

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Esther Chapter 5 — The Hidden Hand of Providence

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Esther Chapter 5 continues the dramatic story of Esther's courageous decision to approach King Ahasuerus.

After three days of fasting, Esther enters the king's inner court without being summoned. The king extends the golden scepter, showing her favor and allowing her to live.

But Esther does not immediately reveal Haman's plot.

Instead, she invites the king and Haman to a banquet. At the banquet, the king again asks what she wants. Esther delays her request and invites them to another banquet the following day.

Meanwhile, Haman's pride and hatred toward Mordecai continue to grow. Although Haman possesses wealth, authority, family, and the king's favor, he cannot enjoy any of it because Mordecai refuses to honor him.

Haman's wife and friends suggest building a seventy-five-foot-high gallows for Mordecai.

Haman accepts their advice.

But Haman does not know that **God is already preparing a reversal of his plan.**

I. ESTHER AND THE KING

Esther 5:1 — Esther Enters the Inner Court

Verse 1

“On the third day, Esther dressed in her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king’s palace, across from the throne room. The king was sitting on his royal throne, facing the entrance.”

Esther has completed the three-day period of fasting.

Now she acts.

She puts on her royal robes and enters the inner court.

This is a tremendous act of courage because Esther knows that approaching the king without being summoned could result in death.

Yet she does not allow fear to stop her.

Cross References

Genesis 22:4

“On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.”

The third day marked an important point in Abraham's journey toward obedience.

Hosea 6:2

“After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will restore us, so that we may live in His presence.”

The third day is associated with restoration and renewed life.

Esther 4:16

“Go and gather all the Jews who are in Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My attendants and I will do the same. Then, even though it is against the law, I will go to the king. And if I perish, I perish.”

Esther now fulfills the commitment she made in the previous chapter.

Crawford Commentary

Esther did not merely talk about courage.

She acted courageously.

Faith eventually requires us to move from preparation to action.

Spiritual Principle

There comes a time when faith must step forward.

II. THE KING EXTENDS THE GOLDEN SCEPTER

Esther 5:2 — Esther Finds Favor

Verse 2

“When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she found favor in his sight. He extended the golden scepter toward her, and Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.”

This is the moment Esther feared.

The king sees her.

He could have rejected her.

Instead, he extends the golden scepter.

Esther has found favor.

She approaches and touches the tip of the scepter.

Cross References

Proverbs 21:1

“The king’s heart is like a stream of water in the hand of the Lord. He directs it wherever He chooses.”

This verse provides an important principle for understanding the providence of God.

The king has authority, but God remains sovereign.

Psalms 45:9

“Kings’ daughters are among your honored women. At your right hand stands the queen wearing gold from Ophir.”

This passage describes the honor and position associated with the queen.

Hebrews 4:16

“So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”

Esther approached an earthly king and depended upon his favor.

Believers can approach God's throne through His grace.

Crawford Commentary

Esther's circumstances demonstrate the hidden hand of providence.

God's name is not mentioned in the Book of Esther, yet God's providential work is evident throughout the story.

Spiritual Principle

God can open a door that no human being can close.

III. THE KING ASKS ESTHER WHAT SHE WANTS

Esther 5:3 — “What Is Your Request?”

Verse 3

“The king asked her, ‘What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even if it is up to half the kingdom, it will be granted to you.’”

The king immediately recognizes that Esther has come for a reason.

He asks her what she wants.

The statement about half the kingdom is a royal expression of extraordinary generosity.

The king is essentially telling Esther:

“Tell me what you need.”

Cross References

Mark 6:23

“He promised her with an oath, ‘Whatever you ask, I will give you, up to half my kingdom.’”

Herod made a similar promise.

1 Kings 3:5

“That night the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, ‘What do you want Me to give you?’”

God asked Solomon to identify his request.

Psalms 2:8

“Ask Me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance. The ends of the earth will be your possession.”

God is sovereign over nations and kingdoms.

Crawford Commentary

Esther has an extraordinary opportunity.

Yet she does not rush.

She demonstrates wisdom by waiting for the right moment.

Spiritual Principle

An open door does not mean that we must rush through it without wisdom.

IV. ESTHER INVITES THE KING AND HAMAN

Esther 5:4 — The First Banquet

Verse 4

“Esther replied, ‘If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.’”

Esther does not immediately expose Haman.

Instead, she invites both the king and Haman to a banquet.

Her approach is deliberate.

She is not acting impulsively.

