

**Book Study on Esther**  
**Esther Plans a Banquet**  
**Esther 5:1-8**  
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## **Introduction**

- Review books of the Bible: Genesis – Esther
- Esther asks Mordechai to pray.

## **Let's pick up here in chapter 5 and verse 1**

## **Bible**

**Est 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.

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

**Est 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.

**Est 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 to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.

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

**Est 5:14** Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow 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.

## **Lets look a little deeper into these verses:**

*Est 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.

- reckoning as the first day that on which (Esther 4:16) she gave her promise to Mordecai.<sup>1</sup>
- in contrast with the mourning garb which she had worn while fasting.<sup>1</sup> (remember no sadness in the kings presence)
- The palace of this Persian king seems to have been built, like many more of the same quality and description, with an advanced cloister, over against the gate, made in the fashion of a large penthouse, supported only by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or else in the center. In such open structures as these, in the midst of their guards and counsellors, are the bashaws, kadis, and other great officers, accustomed to distribute justice, and transact the public affairs of the provinces [Shaw, Travels]. In such a situation

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<sup>1</sup> The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

the Persian king was seated. The seat he occupied was not a throne, according to our ideas of one, but simply a chair, and so high that it required a footstool. It was made of gold, or, at least, inlaid with that metal, and covered with splendid tapestry, and no one save the king might sit down on it under pain of death. It is often found pictured on the Persepolitan monuments, and always of the same fashion.<sup>2</sup>

- It was formed of gold and precious stones, with a curtain over it of purple and other colours. (Atheneus xi. 2.)<sup>3</sup>

*Est 5:2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.*

- The Septuagint represents "the king as being at first greatly enraged when he saw Esther, because she had dared to appear before him unveiled, and she, perceiving this, was so terrified that she fainted away; on which the king, touched with tenderness, sprung from his throne, took her up in his arms, laid the golden scepter on her neck, and spoke to her in the most endearing manner." This is more circumstantial than the Hebrew, but is not contrary to it.<sup>4</sup>
- Josephus saith, that at first the king frowned upon her, so that she fell into a swoon before him.<sup>5</sup>
- The Vulgate makes Esther kiss the sceptre<sup>1</sup>

*Est 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.*

- The practice of granting requests beforehand is one common among Oriental monarchs. Sometimes no limit at all is placed to the petitioner's liberty of choice - seldom any less wide limit than that of the present passage. According to Herodotus (9:111), there was one day in the year on which the king was bound to grant any request made by a guest at his table. To the half of the kingdom. Compare Mark 6:23, where Herod Antipas makes the same limitation.<sup>6</sup>

*Est 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.*

- Such an invitation as this was very unusual. Ordinarily the king and queen dined separately, each in their own apartments; family gatherings, however, not being unknown (Plut., 'Vit. Artaxerx.', § 5; Athen., 'Deipnosoph.', 4. p. 145, A). But for the queen to invite not only the king, but also another male guest, not a relation, was a remarkable innovation, and must have seemed to the fortunate recipient of the invitation a high act of favour.<sup>6</sup>
- That a subject like Haman should be admitted to make a third at the banquet to which the king was invited by his consort, seemed a specially marked instance of favour, arising from the position which the minister held in the estimation of his royal master. The higher the honour paid, the more startling and effective is the favourite's ruin.<sup>1</sup>
- the banquet-

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<sup>2</sup> Jamieson, Robert, D.D.; Fausset, A. R.; Brown, David. "Commentary on Esther 5:1". "Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible". 1871-8.

<sup>3</sup> Haydock, George Leo. "Commentary on Esther 5:1". "George Haydock's Catholic Bible Commentary". 1859.

<sup>4</sup> Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on Esther 5:2". "The Adam Clarke Commentary". 1832.

<sup>5</sup> Trapp, John. "Commentary on Esther 5:2". John Trapp Complete Commentary. 1865-1868.

<sup>6</sup> The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010 by BibleSoft, inc.,

Mishteh, from shathah, "to drink," a comotation. feast, or banquet accompanied with drinking; the drinking in the East being at the beginning, and not at the end of the entertainment. Olearius, describing an entertainment at the Persian court, says, "The floor of the hall was covered with cotton cloth, which was covered with all sorts of fruits and sweetmeats in basons of gold. With them was served up excellent Shiraz wine. After an hour's time, the sweetmeats were removed, to make way for the more substantial part of the entertainment, such as rice, boiled and roast mutton, etc. When the company had been at table an hour and a half, warm water was brought, in a ewer of gold, for washing; and grace being said, they began to retire without speaking a word, according to the custom of the country."<sup>7</sup>

*Est 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:<sup>8</sup>
- 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.<sup>8</sup>

*Est 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.*

- After the meats were removed, it was customary in Persia to continue the banquet for a considerable time with fruits and wine. During this part of the feast, the king renewed his offer.<sup>9</sup>
- Ahasuerus has understood that it was not for the mere pleasure of entertaining himself and his prime minister at a banquet that Esther adventured her life. He knows that she must still have a request - the real favour that she wants him to grant - in the background. He therefore repeats the inquiry and the premise that he had made previously (ver. 8).<sup>10</sup>
- A usual form of speech among kings, when their hearts are enlarged and overflow with affection to others, or when they give persons the freest liberty to ask what they please. The meaning is, Nothing in reason shall be denied thee.<sup>11</sup>

*Est 5:7 Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request is;*

*Est 5:8 If I have found favour 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 to morrow as the king hath said.*

- *Esther's form of reply suggests that for the moment she meant to declare her grief, but suddenly breaks off for some reason which remains hidden from the reader. She virtually acknowledges, however, that she has a weighty petition to present, and promises that, if her two guests will repeat their visit under similar circumstances next day, she will postpone no longer.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Torrey, R. A. "Commentary on Esther 5:4". "The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge".

<sup>8</sup> Gill, John. "Commentary on Esther 5:5". "The New John Gill Exposition of the Entire Bible".

<sup>9</sup> Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes [1834].

<sup>10</sup> The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010

<sup>11</sup> Benson Commentary on the Old and New Testaments