

Esther 7:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

Analysis

Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? The king's question reveals shock and rage—"Who is he, and where is he" that dared (male libo, "presume in his heart") to threaten the queen? The phrase "presume in his heart" suggests audacious evil requiring extraordinary boldness. Ahasuerus's outrage demonstrates he hadn't connected his authorization (3:10-11) to its implications for Esther. This moral blindness—approving genocide abstractly while horrified when it affects someone he loves personally—demonstrates how evil operates through abstraction and distance. The king's question sets up Esther's dramatic identification of Haman, transforming the banquet from festive to judicial.

Historical Context

The king's shocked question suggests he had given little thought to the decree's specifics after approving it (3:11). Ancient monarchs often delegated authority without tracking details, creating situations where they might unknowingly authorize harm to those they valued. Ahasuerus's outrage at threat to his queen, while having approved threatening an entire ethnic group, demonstrates the moral inconsistency of selective empathy. The dramatic question also served rhetorical purpose—creating suspense before Esther's identification of Haman. Ancient

audiences would have recognized this as the narrative's climax, where hidden evil would be publicly exposed.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the king's shock at his decree threatening Esther illustrate the moral danger of abstract evil versus personal connection?
2. What does this teach about how injustice often operates through distance and abstraction that shields perpetrators from confronting consequences?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	הַמֶּלֶךְ	אֲחַשְׁוֵרֶשׁ	וַיֹּאמֶר	לְאֶסְתֵּר	הַמַּלְכָּה	מִי
and said	Then the king	Ahasuerus	and said	unto Esther	the queen	H4310
H559	H4428	H325	H559	H635	H4436	

אֲשֶׁר	הוּא	זֶה	וְהוּא	זֶה	הוּא
H834	H1931	H2088	H335	H2088	H1931

מֶלֶךְ	וְהוּא	לִבּוֹ	לַעֲשׂוֹת	כֵּן
Who is he and where is he that durst presume	in his heart	to do		H3651
H4390	H3820	H6213		