**Lesson 7**

**Esther 7**

**The Mask Comes Off**

**Memory verse:** “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. The Lord works out everything for his own ends—even the wicked for a day of disaster” (Prov. 16:3–4 NIV).

When they arrived at Esther’s palace apartment, neither the king nor Haman knew that Esther was a Jewess. Haman was probably still distressed because of the events of the day, but he composed himself and hoped to enjoy the banquet. This is the seventh banquet recorded in the book of Esther.

Had he known the nationality of the queen, Haman either would have run for his life or fallen on his face and begged the king for mercy. God had warned Haman through circumstances, through his advisers, and through his wife, but the prime minister would not heed the warnings. “The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished” (Prov. 16:5 NIV).

God’s longsuffering led Haman into thinking he was safe. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Eccl. 8:11 NKJV). God’s longsuffering today is an opportunity for people to repent (2 Peter 3:9), but our sinful world thinks it means God won’t judge sinners at all. “For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labour pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3 NKJV).

The queen, Esther recognized the perfect timing and setting of Good to make her request. Ever since the previous evening’s banquet, Xerxes had been waiting to hear the queen’s petition; so when the wine was served, he broached the subject. Of

course, the statement “even to half of the kingdom” was a royal promise that wasn’t to be taken literally (see Esther 5:3; Dan. 5:16; Mark 6:23). It simply meant that the king would be generous. Therefore, tell him what you want.

 In the Soncino Jewish commentary on Esther, Dr. S. Goldman makes this telling statement about Esther 7:8: “The arrogant bully became, as usually in the face of disaster, a whining coward” *(The Five Megilloth,* 228). When the authority of the king had been behind him, Haman could courageously strut about, demand respect, and give orders. But now that the anger of the king was *against* him, Haman’s true character was revealed. He was not a giant; he was only a midget full of pride and hot air! And all the king’s horses and all the king’s men couldn’t put Haman’s life back together again.

When Xerxes strode into the palace garden speechless with fury, Haman sealed his doom as he fell upon Queen Esther’s couch to plead with her, *exactly at the time the king returned.* Haman was hung on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai.

God’s judgement can be swift. He is no respecter for any man of any position. For those that have not heeded His warning and repent, the judgement is still the same, even for today when the time is up!

Summary: 1) Esther’s request. 2) The king’s rage. 3) Haman’s reward.

**Discussion questions:**

Q1. Review Esther’s request in verses 1 to 4. What did you find in the dialogue between the king and the queen?

Q2 Why did the king respond in a fury with the information from Esther and is God behind all this?

Q3 “He who sows wickedness reaps trouble” (Prov. 22:8 NIV). Discuss whether this proverb is only applicable to unbelievers (e.g. Haman) or to believers as well.