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ESTHER 5: 1 Now on the third day, Esther put on her royal clothing, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, next to the king's house. The king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, next to the entrance of the house.

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Esther presents herself before the king, and finds favor in his sight, Est 5:1, Est 5:2. He asks what her request is, and promises to grant it, Est 5:3. She invites him and Haman to a banquet, which they accept, Est 5:4, Est 5:5. He then desires to know her request; and she promises to make it known on the morrow, if they will again come to her banquet, Est 5:6-8. Haman, though overjoyed at the manner in which he was received by the queen, is indignant at the indifference with which he is treated by Mordecai, Est 5:9. He goes home, and complains of this conduct to his friends, and his wife Zeresh, Est 5:10-13. They counsel him to make a gallows of fifty cubits high, and to request the king that Mordecai may be hanged on it, which they take for granted the king will not refuse; and the gallows is made accordingly, Est 5:14.

#### Verse 1

On the third day - Most probably the third day of the fast which she has prescribed to Mordecai and the Jews.

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ESTHER 5: 2 When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther came near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

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#### Verse 2

She obtained favor in his sight - 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.

The golden scepter that was in his hand - That the kings of Persia did wear a golden scepter, we have the following proof in Xenophon: Ὅτι οὐ τοδε το χρυσουν σκηπτρον το την βασιλειαν διασωξον εστιν, αλλ' πιστοι φιλοι σκηπτρον βασιλευσιν αληθεστατον και ασφαλεστατον. See *Cyrop.*, lib. viii., p. 139, edit. Steph. 1581. It is not, said Cyrus to his son Cambyses, the Golden Sceptre that saves the kingdom; faithful friends are the truest and safest scepter of the empire.

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ESTHER 5: 3 Then the king asked her, "What would you like, queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you even to the half of the kingdom."

ESTHER 5: 4 Esther said, "If it seems good to the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

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Verse 4

Let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet - It was necessary to invite Haman to prevent his suspicion, and that he might not take any hasty step which might have prevented the execution of the great design.

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ESTHER 5: 5 Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, so that it may be done as Esther has said." So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

ESTHER 5: 6 The king said to Esther at the banquet of wine, "What is your petition? It shall be granted you. What is your request? Even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed."

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Verse 6

The banquet of wine - At that part of the banquet when the wine was introduced.

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ESTHER 5: 7 Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and my request is this.

ESTHER 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 will prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the king has said."

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Verse 8

I will do to-morrow - She saw she was gaining on the king's affections; but she was not yet sufficiently confident; and therefore wished another interview, that she might ingratiate herself more fully in the king's favor, and thus secure the success of her design. But Providence disposed of things thus, to give time for the important event mentioned in the succeeding chapter.

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ESTHER 5: 9 Then Haman went out that day joyful and glad of heart, but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he didn't stand up nor move for him, he was filled with wrath against Mordecai.

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Verse 9

That he stood not up, nor moved for him - This was certainly carrying his integrity or inflexibility to the highest pitch. But still we are left to conjecture that some reverence was required, which Mordecai could not conscientiously pay.

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ESTHER 5: 10 Nevertheless Haman restrained himself, and went home. There, he sent and called for his friends and Zeresh his wife.

ESTHER 5: 11 Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, the multitude of his children, all the things in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

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#### Verse 11

The multitude of his children - The Asiatic sovereigns delight in the number of their children; and this is one cause why they take so many wives and concubines.

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ESTHER 5: 12 Haman also said, "Yes, Esther the queen let no man come in with the king to the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and tomorrow I am also invited by her together with the king.

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

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#### Verse 13

Yet all this availeth me nothing - Pride will ever render its possessor unhappy. He has such a high opinion of his own worth, that he conceives himself defrauded by every one who does not pay him all the respect and homage which he conceives to be his due.

The soul was made for God, and nothing but God can fill it and make it happy. Angels could not be happy in glory, when they had cast off their allegiance to their Maker. As soon as his heart had departed from God, Adam would needs go to the forbidden fruit, to satisfy a desire which was only an indication of his having been unfaithful to his God. Solomon, in all his glory, possessing every thing heart could wish, found all to be vanity and vexation of spirit; because his soul had not God for its portion. Ahab, on the throne of Israel, takes to his bed, and refuses to eat bread, not merely because he cannot get the vineyard of Naboth, but because he had not God in his heart, who could alone satisfy its desires. Haman, on the same ground, though the prime favourite of the king, is wretched because he cannot have a bow from that man whom his heart even despised. O, how distressing are the inquietudes of vanity. And how wretched is the man who has not the God of Jacob for his help, and in whose heart Christ dwells not by faith!

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ESTHER 5: 14 Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on it. Then go in merrily with the king to the banquet." This pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made.

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#### Verse 14

Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high - The word גולגולת, which we translate gallows, signifies simply wood, a tree, or pole; and this was to be seventy-five feet high, that he might suffer the greater ignominy, and be a more public spectacle. I believe impaling is here also meant. See the note, Est 2:23 (note).

In former times the Jews were accustomed to burn Haman in effigy; and with him a wooden cross, which they pretended to be in memory of that which he had erected for the suspension of Mordecai; but which was, in fact, to deride the Christian religion. The emperors, Justinian and Theodosius, abolished it by their edicts; and the practice has ceased from that time, though the principle from which it sprang still exists, with the same virulence against Christianity and its glorious Author.