for his coming execution. Once again, the bag goes over Haman's head. (TLSB)

7:9 Before this moment there is no evidence that Esther had known of Mordecai's triumph earlier in the day (ch. 6); she has pleaded for the life of her people. Harbona's reference to the gallows in effect introduces a second charge against Haman—his attempt to kill the king's benefactor. (CSB)

Harbona. See Introduction: Purpose, Themes and Literary Features. He had been sent earlier to bring Vashti and thus set in motion the events that would lead to her fall and the choice of Esther (1:10); now he is instrumental in the fall of Haman and the rise of Mordecai. (CSB)

gallows ... standing at Haman's house. Towering gallows erected by Haman were widely visible. (TLSB)

7:10 *hanged Haman.* Haman was punished for a crime he did not commit (assaulting the queen), just as he had intended to destroy Mordecai and the people of Judah, though they were innocent of any crime. (TLSB)

subsided. See 2:1; see also Introduction: Purpose, Themes and Literary Features. (CSB)

7:7–10 Haman's end fulfills the words of Pr 26:27: "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back on him who starts it rolling." St Paul makes the same point: "Whatever one sows, that will he also reap" (Gal 6:7). When we find ourselves entangled in sin and its consequences, our only escape is to turn in repentance to Christ and receive from Him forgiveness and renewal. • Lord, when I fall, lift me up. When I stray, restore me to the paths of righteousness. Amen. (TLSB)