



Esther 4-6

CHAPTER 4

Chapter four of the book of Esther.

In the third year of the reign of King Ahasuerus, his wife Vashti refused his command to come in to the banqueting feast that he was having for his lords and his noblemen. Her stubborn refusal to obey created a crisis of sorts. He consulted his wisemen. They said, "If you let her get by with this, the women will be out of control throughout all of the kingdom. We go home, and our wives will be giving us a bad time. You've got to handle this, man, you've got to handle it now. You've got to handle it decisively." And so, it was suggested that she be deposed from being queen, which she was.

He then sort of became involved in some skirmishes with Greece, and coming back victorious. Four years had transpired, and he began to miss Vashti; and so, it was suggested that they make an announcement throughout all the provinces of Persia, that the beautiful young virgins should be brought in, have beauty contests, and bring in the most beautiful of them to go through the twelve months of purification by the bathing in oils and in perfumes, that they might come before the king, and whichever of these beautiful young gals that pleased him could become the queen, the rest would become a part of his harem.

And so, this was done; and among the beautiful young girls that came in for the appearance before Ahasuerus was Esther, who had been raised by her cousin Mordecai. They were Jews. He told her not to reveal her nationality. When the king and all of those there saw her, she was by far the outstanding choice, and she became the queen over the Persian empire.

And now, an incident took place in which there was a plot against the king's life. Her cousin Mordecai, who stood in the gate, became aware of this plot. He informed Esther, who told the king, in the name Mordecai, of the plot to assassinate him. They sent out the FBI, and they discovered that it was a true report; that there was indeed a plot. The men were put to death, and the king's life was spared because of this warning.

Now, some five years later, after Esther has been now queen for five years; there is a man in the kingdom by the name of Haman, who has been promoted to a position of great honor, second to the king. Haman was an Agagite, which means that he was from the tribe of Amalek, a descendant of Esau. In fact, Amalek was the grandson of Esau.

And there seemed to be a murderous hatred between Esau and Jacob from the time that Jacob stole the birthright, stole the blessing; he bargained for the birthright, but he stole the blessing of Esau, and Esau vowed to kill him. And now, years and years later, this same hatred and animosity seems to exist between the descendants of Esau, and the descendants of Jacob.

Haman, promoted to this position of honor, whenever he would walk out of the palace, all of those men standing in the gate would bow and do obeisance to him, with the exception of Mordecai. And the fellows at the gate, the servants there, said to Mordecai, "Hey, man, don't you know you're suppose to bow? The king has ordered that you do this honor to this fellow." And he said, "I am a Jew," by which he was saying that according to our law, we do not bow to any man to do obeisance, or worship, or honor. Thou shalt not bow down to worship any other God.

So, they finally reported to Haman, "Do you realize there's a fellow out here who refused to bow

when you come out, and he said the reason why is because he's a Jew. Does he get by with that?" And so, when Haman came out, he noticed this little Jew, Mordecai, standing, while the rest were bowing and doing obeisance, and it began to get under his skin. It began to disturb him.

And so, he was sharing with his family and friends how, though he had all of this great honor, he couldn't thoroughly enjoy it because of the insolence of this Mordecai, who would refuse to bow to him. And they said, "Hey, fellow, you've got all kinds of power, why don't you use it, get rid of the little guy? No problem." But he was so incensed; just to get rid of Mordecai would not satisfy this desire of vengeance, and so he determined upon a plot by which all of the Jews were to be exterminated. The hatred of Esau for Jacob, now being manifested in this descendant of Esau against all of the Jews.

So he came to the king, and he said to the king, "There is an ethnic group within our kingdom that are rebellious. They have a history of rebellion. They really will not bow, or do obeisance to the king. They're a danger. They're a constant threat within the kingdom. It would be to the benefit of the kingdom if we would exterminated these people.

