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Let the King and Haman Come Tomorrow to the Banquet I Will Prepare for Them 5: 1-8

Let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them DIG: On the third day – of what? Why is that detail relevant to the plot? What might be the purpose of Esther's delaying tactic? What was the king's response so far to Esther's requests? What does that imply?

REFLECT: What would you have asked for if half the Persian Empire had been offered to you? If you could have any request granted by King Messiah, what would it be? What assurances do you have that when you ask God for something, it will be granted (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Kq – No One Comes to the Father Except Through Me)?**

In **Chapter 1**, Queen Vashti risked her life by refusing to appear before **Ahasuerus** when summoned **(1:12)**; but now in **Chapter 5**, **Queen Esther** risks **her** life by appearing before **the king** uninvited **(5:1-3)**. Archaeological evidence shows **her** fears were not unfounded. Two bas-reliefs have been excavated from Persepolis, the summer capital, showing a **Persian** king seated on his **throne** with a long **scepter** in his right hand. A soldier is also seen standing behind **the throne**, holding a large ax.[64]

After committing **her** cause into God's hands, **Esther** prepared **herself** to approach **the king**. **On the third day** of fasting, **she** did not just try to make **herself** beautiful for **her** uninvited audience with **the king**, **she put on her royal robes. She had probably worn mourning garb while she was fasting.** No doubt these were in keeping with **the king's** splendid **robes** of Phoenician purple, heavy with gold embroidery, worn over garments of white and purple.[65] At the same time **she** decided to identify with **her** people, **she** also would claim **her** authority and power as **the Queen of Persia** as **she** went before **the king**.

The rabbis teach that Isra'el is never left in dire straights more than three

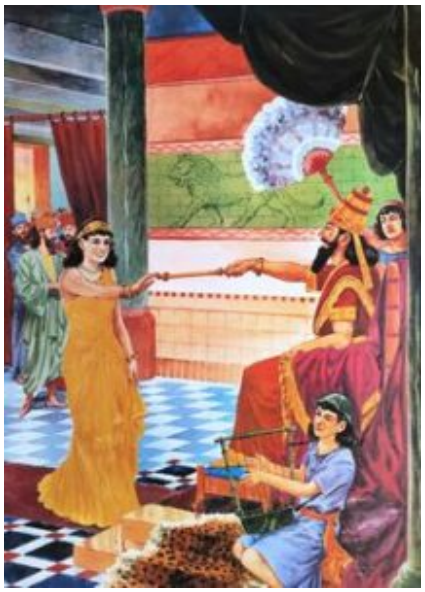
days. In a Jewish Midrash, the miracle of deliverance through Mordecai and Esther is compared to events in the lives of Abraham, Jacob and Jonah, which also involve three days (Genesis 22:4, 31:22; Jonah 1:17). It links this miracle to the Jewish tradition that physical death was certain only *after* three days (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Ia – The Resurrection of Lazarus: The First Sign of Jonah**)**, and spiritual life would "come on the third day." The concept is based on Hosea 6:2, where the prophet declares: After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will restore us, that we may live in His presence.**

To the northwest of the palace complex stood **the throne room**. It was about 193 feet square, its roof supported by six rows of six mighty columns soaring to a height of 65 feet. To the east and west, **the throne room** was approached by porticoes of two rows of six more of these columns to a depth of 57 feet. To the north and west, below the level of the platform, there were lush gardens, easily watered from the nearby river and protected by a tower at the northwestern corner.[66]

If invited, any guest into **the throne room** needed to prostrate themselves in adoration, for by ancient oriental custom **the king** was in a very real sense divine.[67] The mere fact that **she stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the throne room,** put **her** in great danger**. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance (5:1).** In those days, **a king** protected **himself** from assassination by not allowing anyone into **his** presence that **he** did not specifically call for. It was well understood, therefore, that whoever thus appeared before **the king** deliberately risked their life. As **she** mustered the

courage to approach **the king**, **her** heart pounding so loud **she** could probably hear it, the threat of **death** and the hope of life were equally present.

