

10 Then she instructed him to say to **Mordecai**,

11 "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

12 When **Esther's** words were reported to **Mordecai**,

13 he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape.

14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

15 Then **Esther** sent this reply to **Mordecai**:

16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

17 So **Mordecai** went away and carried out all of **Esther's** instructions.

5:1 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.

2 When he saw **Queen Esther** standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held

out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So **Esther** approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

3 Then the king asked, "What is it, **Queen Esther**? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you."

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

5 "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.

6 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."

7 **Esther** replied, "My petition and my request is this:

8 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. Then I will answer the king's question."

9 **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**.

10 Nevertheless, **Haman** restrained himself and went home. Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife,

11 **Haman** boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had

elevated him above the other nobles and officials.

12 "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.

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

14 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.

6:1 That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him.

2 It was found recorded there that **Mordecai** had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate **King Ahasuerus**.

3 "What honor and recognition has **Mordecai** received for this?" the king asked. "Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered.

4 The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now **Haman** had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about hanging **Mordecai** on the gallows he had erected for him.

5 His attendants answered, "**Haman** is standing in the court." "Bring him in," the king ordered.