

# CHAPTER 7

We are now to attend the second banquet to which the king and Haman were invited: and there,

**I.** Esther presents her petition to the king for her life and the life of her people (v. 1-4).

**II.** She plainly tells the king that Haman is the man who designed her ruin and the ruin of all her friends (v. 5, 6).

**III.** The king thereupon gave orders for the hanging of Haman upon the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai, which was done accordingly (v. 7-10). And thus, by the destruction of the plotter, a good step was taken towards the defeating of the plot.

## ESTHER 7:1-6

### HAMAN ACCUSED BY ESTHER

The king in humour, and Haman out of humour, meet at Esther's table. Now,

**I.** The king urged Esther, a third time, to tell him what her request was, for he longed to know, and repeated his promise that it should be granted, v. 2. If the king had now forgotten that Esther had an errand to him, and had not again asked what it was, she could scarcely have known how to renew it herself; but he was mindful of it, and now was bound with the threefold cord of a promise thrice made to favour her.

**II.** Esther, at length, surprises the king with a petition, not for wealth or honour, or the preferment of some of her friends to some high post, which the king expected, but for the preservation of herself and her countrymen from death and destruction, v. 3, 4.

**1.** Even a stranger, a criminal, shall be permitted to petition for his life; but that a friend, a wife, should have occasion to present such a petition was very affecting: *Let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request.* Two things bespeak lives to be very precious, and fit to be saved, if innocent, at any expense: —

(1.) Majesty. If it be a crowned head that is struck at, it is time to stir. Esther's was such: "*Let my life be given me. If thou hast any affection for the wife of thy bosom, now is the time to show it; for that is the life that lies at stake.*"

(2.) Multitude. If they be many lives, very many, and those no way forfeited, that are aimed at, no time should be lost nor pains spared to prevent the mischief. "It is not a friend or two, but *my people*, a whole nation, and a nation dear to me, for the saving of which I now intercede."

2. To move the king the more she suggests,

(1.) That she and her people were bought and sold. They had not sold themselves by any offence against the government, but were sold to gratify the pride and revenge of one man.

(2.) That it was not their liberty only, but their lives that were sold. "Had we been sold" (she says) "into slavery, I would not have complained; for in time we might have recovered our liberty, thought eh king would have made but a bad bargain of it, and not have increased his wealth by our price. Whatever had been paid for us, the loss of so many industrious hands out of his kingdom would have been more damage to the treasury than the price would countervail." To persecute good people is as impolitic as it is impious, and a manifest wrong to the interests of princes and states; they are weakened and impoverished by it. But this was not the case. *We are sold* (says she) *to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish*; and then it is time to speak. She refers to the words of the decree (~~TRIS~~ Esther 3:13), which aimed at nothing short of their destruction; this would touch in a tender part if there were any such in the king's heart, and would bring him to relent.

III. The king stands amazed at the remonstrance, and asks (v. 5) "*Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? What! contrive the murder of the queen and all her friends? Is there such a man, such a monster rather, in nature? Who is he, and where is he, whose heart has filled him to do so?*" Or, Who hath *filled his heart*. He wonders,

1. That any one should be so bad as to think such a thing; Satan certainly filled his heart.

2. That any one should be so bold as to do such a thing, should have his heart so fully set in him to do wickedly, should be so very daring. Note,

(1.) It is hard to imagine that there should be such horrid wickedness committed in the world as really there is. Who, where is he, that dares, presumes, to question the being of God and his providence, to banter his oracles, profane his name, persecute his people, and yet bid defiance to his wrath? Such there are, to think of whom is enough to make *horror take hold of us*, ~~1885~~ Psalm 119:53.

(2.) We sometimes startle at the mention of that evil which yet we ourselves are chargeable with. Ahasuerus is amazed at that wickedness which he himself is guilty of; for he consented to that bloody edict against the Jews. *Thou art the man*, might Esther too truly have said.

IV. Esther plainly charged Haman with it before his face: “Here he is, let him speak for himself, for therefore he is invited: *The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman* (v. 6); it is he that has designed our murder, and, which is worse, has basely drawn the king in to be *particeps criminis* — a *partaker of his crime*, ignorantly agreeing to it.”

V. Haman is soon apprehensive of his danger: *He was afraid before the king and queen*; and it was time for him to fear when the queen was his prosecutor, the king his judge, and his own conscience a witness against him; and the surprising operations of Providence against him that same morning could not but increase his fear. Now he has little joy of his being invited to the banquet of wine, but finds himself in straits when he thought himself *in the fulness of his sufficiency*. *He is cast into a net by his own feet*.

## ~~1700~~ ESTHER 7:7-10

### HAMAN HANGED UPON HIS OWN GALLOWS

Here,

I. The king retires in anger. He rose from table in a great passion, and *went into the palace garden* to cool himself and to consider what was to be done, v. 7. He sent not for his *seven wise counsellors who knew the times*, being ashamed to consult them about the undoing of that which he had rashly done without their knowledge or advice; but he went to walk in the garden awhile, to compare in his thoughts what Esther had now informed

him of with what had formerly passed between him and Haman. And we may suppose him,

1. Vexed at himself, that he should be such a fool as to doom a guiltless nation to destruction, and his own queen among the rest, upon the base suggestions of a self-seeking man, without examining the truth of his allegations. Those that do things with self-will reflect upon them afterwards with self-reproach.
2. Vexed at Haman whom he had laid in his bosom, that he should be such a villain as to abuse his interest in him to draw him to consent to so wicked a measure. When he saw himself betrayed by one he had caressed he was full of indignation at him; yet he would say nothing till he had taken time for second thoughts, to see whether they would make the matter better or worse than it first appeared, that he might proceed accordingly. When we are angry we should pause awhile before we come to any resolution, as those that have *a rule over our own spirits* and are governed by reason.

