

Lesson 68

Mordecai's Reward and Haman's End

Esther 6:1-7:10



Teacher, please remember that the commentary below is intended to help you in your study, not to be read to your students. Make your own list of applications, using the help from the commentary, but don't necessarily try to cover everything! Think of the students in your class, then be prayerfully selective.

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1. Preparation

- 1) Choose memory verse
- 2) Select one attention grabber to start off lesson / break the ice - optional, recommended for younger classes. (see point 7)
- 3) Suggested activities- optional, recommended for younger children (see point 8)

2. Memory verse

Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

3. Theme

Pride goes before a fall, but God will reward His people in His time and in His way.

4. Lesson introduction

Do you remember our lesson last week? Proud Haman, carried away by his anger with Mordecai the Jew—the man who would not bow to him—built a gallows 75 feet high. Will Mordecai hang on that gallows? And what about the Jewish people? Remember, Haman had persuaded the king to sign a decree that all the Jewish people be destroyed on a certain day. It did not look good. Yet God is the defender of His people, and the story will continue to unfold.

Remember from a previous lesson, Mordecai had heard of a plot to kill the king and had taken immediate action to warn him. Mordecai asked for no reward for his deed, and no reward was given. The matter seemed to have been forgotten. However, one night the king could not sleep, and he asked that the "records of the chronicles" (a sort of daily journal or history of the kingdom) be read before him.

The story of Esther is amazing. For throughout the story, we see the hand of God working behind the scenes to deliver His people in their great time of need. Do you remember the story? Wicked Haman, angry at Mordecai, the Jew, who would not bow to honor him, convinced the King of Persia to sign a decree that would annihilate Mordecai and all the Jewish people on a certain day. Still discontent to see Mordecai not bowing, he determined to hang Mordecai on a 75 foot gallows he had prepared—all he needed was the king's permission.

But, even as Haman sought permission to carry out his evil deed, a servant was reading the king the "records of the chronicles." Reminded that Mordecai had saved his life, the king desired to honor Mordecai. Haman began to see the tables turning on him. How could he ask the king's permission to hang a man the king commanded to honor? As God moved to protect Mordecai and the Jewish people, things would get even worse for proud Haman.

Remember Esther, the cousin of Mordecai, who had become the Queen of Persia? Mordecai had called upon Esther to entreat the king on behalf of her people. He encouraged her, "For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14). Esther knew to approach the king without invitation could endanger her very life; yet after prayer and fasting, Esther determined to go to the king on behalf of her people.

The king received Esther's approach. Esther invited the king and Haman to a banquet, then another banquet. At this second banquet, she is ready to entreat the king. The king will be quite surprised to find his queen is a Jew. Haman will be surprised, too!

Verse by Verse Commentary

Esther 6:1-3

When the record was read to the king, he wanted to know how Mordecai had been rewarded for his loyalty and action to protect him. Though it may have seemed Mordecai's good deed would go unnoticed by man, God saw everything. God does not forget the actions of the upright in heart. Though no one else may observe our heart-felt labors or good deeds, *God will reward us in His time and way.*

Esther 6:4-5

When the king learned that Mordecai had not been rewarded at all, he wanted to know who was in the court. He probably wanted to consult his leaders to see what could be done—"what honor or dignity" could be bestowed upon Mordecai? Haman "just happened" to be in the king's court. He had come to ask the king's permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had built. The king ordered the attendants to bring Haman in. Do these events seem planned? Haman, filled with pride and love for himself, had come in to the court to present his selfish request to the king—to see Mordecai hung on the gallows he had built. The king also had Mordecai on his mind at just that time, but for quite a different reason. Our God is awesome and able to deliver us!