Cross References

Luke 14:16

“Jesus replied, ‘A man prepared a great banquet and invited many people.’”

Genesis 43:16

“When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the manager of his house, ‘Take these men into my house. Slaughter an animal and prepare a feast, because they will eat with me at noon.’”

Proverbs 9:2

“She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther is preparing the setting for the conversation that will eventually expose Haman.

She is moving carefully.

Spiritual Principle

Wisdom knows that timing can be just as important as words.

V. THE KING AND HAMAN COME TO THE BANQUET

Esther 5:5 — Haman Is Brought In

Verse 5

“The king said, ‘Bring Haman quickly, so we may do as Esther has requested.’ So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared.”

The king immediately accepts Esther's invitation.

Haman is summoned.

Haman probably believes that being invited to a private banquet with the king and queen is another sign of his importance.

He has no idea that the banquet is part of the process that will eventually expose him.

Cross References

Luke 14:17

“At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, because everything is now ready.’”

Genesis 43:25

“They prepared the gifts for Joseph’s arrival at noon, because they had heard that they were going to eat there.”

Genesis 18:6

“Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, ‘Quick! Take three measures of fine flour, knead it, and bake some bread.’”

Crawford Commentary

Haman thinks he is walking into a celebration.

In reality, he is walking deeper into God's providential plan.

Spiritual Principle

A person can be moving confidently toward his own plans while God is moving circumstances toward an entirely different outcome.

VI. ESTHER'S MYSTERIOUS DELAY

Esther 5:6 — The King Asks Again

Verse 6

“While they were drinking wine at the banquet, the king asked Esther again, ‘What is your petition? It will be granted. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom—it will be fulfilled.’”

The king asks Esther again.

He clearly wants to know why she has invited him.

But Esther still does not reveal everything.

She continues to wait.

Cross References

John 15:7

“If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you.”

Prayer involves abiding in Christ and submitting our desires to Him.

Psalm 37:4

“Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

Matthew 7:7

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.”

Crawford Commentary

Esther's delay should not be understood as fear.

She has already demonstrated courage by entering the king's court.

Her delay demonstrates **patience and strategic wisdom**.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes waiting is not weakness; sometimes waiting is wisdom.

VII. ESTHER MAKES HER REQUEST

Esther 5:7 — Esther States Her Petition

Verse 7

“Esther answered, ‘This is my petition and my request:’”

Esther begins to answer.

The king has asked her repeatedly.

She is preparing to explain what she needs.

Cross References

1 Samuel 1:27

“I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of Him.”

Hannah recognized God's answer to her petition.

Psalms 20:4

“May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.”

Philippians 4:6

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Crawford Commentary

The biblical pattern reminds us that petitions should be brought before God.

Esther had already called for fasting.

Now she is acting upon what she had prepared to do.

VIII. ESTHER REQUESTS ANOTHER BANQUET

Esther 5:8 — Tomorrow's Banquet

Verse 8

“If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases him to grant my request, let the king and Haman come to another banquet I will prepare for them tomorrow. Then I will answer the king's question.”

Esther delays the revelation one more time.

She asks the king and Haman to return tomorrow.

The suspense increases.

Haman does not understand what is coming.

The king does not yet know the full reason Esther has approached him.

But the reader knows that something significant is about to happen.

Cross References

Genesis 18:3

“He said, ‘My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass your servant by.’”

Genesis 33:15

“Esau said, ‘Let me leave some of my men with you.’ But Jacob replied, ‘Why do that, my lord? Let me find favor in your sight.’”

Ruth 2:13

“She said, ‘May I continue to find favor in your sight, my lord. You have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant—even though I am not like one of your female servants.’”

Crawford Commentary

Esther continues to operate with humility.

She does not demand.

She asks.

She does not force.

She waits.

Spiritual Principle

God's timing is often worth waiting for.

IX. HAMAN LEAVES THE BANQUET JOYFUL

Esther 5:9 — Pride and Rage

Verse 9

“Haman left the banquet that day in high spirits, joyful and proud. But when he saw Mordecai at the king’s gate—still not standing or showing him any respect—Haman was filled with rage.”

Haman leaves the banquet extremely happy.

Why?

He has wealth.

He has authority.

He has royal influence.

He has been personally invited by the queen.

And he has another banquet waiting for him.

Yet one sight ruins his happiness.

He sees Mordecai.

Mordecai still refuses to bow.

Haman's joy immediately turns to rage.

Cross References

Acts 5:33

“When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put the apostles to death.”