And so, the king, and of course, he offered a him huge bribe, six million dollars or so if the king would allow him the privilege of exterminating these people; the king offered him his signet ring, the ring of authority. He said, "Do what you wish." And so, he made this proclamation. Of course, they got together, and because of the superstition and all, they needed to do it on the psychic day, and all, and get the moon and the stars, and everything in their proper positions. And so, they began to cast lots, month by month; shall we do it this month, this month, this month?

The plot was hatched in the first year of, I mean, in the first month of the year 510 BC. The lot fell on the twelfth month, which in our calendar would be the month of March. April is the first month in the Jewish calendar; and so, it would be the twelfth month, which would be March in our calendar, on the thirteenth day of the month, according to this casting of the Pur; and the Pur was the lot, p-u-r, and thus, they get the name "Purim", and the Jews celebrate the feast of Purim; Esther's deliverance for the people.

And so, it fell on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. And so, the decree was made, it was signed with the king's signet ring, and according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, such a document cannot be altered or changed, even by the king himself. And throughout all of the kingdom, this missile came, informing the people that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, all of the Jews within the kingdom were to be executed, and whoever would kill a Jew, he could have the possessions of the Jew that he killed. You could move in, take his house, take his goods, as long as you killed the family. Go in and exterminated them, and then just take their stuff. Sack them. And so, it was an incentive, really, to get rid of the Jews.

So, we then open with chapter four,

When Mordecai perceived all that was done,

That is, that this decree had been made and sent out throughout the kingdom,

Mordecai tore his clothes, and he put on sackcloth with ashes,

This sackcloth with ashes, of course, was the sign of extreme mourning. We remember how that Ezra, when he was informed of the sin of the people, tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and just sat there in a dazed state all day long; a sign of extreme sorrow and mourning,

and he went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

Now, you were not allowed to show any signs of mourning around the palace. No sign of sorrow there; and so, he left his usual position there by the palace gate, went out into the middle of the city, began to wail, began to cry, as was, of course, the oriental custom. He cried with loud and bitter cry.

So many times on the TV, you will find when they are taking pictures in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon, and all, where all of the conflict is going on, you will see these women wailing and crying. That's just a part of their whole custom. It's just cultural with them. Of course, here in the United States, it just grabs our hearts, because we have more of a tendency of going away in a corner and crying, or getting out of the public eye for our sorrowing. We sort of like to sorrow in the secret recesses of our home. But, they do it publicly. It's just part of their culture; just going out and really wailing and crying. Thus did Mordecai.

And came even before the king's gate; for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

You couldn't have this kind of apparel on coming into the king's gate. No signs of sorrow there.

And in every province, a hundred and twenty-seven of them, wherever the king's commandment and decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

I mean, they realized what this meant. There was coming that day in which they were to be exterminated; and realizing that this order was given, and it meant an end to the hopes of the Jewish people, an end to their race, no place to escape. The decree had gone out among all the provinces.

So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told her. And so, she was exceedingly grieved; and she sent clothes out to Mordecai, that he might not wear this sackcloth; but he would not receive it. And so Esther called for this fellow Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom had been appointed to take care of Esther, and all of their needs,

and she commanded him to go out and find out just what's wrong with Mordecai. Why is he wailing, and wearing this sackcloth and ashes?

So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which is before the king's gate. And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, of the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. And he also gave them a copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan, the copy of the decree to destroy the Jews, to show it to Esther,

So they, now doubt, had these posters up all over; these flyers. And so, Mordecai gave to Hatach one of these to show to Esther what was going on,

and then to charge her that she should in unto the king, and make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.

"Esther," he is saying, "you've got to go in and intercede for the nation, for your people."

And so Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. Again Esther spoke to

Hatach, and gave him a commandment to go out and say to Mordecai;

"Mordecai, all the king's servants, and everybody realizes, that it doesn't matter who you are, man or woman; you're not to come into the king's inner court, unless you've been called. And there is just one law for the violation of this; and that's that you're put to death.

