

Esther 5:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

Analysis

The narrative captures Haman's emotional volatility: 'Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.' Despite being honored by the queen's exclusive invitation, one man's refusal to bow shattered Haman's joy (Hebrew: 'male Haman hemah,' Haman was filled with rage). This reveals pride's insatiable nature: worldly success and honor cannot satisfy when ego is pricked. Mordecai's principled refusal (likely based on not bowing to Agagite royalty descended from Amalek, Israel's ancient enemy—Exodus 17:14, 1 Samuel 15) enraged Haman, leading to genocidal plot (3:5-6). Pride provokes disproportionate vengeance; wounded pride is dangerous. Proverbs 16:18 warns: 'Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.'

Historical Context

Haman the Agagite was likely descended from Agag, Amalekite king whom Saul spared and Samuel executed (1 Samuel 15). The Amalekites were Israel's perpetual enemies, first attacking them after the Exodus (Exodus 17:8-16). God commanded their complete destruction, which Saul failed to accomplish. Mordecai, a Benjamite descendant of Saul's family (Esther 2:5), may have refused homage to Amalekite descendant on theological/historical grounds. Haman's rage

mirrors the ancient Amalek-Israel enmity. His genocidal plot (chapter 3) attempted to finish what Amalek began. Yet God's providence reversed the scheme: Haman was hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai (7:10), fulfilling the principle that 'he that diggeth a pit shall fall into it' (Ecclesiastes 10:8).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does pride poison my ability to enjoy legitimate blessings because of perceived slights?
2. What ancestral or ideological conflicts do I harbor that could lead to disproportionate hostility toward others?

Interlinear Text

לְבָתֵּר וְבָרְכָה שָׁמְמָנָה בְּמִתְּבָנָה אֲבִים וְאֶתְּנָא
Then went Haman that day H1931 joyful and with a glad heart
H3318 H2001 H3117 H8056 H2896 H3820

וְלֹא בָּשָׁעַר מַרְדָּכָי אֲתָה בְּמִתְּבָנָה לְפָנֵי לְרָא
saw Haman H853 Mordecai H4782 gate in the king's H4428
H7200 H2001 H4782 H8179 H4428

עַל בְּמִתְּבָנָה מַפְלָל אָמָּת כִּי
that he stood not up H3808 nor moved H2111 was full H4390 Haman H5921
H6965 H4480 H4390 H2001

מַרְדָּכָי חֲמָה
Mordecai of indignation
H4782 H2534

Additional Cross-References

Esther 3:5 (Parallel theme): And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

Matthew 2:16 (Parallel theme): Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org