

Esther Chapter 5

Esther 5:1 "Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on [her] royal [apparel], and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house."

Of the fast; though the former, Targum paraphrases it the third day of the Passover, the sixteenth of Nisan (see Esther 4:17). Though it is probable this was nearer the time fixed for the destruction of the Jews (see Esther 8:9). Yet the Jews have fixed the fast of Esther on that very day, the thirteenth of Adar.

"That Esther put on her royal apparel": In order to go in to the king, and appear before him. Which to do in a mournful habit, such as she had on when fasting, was not proper. For then she put off her royal crown, as is intimated in the additions to the book of Esther. And upon the third day, when she had ended her prayers, she laid away her mourning garments, and put on her glorious apparel. This was usual for princes to do in times of mourning; but now she put it on, as both Ben Gorion and the latter Targum affirm.

"And stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house": Into which none might go but such as were called. Yet Esther being queen, the keepers of the door could not forbid her, as Aben Ezra observes.

"And the king sat upon his royal throne, in the royal house, over against the gate of the house": So that he could see whoever came in at it, into the inner court.

This was as dangerous for Esther, as it was for Daniel to walk into the lion's den. Her life would be taken, or spared, with the wishes of her king and husband. The three days of fasting had taken place. She was assured the LORD was with her. She put on the garments of the queen to go to her king on his royal throne. She did not rush into the throne room unannounced. She waited outside, but in full view of the king. He was seated on his throne looking toward the very spot in the inner court where she was standing. She was beautiful and he was full of love for her, we must remember.

Esther 5:2 "And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, [that] she obtained favor in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that [was] in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the scepter."

"She obtained favor": This actually means that Esther first found favor with the God of Israel (Prov. 21:10).

The king's "Scepter" symbolized his power and his "favor". Here, it also meant that Esther would not be killed for entering his "inner-court" without invitation (4:11).

When he reached out his scepter to her, it showed that he was not angry with her for coming to him unannounced. She was forgiven for any error on her part in coming. The king knew that Esther was not a selfish woman from past experience. He knew something of real importance was troubling her, or she would not have taken this chance. Her touch of the scepter extended to her was her humbly thanking him for receiving her.

Verses 3-6: Even given thee to the half of the kingdom”: Royal hyperbole that was not intended to be taken at face value (Mark 6:22-23).

Esther 5:3 "Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what [is] thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom."

“What is thy request”: Esther deferred her real wish until (7:2-3).

Esther’s concern was so great that she willingly risked her life in order to have an audience with the king that day, a fact that did not escape Xerxes. When a person’s course is righteous, God will reinforce his or her courage.

It was very obvious from this statement, that he had great love for Esther. In calling her his queen, he was saying he accepted her as his wife. He respected her, it was obvious. He would have to admire her courage as well. This is a type and shadow of the Christians drawing near to the throne of God. He has reached out and invited us to come. It is important that we touch Him, as well. The king offered her anything she wanted unto the half of the kingdom. It is interesting again, that the Christians will be joint-heirs with Jesus. He has offered to share with us as well.

Verses 4-8: It certainly was providential that Esther did not express her desire to the king at the first banquet, since the events (of chapter 6), transpired between the banquets, making it much easier for Esther to expose Haman at the second banquet.

Esther 5:4 "And Esther answered, If [it seem] good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him."

“The banquet”: The first of two (5:4-8; 6:14 – 7:1), that Esther prepared. God would providentially intervene between the two (6:1-2).

We know that was not the real reason that she came. At the point of him offering her half of his kingdom, she could have asked for the life of the Jews. That would have gotten a yes or a no quickly, but Esther was smarter than that. There were many people still praying for her. She had the wisdom of God guiding her every word. It would have been unusual for her to ask the king to come to dinner, but it was extremely unusual for her to ask Haman to come too. Men and women

in Persia did not eat together, unless it was a private family affair. Haman thought of himself even more highly than before, after she made this request for him to come.

Esther 5:5 "Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared."

That is, he ordered some of his servants to make haste and acquaint Haman with the queen's invitation. And to press him to make haste to comply with it.

"So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared": Which was wisely done, to prepare for what she had to say to the king, when cheerful with wine, and when she had her adversary with him alone.

The king gave Haman permission to come. They came to the banquet as Esther had requested.

Esther 5:6 "And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What [is] thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what [is] thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed."

For such it seems the banquet was she prepared; it was not properly a meal, neither dinner nor supper, but a drinking bout. Or, however, it was at that part of the banquet in which wine was drunk that the king accosted Esther, when he began to be cheerful with it. The Persians at their meals had two courses: the first consisted of meats, etc. at which they drank water, the other of fruits, when they drank wine. Aelianus says, the Persians, after they are filled with food, indulge themselves in drinking wine.

"What is thy petition? And it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed": By which it appears he retained the same affection for Esther, and the same disposition to show her kindness (see Esther 5:3).

The king was aware that this banquet was not the request that Esther risked her life for. Again he repeated that he would give her up to half of the kingdom, if that was her desire. We may assume that Esther still did not feel sure of herself in this matter, and that the LORD was leading her in every word she uttered.