In other words, "Mordecai, do you realize what you're asking me to do? You're asking me to jeopardize my life. Everyone in all the provinces know that this is a part of the protocol of the court. When the king is in his inner chamber, you don't just go in unannounced. You don't go in unless you've been invited to come in by the king himself. And, if you go in, you're put to death, unless the king would hold out to you the golden scepter. But I've not been called to go in there for around thirty days, and I just can't, I just can't do that. I just, that's against protocol."

And so, they told Mordecai the words of Esther, and he sent an answer to her. And he said, Esther, don't think within yourself that you are going to escaped though you're in the king's house, more than all of the Jews.

If this commandment goes forth, Esther, though you are the queen, though you are in the king's house, it is a kind of a commandment that you will not be able to escape.

For if you altogether hold your peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise for the Jews from another place; but you and your father's house shall be destroyed; and who knows whether thou are come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

First of all, we note Mordecai's tremendous faith and confidence in the purposes of God to be fulfilled. Though Esther may fail, God will not fail. The Jewish race shall be preserved. God has made promises and predictions for them that must be fulfilled, and Mordecai expresses tremendous faith in the purposes of God, knowing that they're going to be fulfilled, even if man fails.

I think of how Abraham, being tested of the Lord, when God told Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice on the mountain which the Lord would show to Abraham. God has said to Abraham, "Through Isaac shall thy seed be called." God had said, "Through your seed, all the nations of the earth are going to be blessed. That is, the Messiah will come from you." And then, God later said, "Through Isaac shall thy seed be called." Now, Isaac, though he was in his twenties at this time, had not yet had any children. God had promised, "Through Isaac shall thy seed be called, and now God is asking Abraham to do this unthinkable thing; not to withhold from God anything, even that which he prized most dearly, his son Isaac.

And God said, "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, and offer him as a sacrifice on a mountain which I will show you." And Abraham got his servants, and with Isaac, they began to journey a three day journey to the mountain, and on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes, and God showed him the mountain, and he said to the servants, "You wait here. I and the lad will go and worship, and will come again."

And we remember the story, how that Abraham raised the knife, having bound Isaac, and placed him on the altar, raised the knife, and then God said, "Hold it, Abraham. Behold there's a ram caught by it's horns in the thicket. Take him, offer it as the sacrifice. But now I see how that you will withhold nothing from Me."

Now, in the New Testament, it helps us to understand this whole story. It was a test of Abraham's faith, and Abraham had the promise of God, that through Isaac shall the seed be called. Isaac had not yet

had any children, and so, Abraham believed the promise of God, and felt that God will have to raise him from the dead to keep that promise, if necessary. God's got to keep His word. God is going to keep His word. Through Isaac shall the seed be called. Through Isaac shall the nations of the earth be blessed. Isaac, not having any children, God had to keep His word; so Abraham knew that Isaac would be coming back with him. In fact, he said to the servants, "I and the lad will go and worship, and will come again. We're going to come back again;" knowing that God would, if necessary, raise Isaac from the dead in order that He might keep His word.

That's the kind of confidence Abraham had in the Word of God. Would to God we had that same kind of confidence in the Word. You know, God's promised it. I know He's going to do it. I don't know how He's going to do it. That's His problem. If He has to work a miracle to do it, He'll work a miracle to do it. But I know that God has promised, and thus, I know that God cannot fail to keep His word. And so, Abraham, acting upon the promises of God, knew that, if necessary, Isaac would be raised from the dead.

Now, having this same kind of confidence in the promises of God, as God has promised the future for the Jewish people, the Messiah has not yet come, Mordecai, knowing the faithfulness of God in keeping His promises and keeping His word, knew that somehow, God would spare the Jewish people from this edict that he had been given. The idea that he's impressing upon Esther is; who knows, Esther, but what maybe God has chosen you to be the instrument in bringing to pass His purposes. Maybe God has brought you to the kingdom for such a time as this. Five years when you were chosen to be queen. Maybe God had positioned you for this very moment; for this very task of saving your people. Maybe that's why this all transpired before.