But God moved **the king** when **she** approached **him on the throne**. The columns were not supposed to obscure the vision of **the king** as **he** sat on **his throne**. **When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court** in all **her royal** splendor**, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand** granting **her** protected access**.** This indicated that **she** was supposed to approach and touch **the tip** of **the gold scepter** to symbolize **her** acceptance. We know from extra-biblical sources that **King Ahasuerus** was a very cruel, moody and temperamental ruler. But it just so happened that **his** mood happened to be just right when **Esther** appeared. **Providence! So she approached and** as **he** held out **the tip of the gold scepter**, **she touched** it **(5:2).**



On the third day, **Ahasuerus** extended **his gold scepter** to **Esther**, lest **she die** for coming into **his** presence uninvited. **She** approached **him** and completed **his** gracious gesture by touching **the tip of the scepter**. Therefore, **her** safety in **his** presence was guaranteed. This pictures the act of a gracious **king** who holds the power of life and death. Had ADONAI not extended the cross of Jesus Christ to the world, all would die in His presence. **On the third day** after the final judgment was handed down on the cross, Yeshua Messiah arose to eternal life, guaranteeing safety to enter God's presence to all who reach out in faith to touch that cross-shaped **scepter**.[68] **A star will come out from Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Isra'el** (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Av – The Visit of the Magi**).

The Bible says **that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (First Corinthians 15:3b-4).** If you believe that and have never asked Yeshua to be your Lord and Savior would you pray this simple prayer today: **God, I admit that I have sinned. I believe Jesus Christ died for my sins, and I want to trust Him to save me right now.** It is important that you understand that repeating this prayer does not save you. It is only faith in Christ as your Lord and Savior that saves you. Now you need to find a good messianic synagogue or church that teaches the Word of God faithfully so you can grow in your faith and have fellowship with other believers. Why should God let you into His heaven? That's right. Messiah died for all your sins . . . past, present and future!

For the first time in the book, **Esther** is directly addressed as **Queen Esther**. **Then the king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you" (5:3).** This expression is an idiom commonly used by ancient kings and was not intended to be taken literally. It merely meant **the king** was willing to be generous in meeting the request. It was a good sign. Centuries later, John the Baptist was murdered when Herod offered **up to half my kingdom** to the daughter of Herodias **(Mark 6:23)**. It was then, in front of all his officials, that Herodias knew that Herod would not risk losing face by refusing her request for John's head. **Esther**, however, was not going to put **the king** on the spot – just yet. Rather than demanding **Haman's** blood in that very moment, **she** bides **her** time.

Esther's request was anti-climatic, but **the king** was never alone in **the throne** room. Although they are not mentioned, servants would be present as well as guards and other officials. It was neither the time nor the place to disclose **her** true intentions. **"If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him" (5:4).** The **three days** of prayer and fasting by herself, **her** attendants and all the Jews in **Persia** had given **Queen Esther** a godly wisdom, and a confidence not **her** own. **She** had even prepared **a meal**, believing that **her** invitation to **the king** would be accepted.

Once again God's name is hidden in the book of **Esther** (also see **1:20, 5:13** and **7:7**). In **5:4** within the phrase **let the king . . . come today**, the name of **YHWH** (see my commentary on **Exodus At – I AM Has Sent Me to You**) is hidden. It is formed by the initial letters of four successive Hebrew words when read *forward*: **Ybw' Hmlk Whmm Hywn**.[69] Nevertheless, God is the true hero of the story.