Esther 5:7 "Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request [is];"

What she should for the present make; the principal one she had to ask. For wise reasons, she still deferred.

Esther 5:8 "If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the king hath said."

Why did Esther delay her request? Whatever the reason, God used the delay to further His purposes for Mordecai, Haman, and ultimately the Jewish people. While we are waiting, God is working.

We cannot assume to guess why Esther put this off another day, except the Lord had her to do it. She knew she had found favor with the king, or he would not have offered her half the kingdom. She was saying, "give me one more day and I will tell you my request".

Verses 9-14: The word "gallows" haunts the book (6:4; 7:9-10; 8:7; 9:13, 25). The connection between murder and merriment ("then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet"), and Haman's pleasure ("And the thing pleased Haman"), is ever more sinister than the gallows he had made.

Haman was so enraged at Mordecai's continued refusal to honor him that all the privileges he had been bestowed were as "nothing" (5:13). Selfishness and pride can quickly breed ingratitude, envy and even murderous hatred, as it did for Haman.

Esther 5:9 "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."

From court to his own house.

"But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him": Did not show him the least degree of civil respect. Which he refused to do, partly lest it should be interpreted an adoration of him, and partly because it was well known to him he had formed a scheme for the destruction of him and all his people. And the rather he refused it to him, as Esther was about to make intercession with the king to revoke his decree. Of the success of which he had no doubt; and therefore, had nothing to fear from him, but treated him with the utmost contempt, as he deserved.

"He was full of wrath against Mordecai": It was a sad mortification to him, and a great alloy of that joy and elation of mind on account of the favor he was in; not with the king only, but the queen also, as he imagined.

Haman was feeling really proud of himself for being invited to the queen's banquet twice with the king. He still hated Mordecai. What did Mordecai have to lose? What more could Haman do to him than kill him? Haman was totally unaware that Esther was a Jew.

Esther 5:10 "Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife."

From showing any outward resentment to Mordecai, from laying hands upon him or taking revenge on him. As being too much below him to avenge himself on a single person. Especially

when the whole body of the people Mordecai belonged to would shortly feel the power of his hand for such insolent treatment of him.

"And when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife": Who, the Targum says, was the daughter of Tatnai, the governor on the other side the river (Ezra 5:3).

Esther 5:11 "And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all [the things] wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king."

"The multitude of his children": At least 10 sons were fathered by Haman (9:13), who personified sinful pride (Prov. 16:18; 1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 6:3).

Esther 5:12 "Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and tomorrow am I invited unto her also with the king."

To all which he added, and what seemed to delight him most of all, or however was a new additional honor done him.

"Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself": Which he judged was doing him singular honor. And, by the joint affection of the king and queen to him, he thought himself established in his dignity and grandeur.

"And tomorrow am I invited unto her also with the king": Had been invited, not by a messenger, but by the queen herself, which was a double honor.

Haman had ten sons, and he was bragging to them, his wife, and friends of his great standing with the king, and now with the queen.

Esther 5:13 "Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

"Availeth me nothing": Harman expressed raging fixation on killing Mordecai.

His hate for Mordecai was so great that he could not even enjoy the fact that the king and queen were his friends.

Esther 5:14 "Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and tomorrow 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."

“Gallows”: A stake on which a human would be impaled to death and/or displayed after death (2:23).

“Fifty cubits”: Approximately 75 feet or almost 8 stories high. Perhaps the gallows involved displaying a shorter stake atop a building or wall to attain this height.

Since the king and queen thought so much of Haman, he should have no difficulty hanging one Jew. If fifty cubits or 75 feet was the correct height here, it meant he wanted people all over town to see him hang Mordecai. He would be able to take revenge on him in that way. Haman was pleased with this idea, and he immediately had the gallows built.

The lesson here is obvious. Whatever you reap, you sow. Hate destroys you, regardless of whom you hate. Haman would be destroyed for his great hate of Mordecai and the Jews.

Esther Chapter 5 Questions

1. When did Esther decide to go see the king?
2. How was she dressed?
3. Where did she stand?
4. Where was the king?
5. How dangerous was this for Esther?
6. What must we remember about the king's feelings toward Esther?
7. What did the king do, when he saw Esther?
8. What did Esther do, as she drew near?
9. What did the king ask her?
10. What did he call her, when he asked?
11. What did the king offer her?
12. What is verse 3 a type and shadow of?
13. What did Esther ask the king and Haman to do?
14. What was unusual about this?
15. Why did Esther not immediately ask for the Jews to be saved?

16. In verse 5, what was necessary for the king to do, before Haman came?
17. What question did the king ask Esther at the banquet?
18. What did he offer her again?
19. In verse 7 and 8, what was she really asking for?
20. How did Haman feel about being invited to the queen's banquet with the king?
21. What spoiled it for him?
22. Who was Haman bragging to about his relationship with the king and queen?
23. What did his wife and friends suggest, that he do about Mordecai?
24. Haman was totally unaware that Esther was a _____.
25. How tall was the gallows said to be?