Esther 6:6

When Haman came into the court, the king asked Haman's opinion on what would be a good reward for someone who pleases the king—"...The man the king delights to honor." Naturally, Haman thought the king was referring to him. Captive to his own pride, Haman always thought of himself. Who else would the king be so pleased with and desire to honor? *Pride goes before a fall.*

Esther 6:7-9

Since Haman thought the honor was to be his, he suggested that this person wear the king's clothes, ride the king's horse, and be led through the city, proclaiming how the king honors those who please him. Imagining himself as the one being honored, Haman loved this plan! This would show everyone how important he really was. Little did Haman know that one he most despised, Mordecai, was the one the king had determined to honor. *Pride goes before a fall.*

Suggested activity: Honor Race

Esther 6:10

Much to Haman's surprise and dismay, the person to be honored was Mordecai, the very one he was seeking the king's permission to hang on his gallows. To make matters worse, the king ordered Haman to be the one to lead Mordecai through the streets and honor him in the manner that Haman had suggested. Can you imagine? After all of the evil that Haman had planned for Mordecai in his heart, he now must honor Mordecai! God had certainly turned the tables! Could God have been trying to teach Haman a lesson about pride and humility? *Pride goes before a fall.*

Esther 6:11-12

So Haman got the robes, the horse, and led Mordecai through the streets, calling out to everyone that this is how the king honors those who please him. Haman returned home, humbled, embarrassed, and very upset.

Does it make you wonder how enthusiastic he was as he gave his proclamation?

Esther 6:13

When he returned home and told his wife, friends, and advisors what had happened to him, their tone was quite different. It did not look so good for Haman, now. It looked as though his evil plan could backfire on him. He was now in a very tough spot. How could he ask the king to kill Mordecai, now, after the king had honored him? Things were about to get even worse for Haman! *Pride goes before a fall.*

Esther 6:14

While Haman's wife and friends were giving him advice, the king's men came to pick him up for the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Haman was a proud man—he felt the world revolved around him. Indeed, he had a position of great power and prestige. He loved the praise of men as they acknowledged his greatness. Mordecai, the Jew, honored God above any man and would not bow as Haman passed by. Consumed by his pride, anger, and hatred, Haman sought to destroy Mordecai and all the people who worshipped his God. But, Haman's wicked deeds are turning on him. How foolish Haman was! As it says in Proverbs 16:18: "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

May we be cautious and guard our lives against pride, anger, hatred, bitterness—the things God hates. It is not a wise thing for one to be at odds with God, especially when you consider, God desires we have a meaningful, fruitful, abundant life as we yield to Him. A life dominated by our fleshly nature, centered on ourselves, will only bring us misery. Haman was miserable. Even when it seemed he had it all, he could not be satisfied because one little person would not bow. Now, he will reap the consequences of his self-centered life. Pride goes before a fall.

The Bible says God sees everything. He saw the situation of Mordecai and His people. God protected Mordecai from Haman's wicked plot and God will protect the Jewish people. God also saw Haman and observed his ways. Psalm 18:27 states, "For You will save the humble people, but will bring down haughty looks."

Esther 7:1-4

Again, at the second banquet Esther prepared, the king asked Esther for her petition and promised her it would be granted. At this time, Esther boldly entreated the king for her own life and the life of her people.

Suggested activity: Trust and Twirl

Esther 7:5-6

Astonished, the king questioned, "Who would dare murder his queen and her people?" Esther quickly identified "wicked" Haman as the "adversary and enemy." The king, now, realized Esther, his queen, was a Jew, condemned to die under Haman's crusade to kill the Jews (Esther 2:10, 3:8-9). Haman's wicked plot to destroy Mordecai and the Jews had turned against him. He stood before the king and queen terrified. He had nowhere to run, nowhere to hide.

Esther 7:7-8

Overwhelmed by Esther's revelation and no doubt filled with anger, the king now went outside to his palace garden. Persuaded by Haman, the king had made a decree to destroy the Jewish people on a certain day. Once a king makes a decree, it cannot be reversed or changed. It becomes law! Queen Esther was special to the king and the thought of her now under his own edict, sentenced to be killed, must have broken his heart. While the king strolled the palace garden, Haman began to beg Esther to spare his life, "for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king." How quickly the tables can turn on the wicked!

