

Esther 5:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

Analysis

Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made. Zeresh and Haman's friends proposed building a gallows 50 cubits (approximately 75 feet) high for hanging Mordecai, then requesting royal permission next day. The extraordinary height ensured maximum visibility and humiliation—the entire city would witness Mordecai's execution. Haman could then attend Esther's banquet "merrily," his grievance satisfied. The advice "pleased Haman," and he immediately built the gallows. This decision sealed his doom—the gallows intended for Mordecai will instead execute Haman (7:9-10). The ironic justice is perfect: the instrument of intended murder becomes the means of the murderer's judgment. Proverbs 26:27 warns: "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein."

Historical Context

The 50-cubit (75-foot) gallows was extraordinarily high—far beyond practical necessity, serving purely to maximize visibility and humiliation. Ancient executions often served as public spectacles demonstrating authority and warning against similar crimes. Impalement or hanging was common Persian execution method for serious crimes. The advice to build the gallows before securing permission shows Haman's confidence in his influence and the king's compliance. The immediate construction demonstrates Haman's impulsive rashness—acting on advice without considering consequences. Archaeological evidence shows ancient Near Eastern public executions used visible locations and methods to maximize impact on population.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the gallows becoming the instrument of Haman's own execution demonstrate divine justice and irony?
2. What does Haman's immediate action on bad advice teach about pride's tendency toward rash, destructive decisions?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעֲשֵׂה	אֶתְנָבָיו	וְיָשַׁבֵּן	וְיָשַׁבֵּן	וְיָשַׁבֵּן	וְיָשַׁבֵּן
Then said	Zeresh	his wife	and all his friends	and he caused	
H559	H2238	H802	H3605	H157	H6213
בָּעֵץ	מֵגְבָּבָה	מֵקְבָּבָה	וְבָבְבָה	וְבָבְבָה	וְבָבְבָה
the gallows	high	of fifty	cubits	and to morrow	Then said
H6086	H1364	H2572	H520	H1242	H559
בְּמִלְחָמָה	אֶת	מְרֹדְכָּאי	עַל	וְבָא	וְבָא
thou unto the king	may be hanged	that Mordecai	to	thereon then go	
H4428	H8518	H4782	H5921	H935	
עַמְּךָ	לְךָ	בְּמִשְׁתַּחַת	שָׁמְךָ	וַיַּעֲשֵׂה	וַיַּעֲשֵׂה
thou unto the king	unto the banquet	the	unto	and he caused	the gallows
H4428	H4960	H8056	H6213	H6086	
לְפָנָיו	בְּמִלְחָמָה	בְּמִלְחָמָה	בְּמִלְחָמָה	בְּמִלְחָמָה	בְּמִלְחָמָה
And the thing	Haman	and he caused	the gallows		
H1697	H2001	H6213	H6086		

Additional Cross-References

Esther 6:4 (Kingdom): And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

Psalms 37:14 (Parallel theme): The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.

Psalms 37:32 (Parallel theme): The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

1 Kings 21:7 (Kingdom): And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