**II.** Haman becomes a humble petitioner to the queen for his life. He might easily perceived by the king's hastily flying out of the room that *there was evil determined against him*. For *the wrath of a king*, such a king, *is as the roaring of a lion* and as *messengers of death*; and now see,

1. How mean Haman looks, when he stands up first and then falls down at Esther's feet, to beg she would save his life and take all he had. Those that are most haughty, insolent, and imperious, when they are in power and prosperity, are commonly the most abject and poor-spirited when the wheel turns upon them. Cowards, they say, are most cruel, and then consciousness of their cruelty makes them the more cowardly.
2. How great Esther looks, who of late had been neglected and doomed to the slaughter *tanquam ovis — as a sheep*; now her sworn enemy owns that he lies at her mercy, and begs his life at her hand. Thus did God *regard the low estate of his handmaiden* and *scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts*, <sup>(~~118~~)</sup>Luke 1:48, 51. Compare with this that promise made to the Philadelphian church (<sup>(~~118~~)</sup>Revelation 3:9), *I will make those of the synagogue of Satan to come and to worship before thy feet and to know that I have loved thee*. The day is coming when those that hate and persecute God's chosen ones would gladly be beholden to them. *Give us of your oil. Father Abraham, send Lazarus. The upright shall have dominion in the morning.*

**III.** The king returns yet more exasperated against Haman. The more he thinks of him the worse he thinks of him and of what he had done. It was but lately that every thing Haman said and did, even that which was most criminal, was taken well and construed to his advantage; now, on the contrary, what Haman did that was not only innocent, but a sign of repentance, is ill taken, and, without colour of reason, construed to his disadvantage. He lay in terror at Esther's feet, to beg for his life. What! (says the king) *will he force the queen also before me in the house?* Not that he thought he had any such intention, but having been musing on Haman's design to slay the queen, and finding him in this posture, he takes occasion from it thus to vent his passion against Haman, as a man that would not scruple at the greatest and most impudent piece of wickedness. "He designed to slay the queen, and to slay her *wish me in the house*; will he in like manner force her? What! ravish her first and then murder her? He that had a design upon her life may well be suspected to have a design upon her chastity."

**IV.** Those about him were ready to be the instruments of his wrath. The courtiers that adored Haman when he was the rising sun set themselves as much against him now that he is a falling star, and are even glad of an occasion to run him down: so little sure can proud men be of the interest they think they have.

**1.** As soon as the king spoke an angry word *they covered Haman's face*, as a condemned man, not worthy any more either to see the king or to be seen by him; they marked him for execution. Those that are hanged commonly have their faces covered. See how ready the servants were to take the first hint of the king's mind in this matter. *Turba Romae sequitur fortunam, et semper et odit damnatos* — *The Roman populace change as the aspects of fortune do, and always oppress the fallen.* If Haman be going down, they all cry, "Down with him."

**2.** One of those that had been lately sent to Haman's house, to fetch him to the banquet, informed the king of the gallows which Haman had prepared for Mordecai, v. 9. Now that Mordecai is the favourite the chamberlain applauds him — he *spoke good for the king*; and, Haman being in disgrace, every thing is taken notice of that might make against him, incense the king against him, and fill up the measure of his iniquity.

**V.** The king gave orders that he should be hanged upon his own gallows, which was done accordingly, nor was he so much as asked what he had to say why this judgment should not be passed upon him and execution awarded. The sentence is short — *Hang him thereon*; and the execution speedy — *So they hanged Haman on the gallows*, v. 10. See here,

**1.** Pride brought down. He that expected every one to do him homage is now made an ignominious spectacle to the world, and he himself sacrificed to his revenge. God resists the proud; and those whom he resists will find him irresistible.

**2.** Persecution punished. Haman was upon many accounts a wicked man, but his enmity to God's church was his most provoking crime, and for *that* the God to whom vengeance belongs here reckons with him, and, though his plot was defeated, gives him *according to the wickedness of his endeavours*, <sup><19204></sup>Psalm 28:4.

**3.** Mischief returned upon the person himself that contrived it, the *wicked snared in the work of his own hands*, <sup><19075></sup>Psalm 7:15, 16; 9:15, 16. Haman was justly hanged on the very gallows he had unjustly prepared for Mordecai. If he had not set up that gallows, perhaps the king would not have thought of ordering him to be hanged; but, if he rear a gallows for *the man whom the king delights to honour*, the thought is very natural that he should be ordered to try it himself, and see how it fits him, see how he likes it. The enemies of God's church have often been thus taken in their own craftiness. In the morning Haman was designing himself for the robes and Mordecai for the gallows; but the tables are turned: Mordecai has the crown, Haman the cross. *The Lord is known by such judgments*. See <sup><1018></sup>Proverbs 11:8; 21:18.

*Lastly*, The satisfaction which the king had in this execution. *Then was the king's wrath pacified*, and not till then. He was as well pleased in ordering Haman to be hanged as in ordering Mordecai to be honoured. Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to take vengeance on. God saith of wicked men (<sup><1613></sup>Ezekiel 5:13), *I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted*.