

Esther Chapter 7

Verses 1-4: The “second day” is the second banquet of Esther, and she is asked a second time, “What is thy request?” (Compare 5:6). She asks to be spared along with her people, “for we are sold”, I and my people”. She finally identifies herself with the people of Israel who had been “sold,” referring to the bribe of Haman (3:9; 4:7).

Esther 7:1 "So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen."

Or, "to drink with her", that is, wine; for in the next verse it is called a banquet of wine. So they did according to the invitation the queen had given them (Esther 5:8).

This was speaking of the second banquet. We saw in the last lesson, the humiliation of this self-centered Haman. He still was not aware that Esther was a Jew. The king had granted the queen both requests to come to her banquet, but he knew that was not really her request of him. He had already offered her half of the kingdom, if that was what she desired.

Verses 2-6: This is some of the most highly charged dialogue in the book. In reply to Esther’s request that she and her people (the Jews), be spared from destruction, the outraged king asks two questions about the one behind the master plan: “Who is he?” and “Where is he?” Esther’s response: “The adversary ... this wicked Haman!” Surprisingly, the king accepts the disclosure of Esther’s ethnicity without comment.

Esther 7:2 "And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What [is] thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what [is] thy request? and it shall be performed, [even] to the half of the kingdom."

“Second day”: The first day reference point included the first banquet. This refers to the second banquet on the second day (compare 5:8).

“What is thy request”: This was the third time that the king inquired (5:3, 6).

The king offered again to grant Esther's request. He loved her and he wanted her to be happy.

Esther 7:3 "Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request:"

“My people”: This plea paralleled God’s message through Moses to Pharaoh, “Let My people go,” almost 1,000 years earlier.

This had to be a shock to the king, that anyone would threaten the life of his queen. He did not know that Esther was Hebrew. She had never told him, and he had never asked, up until now. She first asked him to save her life, and then she asked for the lives of her people.

Esther 7:4 "For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage."

“Sold”: Refers back to Haman’s bribe (compare 3:9; 4:7).

“Destroyed ... slain ... perish”: Esther recounted the exact language of Haman’s decree (3:13).

The king possibly, still had no idea of what she was speaking. He did not write the edict to kill all of the Jews. Haman had written the edict and sealed it with the king's signet ring. She actually believed the king had sold their lives to the wicked Haman. She said she would have understood, if he had people to take their place, but she did not understand the destruction with nothing to gain. She thought that Haman was going to pay the king for the Jews that were killed. She was saying he would not have near enough money to pay for the lives. "Countervail", in this instance, means equalize. The king would lose far more than Haman could pay.

Esther 7:5 "Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?"

The words in the original text are this, "and the King Ahasuerus said, and he said to Esther the queen"; which doubling of the word does not signify, as Jarchi suggests, that before he spoke to her by a messenger, or middle person. But, now he knew she was of a royal family, he spoke to her himself. But it is expressive of the ruffle of his mind, and the wrath and fury he was in, that he said it again and again, with a stern countenance and great vehemence of speech.

"Who is he? and where is he?" who is the man? And where does he live?

"That durst presume in his heart to do so": That has boldness, impudence, and courage enough to perpetrate so vile an action or "that has filled his heart". The devil no doubt filled his heart to do it (see Acts 5:3). But the king had either forgot the decree he had granted, and the countenance he had given him to execute it. Or, if he remembered it, he was now enraged that he should be drawn in to such an action by him. And perhaps till now was ignorant of Esther's descent, and knew not that she would be involved in the decree.

The king was still not aware that this was connected with the edict. He asked Esther who would dare to kill the queen?

Esther 7:6 "And Esther said, The adversary and enemy [is] this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen."

“This wicked Haman”: Similar to Nathan’s famous accusation against King David, “You are the man” (2 Sam. 12:7). Haman’s honor had quickly turned to humiliation, and then to horror.

The king had not even suspicioned Haman. Haman suddenly remembered what the wise men had told him would happen to him. Esther called Haman an adversary of the king.

Esther 7:7 "And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath [went] into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king."

Not being able to bear the sight of Haman, who had done such an injury both to himself and to the queen. As also that his wrath might subside, and become more composed and sedate, and be able coolly to deliberate what was fitting to be done in the present case.

"And Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen": Hoping that her tender heart might be wrought upon to show mercy to him. And he prevailed on to entreat the king to spare his life; and this request he made in the most submissive manner.

"For he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king": He perceived it both by the king's countenance and by the rage he went out in. And by the threatening words which he very probably uttered as he went out.

The king was not quick to kill someone. He walked into the garden, possibly to try to sort out this whole thing. He really wanted to kill Haman for trying to kill Esther. While the king was in the garden, Haman, realizing that the king would kill him if Esther did not stop him, began to plead for his life to be spared.

“Verses 8-10”: They “covered Haman’s face,” as the ancients often did to those about to be executed. “Harbona” was one of the inner circle of seven (in 1:10). The irony (of verse 10), is spelled out (in Psalm 9:16b) “the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands” (Psalms 7:16; 94:23).

Esther 7:8 "Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther [was]. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face."

“Force the queen”: blinded by anger, Ahasuerus interpreted Haman’s plea to be an act of violence against Esther rather than a plea for mercy.

The couches for reclining were in the banqueting room, and it appeared that Esther had been reclining on one of them. Haman was so desperate for Esther to ask the king to spare his life that

he fell upon the bed face down where Esther was. The king walked back into the room and was furious with Haman. He accused Haman of trying to rape Esther in his presence. It appears the attendants grabbed Haman and covered his head to take him to execute him.

Esther 7:9 "And Harbona, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon."

“Harbona” (compare 1:10).

“Behold”: Because the place prepared by Haman for Mordecai’s execution towered above the city, it became the obvious spot for Haman’s death.

“Mordecai, who had spoken good”: Haman heard the third capital offense charged against him. One, he manipulated the king in planning to kill the queen’s people. Two, he was perceived to accost the queen. Three, he planned to execute a man whom the king had just greatly honored for extreme loyalty to the kingdom.

The very gallows that Haman had built to kill Mordecai on, would be where he would hang. Haman had sown the wind, and would now reap the whirlwind. Harbona reminded the king that Mordecai had saved his life, and this Haman had wanted to kill him. The prophecy of the wise men had come true.

Esther 7:10 "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified."

“They hanged Haman”: The ultimate expression of justice (compare Psalm 9:15-16).

Haman's life had been wicked. He lived by violence, and he died by violence. He had wanted to be a famous man but died as an infamous man. Haman died on the gallows he built for Mordecai. The king's wrath subsided after Haman had paid for his crime with his life. This really did not save Esther's life or the Jews however. The edict still stood. We will see in the next lesson what was done about that.

Esther Chapter 7 Questions

1. Who came to banquet with Esther the queen?
2. In the last lesson, we saw the _____ of this wicked Haman.
3. He still was not aware that Esther was a _____.
4. What question did the king ask Esther at this banquet?

5. What did he offer to give her?
6. What did she say that was a shock to the king?
7. What did she say had been done to them that she believed the king had done?
8. Why did the king have no idea what she was speaking of?
9. What does "countervail" mean here?
10. What questions did Ahasuerus ask Esther in verse 5?
11. What did she call Haman in verse 6?
12. How did this affect Haman?
13. Why did the king walk into the garden?
14. Who did Haman ask to save him?
15. Haman realized what about the king?
16. When the king returned from the garden, where was Haman?
17. What did the king say to him?
18. What was the bed really?
19. What was meant by them covering Haman's head?
20. Who reminded the king that the gallows for Haman were already ready?
21. When was the king's wrath pacified?