Proverbs 29:22

“An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.”

Luke 6:11

“But they were furious and began discussing with one another what they might do to Jesus.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman possessed almost everything a worldly person could desire.

But he could not enjoy any of it.

His pride had made Mordecai's refusal more important than his own blessings.

Spiritual Principle

Pride can make one offense seem greater than a hundred blessings.

X. HAMAN CONTROLS HIMSELF

Esther 5:10 — Haman Goes Home

Verse 10

“Still, he controlled himself and went home. He called together his friends and his wife Zeresh.”

Haman is angry.

But he does not immediately attack Mordecai.

Instead, he goes home and gathers his wife and friends.

Cross References

Proverbs 25:28

“A person without self-control is like a city whose walls are broken through.”

Proverbs 16:32

“Better to be patient than powerful; better to control your temper than to capture a city.”

Proverbs 29:11

“Fools give full vent to their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's temporary self-control does not mean his heart has changed.

His anger remains.

He simply begins looking for another way to deal with Mordecai.

Spiritual Principle

Controlling outward anger is not enough if the heart continues to feed hatred.

XI. HAMAN BOASTS ABOUT HIS SUCCESS

Esther 5:11 — Haman Lists His Accomplishments

Verse 11

“Haman boasted to them about his wealth, his many sons, the honors the king had given him, and how he had been elevated above all the other officials and royal servants.”

Haman begins listing his accomplishments.

He talks about:

- His wealth.
- His sons.
- His honors.
- His position.
- His authority.

Everything about his speech is centered on himself.

Cross References

Psalm 49:16

“Do not be afraid when others become rich, when the glory of their houses increases.”

Material wealth does not provide ultimate security.

Luke 12:19

“And I will say to myself, ‘You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and enjoy yourself.’”

The rich man in Jesus' teaching trusted in his possessions.

Daniel 4:30

“The king said, ‘Is this not the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?’”

Nebuchadnezzar also became consumed with his own greatness.

Crawford Commentary

Haman's greatest problem was not that he possessed wealth or authority.

His problem was that **his identity was built around them.**

Spiritual Principle

When possessions and position become the source of our identity, they can become idols.

XII. HAMAN'S FAVORITE SUBJECT: HIMSELF

Esther 5:12 — Haman's Pride Increases

Verse 12

“He added, ‘And that’s not all—Queen Esther invited no one but me to accompany the king to the banquet she prepared. And she invited me again for tomorrow!’”

Haman believes his special invitation proves how important he is.

He cannot stop talking about it.

He sees himself as uniquely honored.

Cross References

Proverbs 16:18

“Pride goes before destruction, and a proud spirit comes before a fall.”

Proverbs 27:1

“Do not boast about tomorrow, because you do not know what a day may bring.”

Daniel 4:37

“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and honor and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And He is able to humble those who walk in pride.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman is celebrating tomorrow before tomorrow arrives.

But he does not know what tomorrow will bring.

This is a powerful warning.

Spiritual Principle

Never become so confident in tomorrow that you forget God controls tomorrow.

XIII. ONE MAN DESTROYS HAMAN'S JOY

Esther 5:13 — Mordecai Consumes His Thoughts

Verse 13

“‘But none of this gives me any satisfaction,’ Haman continued, ‘as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate.’”

This verse reveals how deeply Haman's hatred has affected him.

He has wealth.

He has children.

He has authority.

He has royal recognition.

He has personal invitations from the queen.

Yet none of it satisfies him.

Why?

Mordecai will not honor him.

Cross References

Job 20:5

“The joy of the wicked is brief; the happiness of the godless lasts only a moment.”

Ecclesiastes 4:4

“I saw that all labor and achievement spring from one person’s envy of another. This too is meaningless, like chasing the wind.”

Proverbs 14:30

“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.”

Crawford Commentary

Haman's problem has moved beyond pride.

It has become obsession.

He cannot enjoy what he has because he is focused on what he cannot have.

Spiritual Principle

Envy makes people miserable by teaching them to focus on what they lack instead of being thankful for what they possess.

XIV. HAMAN'S DEADLY PLAN

Esther 5:14 — The Gallows

Verse 14

“Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said, ‘Let a gallows seventy-five feet high be built, and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then you can go to the banquet with the king and enjoy yourself.’ This idea pleased Haman, and he ordered the gallows to be built.”

Haman's wife and friends encourage his hatred.

They suggest constructing a huge gallows.

Haman likes the idea.