Haman fell on the couch with Esther, perhaps because his fear and emotions had overcome him, perhaps also because he had indulged himself in the wine at the banquet and could not keep good balance. It was not good timing for Haman; for at just that moment, the king walked back in. Disgusted with Haman's actions, the king

accused Haman of assaulting the queen. Haman was now a doomed man, suffering the consequences of his wicked heart.

Esther 7:9-10

Harbonah, one of the king's seven eunuchs (Esther 1:10), wasted no time in telling the king about the gallows which Haman had built during the previous night to kill Mordecai, the man who the king had just honored for saving his life (Esther 5:14). Without any hesitation, the king ordered Haman to be taken and hung on the gallows he had built for Mordecai.

Proud Haman would be hung on the gallows he built in his anger and hatred of Mordecai. Proverbs 26:27 warns, "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him."

God had seen the desperate situation of Mordecai and His people. God had seen the wickedness of Haman—his pride, anger, and hatred. As the story in Esther comes to a close, we see that it was God who orchestrated the events that transpired. God's hand was upon Esther as she was chosen Queen of Persia. She was in the right place at the right time to be an instrument in God's hands. God's hand was on Mordecai as he revealed a plot that saved the king's life and was, later, remembered by the king at just the right time—the very time Haman intended to ask permission to hang Mordecai.

Our God can turn trials into triumphs. No matter our circumstances, we can go to God in prayer, and He will help. How will you respond when a trial comes your way? Will you realize God is in control, even if the situation seems "out of control." Will you trust He is working all things together for His good purposes though you may not see it at the time (Romans 8:28). No difficulty is insurmountable to God, and no weapon formed against you will prosper.

The rest of the book of Esther explains that the king of Persia made an additional decree that the Jews could defend themselves when they were attacked. When the day came when the people of the land tried to destroy the Jews, God's people were able to take weapons to counter the attack, and they won a great victory instead of being defeated. ***God knows how to reward His people at the right time and place!***

5. Prayer

Lead the children in a prayer of praise and adoration to God. Ask the Lord to protect them from pride and to give them a humble heart. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving that God turns our trials into triumphs. Ask the children to share any specific trials that they may be experiencing and pray for those situations. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

6. Attention Grabbers

Option 1: A Moment of Honor

This game will be a great way for the children in your class to get to know one another as well as be introduced to the lesson today.

You will need a nametag for each child in your class. Have all of the children sit in a circle. Choose one child to stand in the middle. The teacher will begin by calling out the name of one of the children sitting in the circle. That child is to name their favorite Bible hero and then call out someone else's name. But this has to be done before the child in the center tags them. The child speaking must remain seated. The catch is that they must say their favorite Bible character before they get tagged. If the child from the center tags the child called on before they say their favorite Bible character then that child becomes the center child and the center child will take that person's place.

Rotate so everyone has a turn to speak. Optional: To spice it up a bit, you could have a small ball for the children to pass around as they call out the names. This will also help the center person to pinpoint quicker who to tag if they are finding it difficult. It's fun when it's our turn. We all enjoy a chance to be noticed and heard. In today's lesson, someone will have his turn to be honored.

Option 2: Where's My Shoes?

Divide the class into two teams. Sit on opposite sides of the room. Have everyone take off their shoes and pile their shoes in the center of the room. Let the two teams mix them together. Have the two teams go back, sit down together, and close their eyes. Have them count to 25 slowly.

While they are counting and have their eyes closed, mix up and hide their shoes (in trash can, outside classroom, under chairs, etc.). After they have counted to 25 say, "Go!" and allow them to find their own shoes and put them on. The first team to have all their own shoes on, laced or buckled up wins.

