

A characteristic of the book of Esther is that there are

HIDDEN SIGNS

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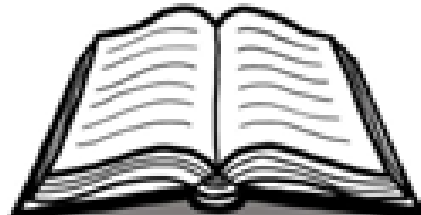
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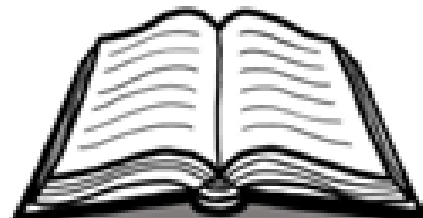
in God's providential dealings
in the text. Esther chapter 5

Esther chapter 5

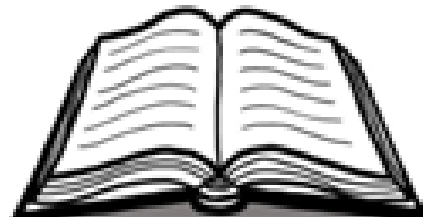
On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the sceptre. Then the king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you." "If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him." "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. 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." Esther replied, "My petition and my request is this.. If the king regards me with favour and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfil my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king`s question." Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king`s gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai.



Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home. Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honoured him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. "And that`s not all," Haman added. "I`m the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king`s gate." His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy." This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the gallows built.



Choose your moment well - Here goes ...

On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king`s hall. v1



While others continue to fast ..

Appearance

– look your best

And

Timing

– before lunch not after.



An Impressive Display

The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. v1

Make visitors aware who is the important one



And for safety: You can see who is coming towards you.

It worked!

When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold sceptre that was in his hand. v2



We have here God's over-ruling at the most dangerous moment. It could have been so different. History hangs on this moment!

'touched' - one translation says 'kissed'

So Esther approached and touched the tip of the sceptre. v2



Why did she touch it ? Protocol?

It's what lay between life or death

It was a grateful acknowledgement to Xerxes' mercy.

And perhaps a silent prayer of thanks to God.

What is it, 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." v3



He senses it is something important.

It's just a way of speaking,
but also encouraging her to ask.

He does offer to do what she asks.

Cf. the Lord's promises to us - ask, seek, knock

Would you like to eat?

"If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him." v4

One step at a time – no rush.
A good setting for a good mood
for the best effect.



Code words

"If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him." v4

let the king, together with Haman, come today

יְבוֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמָּן הַיּוֹם



A strategic point for God to insert his name.

At once

"Bring Haman at once," the king said,
"so that we may do what Esther asks." v5



LET'S GO!

The text "LET'S GO!" is rendered in a bold, grey, sans-serif font with a white outline and a slight drop shadow. It is set against a background of vibrant yellow and orange decorative flourishes, including swirls, loops, and splatters, giving it a dynamic and energetic feel.

No delay – I'm feeling hungry now.

He also wants to please Esther.

A feast for a king and his friend

So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. v5

Did Esther actually prepare it?

She was in charge of the menu.

Was it his favourite dish?

A way to a man's heart ...



Now what is your petition?

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." v6



He knows it is more than an invitation to a meal. There is something big on Esther's mind.



Sensing the moment

Esther replied, "My petition and my request is this.." v7

She appears to falter. Is she afraid to ask ?

Or did she sense that this wasn't the right moment to say?

The Spirit's guidance can be about timing.



Let's try again tomorrow

“If the king regards me with favour and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfil my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question.” v8

This gives more time for more prayer,
And to build up courage, now that
'stage 1' has succeeded.

It is also a providential delay.
God is at work – another part of his
plan is not quite ready yet.



Everything is looking good

Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. v9

Everything is fine – Haman appears to be well respected, well fed and invited back!

Even wicked men can be happy!
For a while ...



There's just one problem ...

But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. v9



The little things that greatly annoy - pride's problem

Nevertheless

Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home. v10

What stopped him from destroying Mordechai then and there?

Restraint is usually considered a virtue
but here ??

Providence

Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
but it is the purpose of the LORD
that will stand. Proverbs 19:21



A prosperous, successful man

Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honoured him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. v11

cf. Psalm 73
Prosperity
The wicked and
the righteous



We should show
proper thankfulness
for honours received.

Big ego boasting – little does he know...

"And that`s not all," Haman added. "I`m the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow." v12



Discontent

But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see
that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate. v13



Good things
can't fill
when you are full
of bitterness and
hatred

Terrible
anti-semitism



Code words

But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king`s gate. v13



All this gives me no satisfaction

וְכֹל־זֶה אֵינֶנּוּ שׁוֹבֵה לִי

Y h w h

He frustrates the devices of the crafty,
so that their hands achieve no success. Job 5:12

What do you suggest?

His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, ...

v14

Joint hatred and conspiracy



A public spectacle!

Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. v14



75 feet

They all assume that the king will do what Haman wants.

Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back on him who starts it rolling. Proverbs 26:27

Sorted !

Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy. v14



What a good idea!

This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the gallows built. v14



In agreeing to this, they have all just signed their death warrants!

Will Esther's or Haman's influence prevail with the king?

Providence takes another turn (next time) ...

Trust in the LORD
with all your
heart...
He will make straight
your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6