I do believe that all of us come to that place in life for which God has been preparing us. Paul, as he is writing to the Ephesians, said, "You are His workmanship. You've been created together in Christ Jesus unto the good works that God has before ordained that you should accomplish, that you should fulfill." In other words, what Paul is saying is God has set out a plan for your life. God has foreordained the work that He intends for you to do for the glory of the kingdom. He's already got it all worked out; but in the mean time, He's working in you to prepare you for that work that He's prepared that you should do.

Now, a lot of times, while we're in this time of preparation, as God is working in us, we're chomping at the bit. I'm prone to despise these days of small things. I want to see the purpose, the plan of God. I don't like this time of preparation. And many times, a person has a tendency to jump out ahead of the Lord. "I'm going to do it on my own." It's sort of like Jacob; "Lord, I've waited long enough, and now I'm going to handle it myself." Or, even like Abraham, the great man of faith; and finally his wife Sarah said, "Honey, it's not going to happen. Take my handmaid, and have a child by her; and I'll take it when it's born, and I'll raise it, and it'll be as my child." So let's help God out. The purposes of God are too slow in being fulfilled, or in coming to pass, so let's jump in and do it ourselves.

And so many times, we jump in ahead of God, and we find ourselves totally failing. But that's all a part of the training, too. Perhaps God is showing you you can't do it yourself; and so He allows you those times of failure. The wrong conclusion to make, though, is that, if you, in doing it yourself, fail, that it can't be done, or you can't do it. It was only a matter of timing. You can't really do it until God is ready to do it through you.

And so, God brings us, I do believe, to those places that He has been preparing us for; that moment that all of this life up to this point was being designed and planned and ordained by God to bring to this place of now beginning to see the fulfillment, and all of the purposes of God that He had in those earlier experiences that I did not understand; that hard school in which I was just weeping and straining, and enduring; but finally, I come to this place, and now, God has brought me to the kingdom for such a time as

this. This becomes God's time to do His work, and it's always exciting when we come to that time of life.

Now, the interesting thing to me is that in three days' time, Esther fulfilled the whole purpose of God for her life. The rest of it, she could just cruise and enjoy being queen. But in three days, all of the preparation up to that point was for these three critical days. God brought her to the kingdom for such a time as this. These three momentous days.

God is going to work. God is going to deliver His people. Esther, if you fail to fulfill the purpose of God, then when the decree is enacted, you're going to be destroyed with your family. I'm going to be wiped out, too. It's really designed against me, but you and your father's house, you'll be destroyed. God will save His people somehow, some way, because God has His eternal purposes for them, but Esther, maybe this is the reason why God's brought you to the kingdom. Who knows but what you came to the kingdom for just such a time as this.

So, she sent the answer back out to Mordecai to,

go and gather together all of the Jews that are present in this capital city of Shushan, and fast for me, do not eat or drink for three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.

Esther has a three day sentence of death sort of hanging over her. You fast and pray, have everybody fast and pray for me. My maidens and I will fast and pray for three days, and I will then go in, and if I perish, I perish.

Now, on the third day, Esther went in. We'll get that as we move into the next chapter, and the king raised his scepter; new life, resurrected life. The sentence of death is over. She lives.

Three days under the sentence of death, the third day, new life. Remind you of anything? As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; seaweed wrapped around him; as he said, hotter than hell. He said he thought he was in hell. "The waves were sloshing over me." If it were a whale, the mammal, the 98 degree temperature, with humidity, which must have been horrendous; but, the third day, deposited on the beach.

We already mentioned Abraham, who for three days journeyed with Isaac and the servants, and in the mind of Abraham, his son was dead. He knew his mission was to sacrifice, and as he would look at Isaac, he would think of what was going to transpire, and it was like he were dead. But, on that third day, it was like resurrection, because of the substitute ram that was caught by its horns.