He orders it built immediately.

The irony is powerful.

Haman thinks the gallows will be Mordecai's end.

But God is preparing a reversal.

Cross References

Psalm 7:15

“The wicked dig a pit and hollow it out, but they fall into the hole they have made.”

Psalm 9:15

“The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.”

Proverbs 26:27

“Whoever digs a pit will fall into it; if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them.”

Crawford Commentary

The cross references reveal the great biblical principle of divine reversal.

The wicked may construct a trap for someone else, but God can turn that trap against the wicked.

Haman thinks he is preparing Mordecai's death.

He does not know that the next chapter will begin the process of Haman's downfall.

XV. PERSONAL STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 — Why did Esther wait until the second banquet to reveal her request?

Answer:

The passage does not explicitly state every reason Esther delayed.

However, her actions demonstrate patience, wisdom, and careful timing.

She did not act impulsively.

Question 2 — What happened when Haman saw Mordecai?

Answer:

Haman became extremely angry.

Even after experiencing great honor and privilege, Mordecai's refusal to bow caused Haman to become consumed with rage.

Question 3 — What does Haman's boasting reveal about his character?

Answer:

It reveals his pride and self-centeredness.

He focused on his wealth, children, position, honors, and special access to the king and queen.

Question 4 — Why could Haman not enjoy all his blessings?

Answer:

Because Mordecai's refusal to honor him consumed his thoughts.

Haman focused on one person who would not give him what he wanted instead of appreciating everything he already possessed.

Question 5 — What does Proverbs 16:18 teach about Haman?

Answer:

It says:

“Pride goes before destruction, and a proud spirit comes before a fall.”

Haman's pride was preparing the way for his downfall.

Question 6 — What does Haman's wife and friends teach us about counsel?

Answer:

It teaches that not every person who gives us advice gives us wise advice.

Haman's wife and friends encouraged him to pursue a deadly plan against Mordecai rather than confront his hatred and pride.

Question 7 — What was the purpose of the gallows?

Answer:

Haman intended for Mordecai to be executed on it.

The gallows represented Haman's hatred and his determination to destroy the man who refused to honor him.

Question 8 — What is ironic about the gallows?

Answer:

Haman believed the gallows would become Mordecai's place of death.

But the biblical principle expressed in the cross references is that the wicked can fall into the very trap they prepare for others.

The following chapter reveals the beginning of that reversal.

Question 9 — What does Esther's behavior teach us about patience?

Answer:

Esther demonstrates that patience can be an important part of courage.

She had the king's attention, but she waited for the appropriate moment to reveal her request.

Question 10 — What does Esther Chapter 5 teach about God's providence?

Answer:

It teaches that God can work through circumstances, timing, decisions, and seemingly ordinary events.

While Haman is making his plans, God's providential plan is already moving forward.

XVI. KEY LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 5

1. GOD GOES BEFORE US

Esther approached the throne after three days of fasting, and the king showed her favor.

When we prepare ourselves spiritually, we can move forward with courage and trust God with the outcome.

2. WISDOM WAITS

Esther did not immediately reveal everything.

Not every battle is won through haste.

3. PRIDE BLINDS

Haman possessed wealth, power, family, and position.

Yet one man's refusal to honor him consumed him.

Pride can make a person blind to his blessings.

4. EVIL HAS A PLAN—BUT SO DOES GOD

Haman builds a gallows for Mordecai.

But Haman does not know that God is preparing a divine reversal.

The enemy may make plans, but God remains sovereign over the outcome.

XVII. CRAWFORD COMMENTARY PRINCIPLE

“Do Not Judge the Ending by What You See in the Middle.”

At the end of Esther Chapter 5, Haman appears to be winning.

He has power.

He has influence.

He has the king's confidence.

He has Esther's invitation.

He has a plan to kill Mordecai.

And he has ordered the gallows built.

From a human perspective, things look terrible.

But the reader knows something Haman does not know:

God is working behind the scenes.

The gallows that Haman built will become part of his own downfall.

XVIII. CENTRAL TRUTH OF ESTHER CHAPTER 5

God can be working toward victory even when circumstances appear to be moving toward defeat.

Esther waits.

Haman boasts.

Esther prepares.

Haman plots.

Esther trusts.

Haman rages.

And while both are making plans, **God's providence is moving the story toward a divine reversal.**

The chapter ends with Haman believing that tomorrow will be his greatest day.

He does not know that tomorrow will begin the collapse of everything he has built.