

1 Esdras 3-4 - The Story of a Strange Contest

- Some of the stories in Ezra and Nehemiah are repeated in the apocryphal book known as 1 Esdras. But the author of 1 Esdras added a few extra stories to make this book more interesting. One of those extra stories is the Tale of the Three Bodyguards; read it in **1 Esdras 3:1-4:63**. How was this contest proposed?
 - by King Darius, in order to get to sleep
 - by Ezra the scribe, to teach the king a lesson
 - by the king's bodyguards themselves, while the king was asleep
- Do you think this really happened? Why, or why not?
- The contest question was: "What is the strongest thing in the world?" How did each contestant answer?
 - _____ the 1st contestant's answer
 - _____ the 2nd contestant's answer
 - _____ the 3rd contestant's first answer
 - _____ the 3rd contestant's second answer
- Match the answers in question 3 with the reasons the three men gave.
 - _____ affects everyone alike
 - _____ gets the people's taxes
 - _____ gives men life
 - _____ makes people forget their friends
 - _____ does not contain any injustice
 - _____ can get a man's wealth if they are pretty
 - _____ confuses the mind of all
 - _____ controls men, even the emperor
 - _____ can send people to war
 - _____ is honored by everyone on earth
 - _____ is always obeyed
 - _____ can get men to leave their family and country
 - _____ is fair, impartial, and lasts forever
 - _____ makes people forget their sorrows
 - _____ is greater than the sun
 - _____ receives the loot soldiers take in battle

5. By the way, who was the third contestant? _____
Where have you read about him before? What did he do?

6. After he won the contest, how did he use his prize?

7. Compare **1 Esdras 4:47** with **Ezra 3:7-9**. Notice the name of the Persian emperor and the name of the leader of the Jews who returned to Jerusalem. Do you see any contradiction here?

[FILE 42]