And so, in a very clever, subtle way, through the Old Testament, God was setting the stage for that New Testament experience, where Jesus Christ, three days, three nights in the heart of the earth, but the third day, he rose again; life out of death.

And so, Esther said, "Fast and pray for three days, and I will go in."

So Mordecai went his way, and he did according to all that Esther commanded him.

CHAPTER 5

And it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel, and she stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house; and the king sat upon his royal

throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house. And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favor in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the scepter.

No doubt this was the protocol; if the king accepted you, and held it out, you'd come and touch the top.

And so the king said unto her, What do you desire, queen Esther; what is your request? It will be given to you to the half of the kingdom.

This, of course, was a typical kind of a overstatement that was made as a mark of generosity, and all. You remember when King Herod, the daughter of Herodias danced before him, and he was pleased with the dance, and so he called, and he said, "What do you want? I'll give you anything to the half of the kingdom." It was just a typical kind of exaggerated overstatement.

But Esther didn't ask for half of the kingdom, but she

answered and said, If it seems good to the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

I'd just like to invite you to come and banquet in my quarters; you and Haman with you.

And the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, so that he may do as Esther has said. And so, the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Now, this wasn't a, the banquets, this particular type of banquet wasn't, you know, where you have the pheasants, and the squab under glass, and wild rice, and that kind of stuff; it was just wines and desserts.

And the king said to Esther at the banquet of wine, What is you desire? What is your petition? It shall be granted to you. What is your request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

Again, this magnanimous offer to Esther.

And Esther answered , and said, My petition and my request is; if I have found favor in he sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the king hath said.

Want you to come again tomorrow, and tomorrow, I'll tell you what it is. It could be that she got cold feet. When it came down to the actual request, it could be that she felt "gulp", you know, and just a reluctance to do it, got cold feet. Like so often when we have something that we're not quite sure of, we're a little apprehensive, we like to postpone it. "Tomorrow, come, and let's do this again, and I'll tell you tomorrow."

So Haman went forth that day joyful and with a glad heart; but as he went out, here was Mordecai in the king's gate, and he did not stand, he did not move, he just sat there. And so, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

I mean, this just, here he goes out, “The queen invited me,” and he’s just so happy and joyful, and then he sees this guy, and suddenly the whole thing turns sour. “I can’t stand it.” It’s amazing how that our emotions can change so rapidly and happiness, you know, we’re just extremely happy, and it quickly can flip, and we’re angry.

I bought a new car once, because the dealer was coming to Calvary, and he told me to come over and he would cut the price way down and give me the car of my choice. So, he ordered the car from the factory; special made, and it was a beautiful car. He offered me all the options for nothing, so I put every option on that the factory had. I went over to pick it up, a beautiful car, and as I was driving that car home, I was just in, close to heaven. It was just, it was just such a comfortable car, such a beautiful car, and everybody was turning and looking. It was just one of those things that I felt, “Man, it’s mine. All mine.” And I was just praising the Lord. I was so blessed, “God, you’re so good.” My, the sky was blue, the world was beautiful, the trees were, it was just glorious.

On the way home, I stopped at the market to get a quart of milk, I think, and a loaf of bread that Kay was needing, and there in market parking lot, someone opened their door, and dinged the door of my brand new car. When I came out to get in, I hadn’t even got the thing home, yet; when I saw that, I was so totally sick inside. I got so angry and upset. Suddenly, the sky was a dark, dingy, smoggy gray; I’d never seen such horrible smog. People, I hate them. Why do I have to live on this earth with all of these rotten people who would do such an inconsiderate, unkind thing, and just open it careless; horrible, and oh, all the way home from the store, I was just in a rage. My brand new car; first new car I’d ever had in my life, and not even get it home. But so are the joys of the world.

