

Now Is the Time
Esther 4:1-17

INTRO: The anger of Haman towards Mordecai individually and the Jews as a whole leads him to devise a wicked plan that could have resulted in a terrible Holocaust (3:13). The thing that really got Haman hot was the refusal of Mordecai to bow down to him (3:6). Mordecai, like the three Hebrew Children of Daniel's day, refused to bow to anyone or anything other than Jehovah God (3:2,5).

We come now to the fourth chapter of Esther where we see:

1. The Pining of the Jews (vs 1-3).
2. The Plan of Mordecai (vs 4-14).
3. The Promise of the Queen, Esther (vss 15-17).

I. VSS. 1-3, THE PINING OF THE JEWS

- A. Vs. 1, Mordecai knows and believes the seriousness of the decree.
- B. Vs. 2, Why is Mordecai so serious? Why is he clothed in sackcloth?
 1. He knew that the decree had been made with the king's authority, and this means that it is now the unalterable law of the Medes and the Persians.
 2. This is a serious decree for it means death for the Jews in Persia.
- C. Vs. 3, The Jews believed the decree that had gone out from Xerxes. A decree that he could not change. A decree that meant death. He could not change his law. That is why Vashti, the beautiful former Queen, could not be brought back before him even though he would have had her back it seems (2:1).
- D. We need to be reminded that there is a decree that comes from the throne of God. It is an unalterable principle; it does not change.
 1. "...there is none righteous no not one...all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:10, 23).
 2. Rom 6:23, "The wages of sin is death."
 3. Ezekiel 18:4 says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezekiel 18:20 says it again: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."
 4. The Jews of Esther's day realized they were in trouble.

They realized that death was coming throughout the empire. They believed it was real.

5. There are those living about us today who do not take God seriously. They treat the truth of scripture as if it were not true at all.
 - a. Think of how foolish it would have been for the Jews of that day not to believe the decree of death.
 - b. Friends, death is real. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb 9:27). Hell is real and eternity is long!
 - c. Sin is serious. Sinners are bound for hell. In John 8:24 Jesus says: "I said unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
- E. Lost sinners need to believe on the Lord Jesus, the sin bearer (II Cor 5:21). Saved sinners need to cry out to God for mercy upon this nation of ours.

II. VSS. 4-14, THE PLAN OF MORDECAI

- A. Vs. 4, Mordecai continued to sit in sack clothe and ashes at the kings gate. He became an annoyance at the gate as he, "cried with a loud and bitter cry" (vs 1c).
 1. Esther sent him some new clothes, but he refused them. New clothes could not take away the terrible decree.
 2. Many try to cover sin with gaudy garments of religion, reformation or education. They refuse to see how bad they really are. They refuse to see that they are sinners. Romans 3:10 says: "There is none righteous, no not one."
- B. Vs 5, Esther is living in the palace. Things are going great for her; she cannot understand what is wrong with cousin Mordecai. Here we have the picture of two kinds of saints:
 1. Those who are in joy because they are ignorant to what is going on.
 2. Those who are in sorrow because they know and see the signs of the times. Weep for the death that is coming to America.
 3. Esther is curious as to what is wrong with Mordecai; so she sends Hatach to find out.
- C. Vs. 6-9, Hatach goes to Mordecai, receives the bad news, and brings it to Esther.

1. Vss 6-7, Hatach goes to Mordecai. Mordecai reveals the plot of Haman to Esther's trusted chamberlain friend.
 2. In verse 8, Mordecai passes on accurate plans so the Queen will be well informed. He does this because he wants her to get involved. In the last part of this verse, Mordecai sends orders for Esther: "to go in unto the king, to make supplication (implore) unto him, and to make request before him for her people."
 3. Vs. 9, Hatach is a faithful messenger even though the message is a bad one.
 - a. The bad news is that all unbelievers will go to hell.
 - b. The good news, the Gospel, is that Christ died, was buried, and rose again. And all who believe on Him are saved.
 - c. Before the good news can be seen, the bad has to be understood.
- D. Vss. 10-12, Esther sends a reply to Mordecai by the hand of Hatach.
1. Esther reminds Mordecai of the law concerning visiting the king unannounced and without summons.
 2. She realizes that her people are in a fix, but she could lose her life trying to help them.
- E. Vss 13-14, Mordecai hears Esther's reply (vs 12) and is now faced with a dilemma. Back off or add pressure— what should he do? He presses on.
1. Vs. 13, Mordecai tells Esther if you do nothing sooner or later you will be found out. They will find out you are a Jew, and you will be killed too. She would not escape death.
 2. Vs. 14, God's covenant with Abraham was not forgotten by Mordecai. The Jewish race would survive. God would raise up a deliverer.
 - a. Mordecai tells Esther that the things that are happening may be why you were elevated to such a high position.
 - b. Our time in history is the working of the Lord, and He brings folks on the scene to be a blessing and help to others.
 - 1- John the Baptist was the bulldozer for Jesus.

- 2- Military leaders are raised up by God for certain times: Lee, Jackson, MacArthur, Eisenhower.
- c. You may only be one, but you are one; and one does make a difference:
*I am only one.
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But I can do something,
And because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.*
(Edward E. Hale)

III. VSS 15-17, THE PROMISE OF THE QUEEN

- A. Vss. 15-16, The character of Esther now shines through. The king chose her for her beauty; God had chosen her on the basis of her character. "She is a queen now, every inch a queen" (McGee 87).
1. Listen to her noble words: "If I perish, I perish."
 2. Esther, like Christ, put herself in the place of death for her people.
 - a. Christ did not say: "If I perish, I perish." He said, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself..." (John 10:17-18).
 - b. He came to give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).
- B. Vs. 17, Esther has gone from fear to faith in this chapter. From follower to leader.

CONCLUSION: There is a sentence of death upon man, but one has stepped forth to take our place (John 1:12). "But as many as received Him....."