

Esther 7:1-10

Esther 7:1-10 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther. (2) And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, “What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!” (3) Then Queen Esther answered and said, “If I have found favour in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. (4) For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king’s loss.” (5) So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?” (6) And Esther said, “The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!” So Haman was terrified before the king and queen. (7) Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king. (8) When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, “Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?” As the word left the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face. (9) Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, “Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king’s behalf, is standing at the house of Haman.” Then the king said, “Hang him on it!” (10) So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king’s wrath subsided.

Questions On The Text

What was Esther’s request?

Verses 1-4: It was now the second banquet and, over wine, the king repeated his previous offer (see 5:6) to grant Esther’s request generously. Careful not to implicate the king in Haman’s plot to annihilate the Jews, Esther pleaded for her life and the lives of her people. In doing so, she indicated that she would not have bothered Ahasuerus had they merely been sold as slaves.

How did Ahasuerus respond?

Verses 5-6: Unless he was merely trying to make doubly sure that Esther was not accusing him of something, the king did not seem to have put two and two together. He was outraged that anyone would dare to formulate such a plot. Esther accused Haman of being the conspirator and, as such, an enemy of the king. Needless to say, having just discovered that the queen herself was Jewish and that his plot had backfired, Haman was terrified.

What was the king’s response?

Verses 7-8: Ahasuerus was furious and exited into the palace garden while Haman was left with Esther pleading for his life; Haman had correctly discerned that the king intended to do him harm. When Ahasuerus returned, Haman was draped across the queen’s couch, a serious breach of harem etiquette. Ahasuerus misinterpreted Haman’s actions and his fate was sealed. Covering Haman’s face should probably be interpreted in line with the Greek and Roman practice of covering the head of a condemned man.

What happened to Haman?

Verses 9-10: The sentence of death was carried out without delay. Harbonah, one of the seven eunuchs previously mentioned (see 1:9-10) as serving in the king’s presence and who had been sent to fetch Queen Vashti, pointed out the gallows that Haman had built.

Apparently it was common knowledge in the palace, except for the king, that the gallows were intended for Mordecai, the same Mordecai who had previously saved the king's life. The king accepted the suggestion and commanded that Haman be hanged. After Haman's execution, Ahasuerus' anger subsided.

Further Questions For Discussion:

What do you think went through the king's mind when he heard that his queen and her people were to be destroyed?

How might Haman have felt right at this point before he was revealed as the culprit?

Why would the king have gone into the palace garden?

Haman pleaded with Esther for his life. How do you think Esther should have responded?

Haman was hanged for his crime. Do you think that was a just punishment?

Is capital punishment valid? If so, under what circumstances?