Today, we are going to learn that the Lord can turn trials into triumphs. He can take something messed up and bring order to it, like our shoe activity. We do not know what it was like to walk in Esther and Mordecai's shoes, but we know they had to trust the Lord through a very difficult time. God worked everything out for good, and He will do the same in our lives.

7. Activities:

Honor Race

The object of this game is for the children to work together as a team and honor others. They will have a race without dropping their passenger.

Have the children divide into teams of three children. Have them make a "human pyramid." Do this by having the two largest children get on their hands and knees and the lightest as a passenger on their back. Have all of the teams line up together in their pyramids. When you say "go" see who can get to the finish line first (set a finish line with masking tape prior to starting).

You can race a few times and have the winners serve the others in the class in some way. Be careful not to let this game get too wild, since someone could get hurt.

The Royal Crest

In Esther 6:8 we see Haman's idea to honor the one who pleases the king. One of the things he states is that there should be a royal crest placed on the horse's head to signify that this was a royal procession. The king that we serve is Jesus, and we are subjects in His kingdom. To help us always remember, we will make a royal crest.

You will need yellow/gold and purple construction paper. Allow the children to get as creative as they want to. The crest should be round and using markers they can write inside of the crest. As a suggestion they can write, "Jesus is King" on the crest or they can write out James 4:10 which goes with today's theme, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up."

Provide stickers, sequins or stones for the children to glue to the crest for decorations. Gold or metallic foil may also be used.

Trust and Twirl

Queen Esther learned that she had to trust in the Lord even when she did not understand what He was going to do. This game will help us to always remember to trust in the Lord.

You will need a pair of socks or two pieces of cloth to form two blindfolds. Choose children who want to form two pairs. Give a blindfold to each pair. One partner of the pair will need to wear a blindfold (Let the pairs decide who is to be blindfolded first). Only one partner is to be blindfolded. Give one blindfold to each pair and have them put them on. Only two pairs of children will race at a time.

Next, have both children in each pair stand back-to-back. Then have them link arms and line up at one end of your meeting room. Tell partners that on "Go," they must race to the opposite wall and back by spinning around in circles. Tell the seeing partners that they're responsible for the welfare of their blindfolded partners. Have them race to the other end of the room. Switch blindfolds and race again. Allow a turn to other pairs of children who would like to race. Talk to the class about what it means to trust in the Lord even when we cannot "see" what He may be doing.

Cornucopia of the Spirit

Using the templates enclosed with the curriculum make cornucopias filled with the fruit of the Spirit. In today's lesson, we learned that Haman's pride and hatred ended up destroying him. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit so we do not do the works of the flesh. This craft will help us to remember the fruit of the Spirit.

You will need the templates provided with the curriculum, construction paper (various colors), glue stick, and markers. Pass out a "cornucopia" template to each child, use construction paper or paper scraps to make nine different kinds of fruit. List a fruit of the Spirit on each fruit that is cut out. Refer to Galatians 5:22-23. Glue the cornucopia onto a sheet of construction paper and then glue the fruit onto the cornucopia. Write "The Fruit of the Spirit" on the outside of the cornucopia or on the construction paper background.

8. Bible text (NIV): Esther 6:1-7:10

6:1 That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. ²It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

³"What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?" the king asked.

"Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered.

⁴The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai on the pole he had set up for him.

⁵His attendants answered, "Haman is standing in the court."

"Bring him in," the king ordered.

⁶When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?" ⁷So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor, ⁸have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. ⁹Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!'"

¹⁰"Go at once," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended."

¹¹So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"

¹²Afterward Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, ¹³and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.

His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, "Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!" ¹⁴While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

7:1 So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, ²and as they were drinking wine on the 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, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, 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 to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. 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 he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?”

⁶ Esther said, “An adversary and enemy! 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 pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits stands by Haman’s house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king.”

The king said, “Impale him on it!” ¹⁰ So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king’s fury subsided.

