

EVERYONE NEEDS A THORN

Esther 6



SYNOPSIS

In chapter 6 of the book of Esther, we follow off of the heels of the advice that was given to Haman to publicly execute Mordecai. We see a lot of 'coincidences' line up that could only point to one thing: There is a divine orchestration of the events that are about to transpire. That very night, though the king had much wine, sleep 'fled' from him. And in his sleeplessness, he brings out the chronicles of his reign and happens to stumble upon how Mordecai had diverted an assassination attempt that targeted him. Haman happens to show up in the court at this time, seeking for permission to impale Mordecai on a 75-foot pole he had erected. And the king happened to be thinking of how to honor Mordecai.

Because of the self-interest and pride of Haman, when the king asks what must be done to honor the man that the king is pleased with, Haman just assumes that it is him. He quickly comes up with a response of having the man be dressed in royal robes with the crown on his head led by a noble of the court. Essentially, the man should be 'king' for the day. It's clear that it is something Haman has been dreaming about for a while.

To his surprise and the ironic and fateful twist of the story, the king tells him to do all of this to Mordecai. In his humiliation and defeat, he leads Mordecai through a parade as the whole city honors Mordecai. When Haman tells his wife and his friends about this account, even they realize the great reversal that is in effect. They begin to distance themselves from Haman, perhaps recognizing that his demise is sealed.

When we think about the pride of Haman, we realize how dangerous it can be when our ego and pride goes unchecked. This is why we all 'need a thorn.' In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, the apostle Paul talks about the thorn in his flesh that God had given him so that he would not become conceited. Though we don't know what the thorn in his flesh was, we know that Paul recognized that it was for his benefit. Paul understood the need for humility. Do we?



OUTLINE

1

"COINCIDENCES"

In this chapter, we see coincidences line up one after another, and the only conclusion is the motif in the book of Esther that the hand of God is everywhere in this story. When Haman comes into the court, the irony is that both men of power are thinking of one man - Mordecai. Haman has one thing in mind - the humiliation of Mordecai. King Xerxes, the honoring of Mordecai.

2

THE GREAT REVERSAL

This leads to the great reversal, where we quickly see the promotion of Mordecai and the demotion of Haman. Even Haman's wife and friends recognize that his demise is near when he tells them all that has happened, perhaps understanding the divine favor that is with Mordecai.

3

THE NEED FOR A THORN

In our culture, we are praised for our strength, we are rewarded for our wits, we are celebrated for our successes. We are supposed to downplay and hide our weakness, but even though it's not bad to do well, it is the very soil that can breed ego and pride. We need to be careful not to become conceited. There is a big supply of grace in God's storage. Let's be people that come and receive it.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Can you name a time you thought you were getting recognition but it was actually for someone else?

2

When was the last time you were so blinded by your own anger, ego, pride that you completely miss what God is doing? Or even go against what God is doing?

3

Where do you find yourself susceptible to pride, arrogance, spiritual superiority, conceit, or self-sufficiency?

4

What thorn in your side has humbled you to see your need for God's grace?

5

In what ways do you need to acknowledge your weakness and come to God to receive the abundance of grace that he has for you?



BIG IDEA

This chapter marks the great reversal, where the rise of Mordecai happens at the same time as the fall of Haman. Haman's pride, ego, and folly has led him closer and closer to his demise, and we see how dangerous conceit and self-idolatry can be. This is why we all need a thorn. Sometimes God gives us a 'thorn' like the Apostle Paul had in order to prevent us from becoming conceited. Perhaps it's a way for us to recognize our limitations and weakness and come to God for help and for His sufficient grace for us. Let's be people that lay down our self-reliance and self-righteousness to find more of God's grace and more of God's power in our weaknesses.