Fortunately, my son, Chuck, was home, and he helped me. When he saw the ding, and I started into my rage to explain it, he said, “Ah, Dad, it’s all going to burn.” And I said, “Thank you, son, I needed that.” I was ready to kick a ding in the side at that; you know, it’s going to burn, so what. He corrected my perspective.

But the world is that way and here he is, “Ah, man, I’m big stuff,” and he sees this fellow, and suddenly, he’s in a rage. This guy’s not even moving for him, looking at him with disdain.

So Haman refrained himself,

He wanted to go home and go right over and grab him by the throat then, and do him in, but he refrained himself.

but when he came home, he called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife, and he told of all the glory and the riches, the multitude of his children,

“I have ten sons, and I have all of these riches, and the king has honored me, put me second in command, and I’ve got all of this. The king’s promoted me. He’s advanced me above all of the princes and the servants,” and then he went on to say, “and even Esther the queen didn’t let anybody come with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared, but myself. I mean, I’m getting in with the whole network. And tomorrow I’m invited unto her with the king again. I mean, I’m really big stuff. Yet,” he said, “all of this availeth me nothing as long as I see Mordecai the Jew just sitting there at the king’s gate. All of these blessings, all of this glory, is just totally dissipated by that little guy that sits up there.”

Isn’t it interesting how that something can get under our skin, and irritate us, and we just seem to forget all of the glorious blessings that God’s given us, because we’ve allowed some little irritant to just be there, and it keeps us from enjoying all that God has done, and all that God has provided. Oh, God, help us

not to lose that joy because of some irritant.

Then said Zeresh his wife and all of his friends unto him, Look, why don't you build some gallows, seventy-five feet high, and tomorrow you talk to the king about this Mordecai,

I mean, you're big stuff now. Talk to him bout this fellow Mordecai,

that he might be ganged on this gallows; and then you can go merrily with the king to the banquet.

I mean, then, when you go to the banquet, you'll be so happy. There'll be nothing to spoil you're joy, because this little guy will be hung, strung up on that gallows, seventy-five feet high.

And the thing pleased Haman;

and so right there in his own yard, he had this gallows made, seventy-five feet high.

CHAPTER 6

Now on that night,

Though the word "God" is not ever found in the book of Esther, yet God so permeates the book.

On that night, the king could not sleep.

A God-inspired insomnia. I do believe that there is God-inspired insomnia. I believe that the Lord wakes me up on many occasions at night. And if I do wake up in the night, I just say, "Lord, is there someone in need, special need? Someone in trouble? And I use the time to intercessory prayer. And I figure that God has awakened me; just maybe He wants some fellowship. And so, I always use that time at night, rather than cursing my sleeplessness, to just spend it with God, and it becomes precious time well spent in intercessory prayer, and just worship and praise.

The king couldn't sleep,

And so he commanded that they should bring the book of the records of the chronicles of the kingdom; that they might be read before the king.

Could be that he couldn't read, or it could be that he just figured some fellow reading this kind of stuff would put him to sleep; you know, the history and all, and as he read the account, maybe he'd think just that voice droning on would help him to go back to sleep.

And as he was reading to the king, it was found written, that Mordecai had told of the plot of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, who were the keepers of the door, who were going to try to assassinate king Ahasuerus. And the king said, What honor and reward was given to Mordecai for informing me of this? Then said the king's servants that ministered to him, We slipped up, king. We didn't do anything.

It's an oversight. We goofed.

Now, I can imagine that when Mordecai informed the king of the plot, and there was no reward, he

probably thought, "Hmm, that's a fine way to show appreciation. I saved the guy's life, and he doesn't do anything." And it was, of course, a part of the whole Persian court to show favors by great rewards, and so forth, and here Mordecai had done this deed of sparing the king's life, and he probably wondered, "Now, why not, Lord? Why did he not give something?" but God's timing, God's purposes. And there are times when we don't understand why there wasn't a response, there wasn't what we were expecting, and why didn't God allow it to happen. I mean, it should have, I mean, it was very natural; and we question many times why God has brought in this position, or why God hasn't doesn't this or that; but here now insomnia on this particular, critical night.

