

ESTHER 5

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE KING

After the three days and nights appointed for fasting and prayer were finished, Esther lost no time in going to see the king. She put on her queenly apparel, in hopes of pleasing her royal husband; and she appeared in the inner court, with her thoughts probably wavering between hope and fear. When Ahasuerus saw Esther standing there, she immediately obtained his favor. He assured her of safety by holding out his golden scepter to her; and she thankfully touched the top of it, thereby presenting herself to him as a humble petitioner. He then encouraged her to present her request. So far was he from counting her as a trespasser, that he actually seemed glad to see her and eager to make her happy. Esther feared that she would perish; but instead, she was promised that she would have whatever she might ask for, even if it were half of the kingdom! God, in His Providence, often overcomes the fears and surpasses the hopes of His people, especially when they venture in His cause.

From this part of the narrative, we may infer (as Jesus did from the parable of the unjust judge) an encouragement to pray always to our God, and not faint (Luke 18:6-8). Hear what the haughty Persian king said: "What is thy petition, and what is thy request? It shall be granted thee." And shall not our merciful Lord hear and answer the prayers of His own children, who cry out to Him day and night? Esther came to a proud and imperious man, but we come to the God of love and grace. She was not called, but we are graciously invited to come into the presence of our Lord. Esther had a law against her; but we have a promise – in fact, *many* promises – in our favor. She had no friend to introduce her or intercede for her; in fact, on the contrary, the man who was the king's favorite was her enemy. But we have an advocate with the Father, in Whom He is well-pleased. Esther was encouraged to ask to the extent of half the kingdom of Persia; but we are promised the enjoyment of the entire kingdom of heaven, with all that is necessary for us while we are still here on earth. Let us come boldly, therefore, to the throne of grace!

The only request that Esther made of Ahasuerus, at this time, was that he would be pleased to come to a banquet which she had prepared for him, and that he would bring Haman with him. She hoped, at the banquet, to have a better and more favorable opportunity of presenting her important petition. The king readily came to the banquet, and ordered Haman to attend him. There he renewed his kind enquiry concerning her request, as well as his generous promise that it would indeed be granted. But at this point, Esther thought it proper to

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Esther goes into the king's presence and is received with favor – verses 1-2
- ❖ She invites the king and Haman to a banquet – verses 3-5
- ❖ She invites the king and Haman to another banquet the next day – verses 6-8
- ❖ Haman sets up a gallows for Mordecai – verses 9-14

ask no more than a promise that the king and Haman would be pleased to accept another invitation to a banquet the next day. She indicated that she would then let him know what her request was. Perhaps her heart failed her at the moment when she was going to make her request, and she desired to take some further time for prayer that God would give her both words and wisdom. But Esther's delay in presenting her request must be chiefly attributed – once again – to the Lord's Providence, for the events that were about to transpire that very evening would further her intentions and make way for her success!

“Proud and haughty scorner is his name that deals in proud wrath,” observed the wise man (Prov. 21:24). And never did that name fit any man more than Haman – in whom, pride and wrath had so much power. Haman's arrogant spirit was puffed up with the fact that no other man was permitted to join the king at the banquet, except for his own mighty self. But as he was leaving the palace, the sight of Mordecai at the gate began to make him fret again; the God-fearing Jew did not even stand up or move aside for the proud and wicked Amalekite. Gladly would Haman have drawn his sword and murdered Mordecai on the spot for affronting him thus. But he hoped to see him fall shortly with all the rest of the Jews; and therefore, he forced himself to forbear killing him at once. He himself acknowledged in the presence of his wife and friends that he had no comfort in his estate, his high position, and his family, as long as Mordecai still lived and had a place in the king's gate. So he meditated revenge, and he was assisted therein by his wife and his friends. They advised Haman to make preparations for the immediate and speedy execution of Mordecai by getting a gallows ready, so that as soon as he could get the warrant signed, there might be no delay. This idea was very agreeable to the evil mind of the grand vizier, who had the gallows made right away. For the gaining of his point, Haman's wife and friends advised him to go early in the morning to the king, and get an order from him for the hanging of Mordecai – which they were sure would be quickly granted to one who was so much the king's favorite, and who had so easily obtained an edict for the destruction of the whole nation of the Jews.

This chapter leaves Haman in his home that evening, going to bed and pleasing himself with the thought of seeing Mordecai hanged the next morning, and then going merrily to Esther's banquet. Never did he dream of landing his own neck in his own gallows!

Thank You, Lord, that You have called us to the privilege of being Your own sons and daughters, who may approach You freely through Jesus' blood and righteousness. We thank You that the golden scepter is always held forth to us, and that we do not need to fear coming to Your throne of grace! Amen.

