Four Letters in Esther's Invitation

Esther 5:4 • A seven-minute exercise with Dr. Bill Creasy

Read Esther 5:4 aloud. The boxes show four consecutive words of her invitation. Hebrew reads right to left, across the line and within each word. Start at box 1.

Read the invitation from right to left

← Start on the right and follow Esther's words to the left.

4 • FINISH	3	2	1 • START HERE
היום	והמן	המלך	יבוא
ha-yom today	*ve-Haman* and Haman	*ha-melekh* the king	*yavo* let … come

Which four letters do you find?

Circle the rightmost Hebrew letter in each box. Use the key to say the four initials aloud, or write them in the table below.

ה = H (he) י = Y (yod) ו = W (waw or vav)

Box 1 is row 1. Follow the rows down the page. The W in the key stands for the letter pronounced v in ve-Haman.

Box	Hebrew	Pronunciation	Meaning	English initial
1	יבוא	yavo	let … come	_____
2	המלך	ha-melekh	the king	_____
3	והמן	ve-Haman	and Haman	_____
4	היום	ha-yom	today	_____

Read your last column from top to bottom. What name do you recognize?

Compare what you found

יהוה **Y – H – W – H**

In English we write Y–H–W–H from left to right. These four consonants spell the personal name of Israel's God, often printed LORD in English Bibles. The word "today" gives the final H.

Hebrew Esther never names God directly. Dr. Creasy sees an imprint of God's presence in this invitation. Readers can see the same four letters and differ about whether the author arranged them deliberately.

Reread 5:4. With the initials in mind, what do you notice about the ordinary words Esther chooses to speak?

Esther 5 in Hebrew and English • Hopf and Bezold on the initials