Although hidden from view, He is everywhere at work behind the scenes. He keeps His promises and defends His people – even the ones who chose not to return to the Promised Land. He chooses to work through **Esther** and **Mordecai**, despite **their** failures, bad choices, and outright disobedience. When the crisis hit, He has **them** right where He wants **them**.[70]

His last audience of the day over, **Ahasuerus**, aware more of **his** hunger than **his** supposed divinity, was not slow to accept **her** offer for dinner. **She** asked **the king** to invite **Haman** also. Consequently, **Esther** had the two most powerful **men** in **Persia** eating out of **her** hand. **"Bring Haman at once," the king said, "so that we may do what Esther asks." So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared (5:5).** It was an unusual honor to be invited to **a banquet** with **the queen**, for **Persian** officials were unusually protective of their wives.

The king understood that Esther had not risked her life merely to come and invite him to a banquet. He, therefore, repeated his inquiry into the real nature of her wish. Once the leisurely eastern **meal** was over, the three reclined on **their** couches and drank **wine**. An activity that the author takes every opportunity to point out. **As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, "Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted" (5:6).** Once again, not meant to be taken literally, but simply that **Ahasuerus** was willing to be generous in meeting **her** request.

Esther replied, "My petition and my request is this: If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Using a delay tactic, **she** merely answered: **Then I will answer the king's question" (5:7-8).** The LORD had given His wisdom to **Esther** and **she** must have sensed that the time was not right for **her** request. In God's **providence** a few other details had to be worked out. The delay allowed time for **Haman's** misguided self-confidence to ripen.

Dear Wise and loving Heavenly Father, Praise You for Your constant loving care of Your child. You never get distracted. No problem is too big for You. You never are sick or feeling sleepy. You are always wise and because You know the future – You have worked on the solution for the problem before the problem even happens. How wonderful that before Your child even prays to You about the problem, You

have already put into place what needs to be done so the problem can be solved to Your glory! What an Awesome Father You are!

Please help Your children to remember to run into your gracious arms of love and lay problems at Your feet. It may seem like there is no way of fixing the awful trial but so much better to trust Your Almighty power and great love. Praise You for your love. We do not want to run to you just to ask for Your help. Your children love You and it is a joy and a pleasure to spend time daily praising You and meditating on Your Holy Word.

It is such a treasure to be able to know You and how wonderful You are! There is nothing that could make You any better for You are perfect, God our Heavenly Father ***(John 14:23),*** *Ruach Ha'Kodesh – the Spirit of Truth who lives within us (****John 14:17),*** *and Yeshua our Lord and Savior* ***(Romans 10:9-12).*** *It is such a comfort to fall asleep each night meditating on Your: Almighty Power- Creation* ***(Genesis 1),*** *Ten Plagues* ***(Exodus 7-11);*** *your Power over life and death- The Passover* ***(Exodus 12),*** *Power over the Assyrian army to kill 185,000 in one night* ***(Second Kings 19:35);*** *Yeshua's power to bring back from the dead those who had died – Jairus's daughter* ***(Mark 5:21-42),*** *the widow's only son who was being carried out in a coffin* ***(Luke 7:14-15),*** *and Lazarus who had been dead for three days* ***(John 11:40-44). Yeshua said: I am the resurrection and the life! Whoever believes in Me, even if he dies, shall live (John 11:25).***

Your power is so great that there is nothing You can't do, indeed you can do anything! Yeshua proved your Almighty power by: healing from a long distance ***(Matthew 8:5-13, John 4:43-53),*** *healing a man born blind* ***(John 9),*** *healing a blind and mute demon possessed man (****Matthew 12:22****), and forgiving sins- which can only be done by God* ***(Matthew 9:2-8, Mark 5:1-12, Luke 5:18-26). There are also many other things that Yeshua did. If all of them were to be written one by one, I suppose that not even the world itself will have room for the books being written (John 21:25)!***

Love and praise you dear Heavenly Father: for being so wonderful, for Your loving constant care, for not leaving Your children but always being there to help them ***(Hebrew 13:5),*** *for taking the punishment for our sins, laying them on Yeshua and*

then giving us his righteousness from His victory over sin and death. ***He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).*** *In Yeshua's holy name and power of His resurrection. Amen*