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Haman's Rage Against Mordecai

5: 9-14

Haman's rage against Mordecai DIG: As the tension mounts, so do the tempers. Why is Haman in high spirits? What infuriates Haman most about Mordecai? What irony do you see here (see 3:2-6)? What does this say about Haman? About human nature?

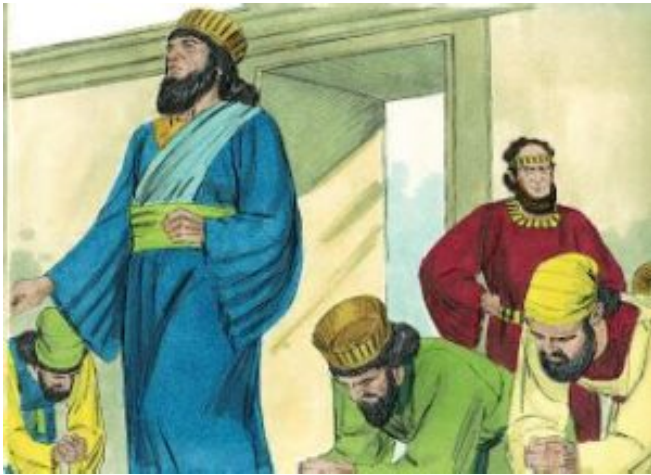
REFLECT: What is your happiness based on? Can you be at peace in the midst of turmoil in your life? Comparing yourself to Haman, how do you react when someone touches your "hot button?" Do you simmer, explode or just get even?

Esther, the hostess, has been directing developments during **her dinner** party, but now the author allows us to see what happens to each of the guests immediately afterwards.⁷¹

Going home from the first banquet with **the king** and **queen**, **Haman** was on top of the world at the unexpected honor that had come **his** way. **He went out that day happy and in high spirits. But** before **he** could leave the palace, **his** joy was stopped dead in its tracks. **When he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai (5:9). Mordecai, his** fast ended, had discarded **his** sackcloth and was back in **his** usual seat to taunt **Haman** with **his** deliberate indifference as he passed by. **Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home (5:10).** In keeping with **his** calculating temperament, **Haman** did not allow **his** rage to show itself just yet. **He** figured **he** would get **his** revenge in due time.

Back at **his** house, everyone had to endure **Haman's** endless impressions of the dinner. Like inviting all your neighbors over to see the pictures of your vacation, **Haman** called **together his friends (advisers in 6:13b) and Zeresh, his wife, he boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials (5:11). According to the Greek historian Herodotus, those Persians were held in highest honor that had the largest number of sons, and Haman had ten sons (9:7-10). His** boastings shed some light on **his** priorities. **He** mentioned **his** vast wealth even before **his** sons.

“And that’s not all,” Haman added. “I’m the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow (5:12). It was a rare privilege for a subject, no matter how high **his** position, to be invited **to a banquet with the king**. Occasionally, this was allowed; therefore, **Haman** had reason to feel highly honored at the invitation **he** received from **the queen** by permission of **the king**. In **his** mind **he** was so favored that **he** did not suspect **Esther** of having any hidden motive for inviting **him** to a second dinner with **Ahasuerus** the next day. **Haman** didn’t realize that it was, in reality, an invitation to **his** own execution.



But when **Mordecai** ignored **him**, **he** said to himself, **“all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate” (5:13).** With **his** place of power and all of **his** riches, **Haman** was still unhappy and dissatisfied because one person refused to honor **him**. **His** pride was the source of **his** sin. For the third time in the book of **Esther**, God’s name is hidden (see **1:20** and **5:4**). In **5:13** within the phrase **this gives me no satisfaction**, the name of **YHWH** (see my commentary on **Exodus**, **to see link click At - I AM Has Sent Me to You**) is hidden. It is formed by the final letters of four successive Hebrew words when read *backwards*: **zH ‘ynnW swH IY**.⁷² His name was not overtly mentioned, but He was there nonetheless, working behind the scenes for **their** good.

*Dear Great Heavenly Father, Praise You for You are always working for the good of Your children whom You love. How wonderful that even when You are not seen, Your hand is behind the scenes guiding the events for your glory. Nothing can separate Your child from Your love! **For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God***

that is in Messiah Yeshua our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

Praise You that not only are You Almighty and all powerful, but You are also all wise and can do anything. **For nothing will be impossible with God (Luke 1:37).** Problems may initially seem big, but as Your children look up to You, and meditate on how very great You are, the problem becomes very small. Praise You that you never leave Your child (**John 1:12**) but are always there living within him. **The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him. You know Him, because He abides with you and will be in you. . . Yeshua answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him (John 14:17, 23).** Your Almighty power and love are such a comfort! How great to have as our Heavenly Father, the sovereign ruler of the universe! You are so loved! In Yeshua's holy name and power of His resurrection. Amen

His wife, Zeresh, and all his friends said to him, "Have a pole set up, reaching to a height of seventy five feet high, which is about fifty cubits or 23 meters, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled on it" (5:14a). Rather than being hanged by the neck on a modern-type gallows, the **Persians impaled** people with nails on a wooden **pole** in public view, as lesson for all to see. That word haunts the story (**2:23, 6:4, 7:9-10, 8:7, 9:13** and **25**). But the **pole** that **Haman** built for **Mordecai** ended up being **his** own means of execution. **Providence!**

Zeresh's advice reminds us of Jezebel when her husband, King Ahab, was pouting like a spoiled brat (**First Kings 21:1-6**). Like **Haman**, all of Ahab's power and fame didn't satisfy him. His appetite for things could not be satisfied. He wanted just one more thing, the vineyard owned by Naboth. Jezebel's solution was to arrange the murder of Naboth so that Ahab could have what he wanted. Like Jezebel, **Zeresh** advised **Haman** to simply find some excuse to kill **Mordecai**.

The height of Haman's seventy-five foot pole constructed to impale Mordecai has been seen by some as fanciful, and lacking authenticity. The size of the **pole** was that **high** for all to see. It strikes some as exaggerated. And it certainly was unnecessarily **high**, but then *everything* constructed in **Persia** was on a grand scale, like the image of Nebuchadnezzar was 60 cubits or 90 feet high (**Dani'el 3:1**).⁷³ The spectacle would be a lesson for all to see. The person nailed to **the pole** would be visible from all directions, higher than all the trees. The sight would make the point that **Haman** was in control and

that no one should try to stand in **his** way. Therefore, the size of the **pole** really equaled the size of **Haman's** pride.

His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Then go with the king to the banquet and enjoy yourself." The author again points out the world's idea of happiness. If **Haman** could just get rid of **Mordecai** first, then **he** would be **happy** at the next day's **dinner**. **Haman** wanted everyone to witness **him** crush **Mordecai**. **His wife and his** advisors assumed that **the king** would immediately grant **his** request. **This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the pole set up (5:14b)**. The enormity of **Haman's** evil is captured in the enormity of **the** death **pole** that **he** unknowingly constructed for **himself!**

The tension between **Haman** and **Mordecai** reached its peak here. From this point on the stress would be relieved little by little through circumstances that had already been set in motion. As the events unfold, we are reminded of seemingly insignificant events that the author had previously mentioned but not emphasized. ADONAI was at work behind even such a vengeful act of **Haman's** wanting **to impale Mordecai on a pole**.⁷⁴