

# Esther 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther?  
and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half  
of the kingdom.

## Analysis

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**Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.** After extending the scepter (v. 2), Ahasuerus offered Esther up to "half of the kingdom"—a hyperbolic expression of generous willingness to grant her request. This phrase appears three times in Esther (5:3, 6; 7:2), creating narrative tension: the king repeatedly offers extravagant gifts, but Esther delays her actual request. The offer demonstrates both the king's affection for Esther and God's providence positioning her with maximum influence. The irony is profound: Esther doesn't want wealth or territory—only her people's survival. Her "request" will expose the king's own decree (through Haman) as threatening his beloved queen. The generous offer creates the opportunity for her strategic appeal.

## Historical Context

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The "half of the kingdom" formula appears elsewhere in Scripture (Mark 6:23, Herod to Herodotus's daughter) as hyperbolic generosity expressing willingness to grant requests. Ancient Near Eastern monarchs used such formulas in audiences, promising favor while retaining ultimate authority. The offer wasn't literal—kings didn't actually give half their kingdoms—but signaled open-handed generosity. Esther's position as beloved queen gave her enormous influence, as the king's offer demonstrates. Persian queens, particularly favorites, wielded significant power

through access and influence. Archaeological evidence shows royal wives owned property, directed resources, and influenced policy.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does the king's extravagant offer demonstrate God's providence positioning Esther with maximum influence for her people's deliverance?
2. What does Esther's strategic delay in making her request teach about wisdom in advocacy and timing?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֹּאמֶר	לָהּ	הַמֶּלֶךְ	מֶה	לָהּ	אֶסְתֵּר	רַ	הַמֶּלֶךְ
Then said	H0	the king	H4100	H0	Esther		unto her What wilt thou queen
H559		H4428			H635		H4436
וְמֶה	בִּקְשָׁתְךָ	עַד	חֲצִי	י	הַמֶּלֶךְ	וְ	
H4100	and what is thy request	H5704	thee to the half		of the kingdom		
	H1246		H2677		H4438		
וְיִנָּתֵן	לָהּ:						
it shall be even given	H0						
H5414							

## Additional Cross-References

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**Mark 6:23** (Kingdom): And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

**Esther 7:2** (Kingdom): And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

**Esther 9:12** (Kingdom): And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done.

**Esther 5:6** (Kingdom): And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

**1 Kings 3:5** (Parallel theme): In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.