

Esther 4 New American Standard Bible

Esther Learns of Haman's Plot

When Mordecai learned of everything that had been done, ^[a]he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly. ² And he came as far as the king's gate, for no one was to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth. ³ In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and mourning rites; and many had sackcloth and ashes spread out as a bed.

⁴ Then Esther's attendants and her eunuchs came and informed her, and the queen was seized by great fear. And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai so that he would remove his sackcloth from him, but he did not accept *them*.

⁵ Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king's eunuchs, whom ^[b]the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered him *to go* to Mordecai to learn what this *mourning was* and why it *was happening*. ⁶ So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square, in front of the king's gate.

⁷ Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the elimination of the Jews. ⁸ He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their annihilation, so that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and plead with him for her people.

⁹ So Hathach came back and reported Mordecai's words to Esther. ¹⁰ Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him *to reply* to Mordecai: ¹¹ "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king in the inner courtyard, who is not summoned, he has *only* one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."

¹² And they reported Esther's words to Mordecai.

¹³ Then Mordecai told *them* to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the *other* Jews. ¹⁴ For if you keep silent at this time, liberation and rescue will arise for the Jews from another place, and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"

Esther Plans to Intercede

¹⁵ Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai, ¹⁶ “Go, gather all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants also will fast in the same way. And then I will go in to the king, which is not in accordance with the law; and if I perish, I perish.” ¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

1. The Jews were captive in a foreign land, serving their enemy.
2. Mordecai had learnt of a plot to destroy the Jews throughout the land which had been planned by Haman.
3. His response was to go into mourning as he acknowledged the trouble ahead.
4. What do we do when we know there is trouble ahead?
5. Mordecai demonstrates publicly the deep anguish he felt inside his soul for his people, even though this was a dangerous thing to do.
6. To put on sackcloth and sit on ashes was a posture of humility.
7. The news of this plot reached the Jewish community and dread took hold of them and they went into mourning.
8. In this state of mourning they threw themselves onto the mercy of God with prayer, fasting and wailing.
9. What is it to be a wailer?
10. Esther's servants came and told her about Mordecai and the plot against the Jews.
11. In an attempt to protect Mordecai, Esther sent him a change of clothes. Mordecai declined. Why did she do this?
12. Esther is unaware as to what is happening so she sent her servant to enquire of Mordecai.
13. He informs her of the plot of destruction of the Jews, this act of genocide by Haman.
14. Part of the tactics Haman used to persuade the king was to point out the benefits financially, that would come into the king's treasury.
15. There had been a decree declaring the intention of the king against the Jews, sent out across the 127 provinces.
16. Mordecai wants Esther to have a meeting with the King on behalf of the Jewish community, but this would break protocol and risk Esther's life.
17. Mordecai is Esther's uncle, Esther was an orphan.
18. Esther's first response was not what Mordecai wanted to hear, she explains how her life will be in danger if she tries to have a meeting with the king, she would be depending on his mercy.
19. Would you have gone?
20. Esther justifies her fears to her uncle.
21. Mordecai reminds Esther that she will not survive and neither will her family as she too is a Jew.

22. The incredible declaration to remain silent as an act of treason to her people, the Jews.
23. Mordecai declares 'salvation will come to the people by someone else'.
24. God wants to use us to minister to the world but if we won't go will he raise up someone else?
25. Treason will lead to the destruction of all you have, all you are and all you will be, you will perish.
26. Mordecai presents to her the revealed will of God as a fore knowledge of the Jewish protection.
27. God has put you here for a time such as this.
28. Do you see this reality in your own life?
29. Esther is persuaded and decides to do as Mordecai had asked.
30. She looks for support from the Jewish community, asking them to go into a three day fast with her before she approaches the king.
31. She comes to a place within herself where she decides to make the sacrifice to save her people.
32. What makes a hero and what makes a coward.