

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

אָמַר	לֹא	זֶרֶשׁ	אִשְׁתּוֹ	וְכָל	אֶהְבֵּי יוֹ	וַיַּעַשׂ
Then said	H0	Zeresh	his wife	H3605	and all his friends	and he caused
H559		H2238	H802		H157	H6213
אָמַר	וּבֹבֶ קֶרֶן	אֵמָה	חֲמִשָּׁים	גָּבִי הַ	הָעֵץ:	
Then said	and to morrow	cubits	of fifty	high	the gallows	
H559	H1242	H520	H2572	H1364	H6086	
וַיָּבֹא	עַל יוֹ	מֶרְדֵּכָי	אֶת	וַיִּתֵּל וְ	הָמָּ לָךְ	
thereon then go		that Mordecai		may be hanged	thou unto the king	
H935	H5921	H4782	H853	H8518	H4428	
וַיֵּט בְּ	שִׂמְחָה	הַמְּשֻׁתָּה הַ	אֶל	הָמָּ לָךְ	עַם	
pleased	thou in merrily	unto the banquet		thou unto the king		
H3190	H8056	H4960	H413	H4428	H5973	
הָעֵץ:	וַיַּעַשׂ	הָמָּ	לִפְנֵי יְ	הַדָּבָר	וְ	
the gallows	and he caused	Haman		And the thing		
H6086	H6213	H2001	H6440	H1697		

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.