And the king said, Who is out there in the court? Now Haman had come into the outer court of the king's house, to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. And the king's servants said to him, Behold, it's Haman standing in the court. And the king said, Let him come in. So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What should I do to a man who I would like to show great honor to? Now Haman thought in his heart, Who would the king delight to honor more than me?

Look out for that ego.

And Haman answered the king, For the man who the king would like to honor, delight's in honoring, let royal apparel, the royal robes of the king be brought which the king himself is used to wear, and the horse upon which the king rides, and the royal crown which is set upon his head; and let this apparel and the horse be delivered into the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man whom the king delights to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor.

And Haman could see himself riding on the king's horse, wearing the king's robe, and the king's crown, and one of the noblemen going before him in the street, and all of the people going, "Ooh, aah."

Of course, in this, Haman is revealing what's in his heart. He is desiring the throne himself. He's desiring the honor and the glory of the throne.

Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as you have said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sits at the king's gate; and let nothing fail of what you have spoken.

Remember when Joseph faced his brothers at the death of Jacob their father? The brothers were now frightened. They figured, "Well, because of Dad, Joseph's been kind to us, but now that Dad is dead, he's going to get even for those cruel, wicked things we did to him." And so they came in bowing, doing obeisance and all to Joseph. And Joseph said, "Hey, fellows. Knock that stuff off. I know that you intended it for evil, what you did; but God intended it for good."

I love it the way that God turns things around. And things that were designed really to hurt or to harm, God will turn around for good. And I just love the way the Lord turns the tables on Satan so often. The Bible says, "No weapon that is formed against you will prosper." This is the heritage of the children of the Lord. You're a child of God. The Lord watches over you, and though there may be evil devices that are planned against you, God will reverse it. God will turn it for good, even as with Joseph.

Of course, the most classic of all would be that of Jesus Christ Himself, when Satan conspired to put Him on the cross, but yet, look at the blessings that God has brought out of the cross; our salvation, our

redemption. Satan intended it for evil, but God made it good.

And so, here is Haman; Man, how the table is turned; and he took him through the city, and then brought him back to the king's gate, and he hurried as fast as he could to get home, mourning, having his head covered. Man, I mean, he beat it for home just as fast as he could get home. I mean, this was it.

And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all of his friends these things that happened to him. And then the wise men and Zeresh his wife said unto him, Look, if Mordecai is one of those Jews, you're in big trouble, fellow. You will not prevail against him, but you will surely fall before him. And while they were still talking to him,

I mean, before he had a chance to just fully recover,

the king's chamberlains were there to hurry to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

The gauntlet is about to fall. And next Sunday, we'll see it fall.

Isn't it great to be a child of God? To have the affairs of your life ordered and directed by the Lord. To know that your life is in His hands, and He loves you, and He is watching over, and He is keeping you, and all things, all things are working together for good, your good, because you love God. And you can live with that kind of confidence. The purposes of God for my life are going to be fulfilled. And what is God's purpose for my life? That I should dwell with Him in the glories of His eternal kingdom. Oh, how glorious that is; to know that God loves me, watching out for me, taking care of me. But I want to be His instrument. I want to be sensitive. Who knows what God has in mind. Who knows what the future holds. We can only find out as we yield ourselves to serve Him, as we surrender daily our lives to be the instruments through which He can accomplish His purposes, and every day becomes an exciting adventure, because you just don't know what God has in mind for you today.

Let's pray.

Father, bless now, we pray, Your children. Watch over them and keep them in Your love. Let them know, Lord, the glory of Your presence consciously. May they become very conscious of Your nearness, as we walk in awe and in wonder of Your greatness, of Your power, and of Your love for us, all demonstrated in Jesus Christ, who gave Himself as a ransom for our sins. We give You thanks. In Jesus' name, amen.