

# MENTOR



# FOR LIFE

## BAIT & SWITCH

Last Week, we saw Haman having a no good very bad day. He would've felt so much better with one tiny little thing—killing Mordecai. Instead, Haman found himself parading Mordecai around on a horse dressed in the king's robe shouting, "*Thus, shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor*" (Esther 6:11) That had to be the worst day of Haman's life... or so he thought. Things perked up as the king's servant came to find Haman for the queen's exclusive dinner with just the king, the queen, and himself. Haman probably thought his day was looking up—that is, until he heard the queen's request.

### ESTHER 7

<sup>1</sup> So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. <sup>2</sup> And on the second day, as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." <sup>3</sup> Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request. <sup>4</sup> For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king." <sup>5</sup> Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?" <sup>6</sup> And Esther said, "A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

<sup>7</sup> And the king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king.

<sup>8</sup> And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. <sup>9</sup> Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." <sup>10</sup> So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

What are we supposed to think about Haman's death? Does his punishment reconcile with what we see in the New Testament about loving our enemies, forgiveness, & grace?

Stories like in our passage today sometimes cause us to think God is different between the Old and New Testaments. He's not. Sin must always be punished. We don't relish in sin or its consequences, but we trust in the one who sent his Son to take our place. Scan the QR code to learn more.



## DISCUSSION

Why do you think the author repeatedly referred to drinking wine in this passage?

1. For what does Esther ask in her response to the king? (Also, observe what she doesn't mention) (3-4)

2. What two things happened next and simultaneously upon the king's return? (8)

3. In reference to the gallows: (9-10)

-Who prepared it?

-For whom was it intended?

-Who occupied it?

4. Esther had asked the Jews of Susa to fast and pray (Esther 4:16). How did this passage show the fulfillment of those prayers?

5. How does God's dealing with Haman encourage you as you pray and step out in courageous faith?

What impossible thing are you asking God for? A friend's salvation? A circumstance outside of your control? If you need some encouragement, talk to your Coach today!

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

# MENTOR



# FOR LIFE

## STUDY NOTES

### ROUND 2

Famed 19<sup>th</sup> century preacher, Charles Spurgeon, wisely said, *“Discernment isn’t knowing the difference between right and wrong. It’s knowing right from almost right.”*

Most of life isn’t so black and white that we automatically know what to do and how to do it. Esther overcame the fear of trading her life just to enter the king’s presence in Esther 5. Just as challenging, Esther had to determine when and how to accuse the king’s right hand man of the villainy he had committed.

Although it’s unclear why, Esther refrained from informing the king of Haman’s plot to kill the Jews at the first feast she threw. Instead, she invited the king and Haman back to feast again. ***So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther.***

Haman had been having a no good very bad day. But, at the **second** feast, ***they were drinking wine*** and he could relax. Both men were full and content when ***the king again said to Esther, “What is your wish, Queen Esther?”***

### MENTEES MUST ACT COURAGEOUSLY

The Lord had moved in the king’s heart to ask the question with the promise, ***“It shall be granted you.”*** Esther sensed that the time had come to lay it all bear— ***Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated.”***

Notice that she made no mention of the edict or her Jewish heritage that condemned her along with her people. It’s unlikely that Haman even realized he was the culprit as Esther apologized for disturbing the king with this matter. She said with some sorrow, ***“If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king.”***

No person on earth has the ability to control the response of any other person. All we can do is act in accordance with God’s principles, pray, and leave the results to God alone. Esther had prayed and fasted along with the Jews in her city. The king responded exactly as all those people had prayed he would, ***“Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?”*** The king’s fury spilled over at anyone who would bring harm to his queen.

Right or wrong, I’ve always pictured this scene with the men reclining while eating. Esther and the king talked while Haman still picked at dessert. He was full, but the food was so good that Haman had just taken a bite as the emboldened Esther pointed his way, ***“A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!”*** The fork falling as eyes and mouth widened to the limit.

***The king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking*** and left the room. We don’t really know why he left, but ***Haman*** freaked out begging ***his life from the queen***. For the third time this chapter, the author reminds us that they had been drinking as ***the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was.***

***The king***, misunderstanding Haman’s fall, said, ***“Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?”*** Whatever the king pondered while he was away didn’t matter as Haman “just so happened” to fall on Esther, sealing his fate. With great irony, ***one of the eunuchs*** spoke up, ***“Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman’s house, fifty cubits high.”***

### ACTING COURAGEOUSLY BUILDS FAITH

The compassionate side of us sort of feels bad for Haman. Then, we remember that Haman ***had prepared the gallows*** (a giant spike sticking out of the ground) ***for Mordecai***. Haman’s pleading wasn’t out of sorrow, he readily plotted to kill an entire people group because of one man wouldn’t fall before him. For all intents and purposes, his authority was the king’s authority. It’s only when he lost control of the king that, in another great irony, he fell before Jewish Esther.

Again, God is never mentioned, but here too we see his hand at work. Esther and the other Jews had fasted & prayed. But, how could they stop the second most powerful man in the world? Whatever the king had in store when he returned, when Haman fell, that was it. God moved to stop the evil Haman in a most unexpected way—and to do so on the very device he intended for his nemesis only added to the punishment.

Faith isn’t built sitting in the bleachers. It’s when we get in the game, when we seek him and serve him, that our faith grows. If we’re only doing that which we can accomplish in our own power, what courage is that? Courage is depending on God for the impossible—for things only ***he*** can do. Stepping out like that not only builds faith, but allows us to participate in the eternal.