

SEEING the UNSEEN Hand ~ Esther 4:1-17

→ Scripture Reading Jeremiah 29:5,7 and 31:35-37

Mordecai's Response to the Death Decree ~ Esther 4:1-6

¹ When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. ² But he went only as far as the **king's gate**, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. ³ In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

→ Map of the Empire

There were an estimated 15 million Jews scattered throughout the Persian Empire. Because of Haman's hatred and the king's stupidity, all of them were now scheduled to be annihilated...Wiersbe

⁴ When Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. ⁵ Then Esther summoned Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why. ⁶ So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate.

IMPLICATION

→ **GRIEF and MOURNING** are a proper response to **Suffering, Pain, and Injustice**

Esther sees the DEATH DECREE ~ Esther 4:7-11

⁷ Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to urge her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people. ⁹ Hathach went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said.

¹⁰ Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, ¹¹ "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the INNER COURT without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only **EXCEPTION** to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

Preparing to SEE the King ~ Esther 4:12-17

¹² When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, ¹³ he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you ALONE of all the Jews will escape.

¹⁴ For if you remain SILENT at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews WILL ARISE from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

→ **For such a TIME as this - that IS the Unseen HAND Working**

Jeremiah 31:35-36 (NIV) This is what the LORD says, He who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar - the LORD Almighty is His NAME: ³⁶ Only IF these decrees vanish from MY sight, declares the LORD, will the descendants of Israel ever CEASE to be a nation before ME.

¹⁵ Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, **I WILL GO to the king**, even though it is against the law. **And if I perish, I perish.** ¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

Fasting was ALWAYS a spiritual act for the Jews. It served as a demonstration of deep distress and mourning over sin, or an expression of utter dependence on God for deliverance from an enemy. Fasting was a facet of prayer, an urgent plea to God for mercy. HOTC

IMPLICATION

→FAITH and TRUST lead to ACTION

¹⁶ Go, gather together ALL the Jews who are in Susa, and FAST for me. ...When this is done, I will GO to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.

Faith INVITES God into the midst of SUFFERING. With the halting breath of prayer FAITH must speak, and its very utterance attests God's presence. HOTC

Daniel 3:17-18 (NIV) If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to SAVE us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But even if He does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

TAKE AWAY ??

Jeremiah 29:5, 7 (NIV) Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce...

⁷ ...seek the **peace** and **prosperity** of the city to which I have carried you into exile. **Pray** to the LORD **for it**, because IF it prospers, YOU TOO will prosper.

Jeremiah 29:10-11 (NIV) This is what the LORD says: "When **seventy years are completed** for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I **know the plans I have for you**," declares the LORD, "**plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you HOPE and a future.**"

Esther 4:14 (NET) Don't imagine that because you are part of the king's household you will be the one Jew who will escape. If you keep quiet at this time, liberation and protection for the Jews will appear from another source, while you and your father's household perish. It may very well be that you have achieved royal status for such a time as this!

Hebrews 12:10-11 (NIV) Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but **God DISCIPLINES us for our good**, that **we may SHARE in his holiness.** ¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for **those who have been TRAINED by IT.**

¹² **THEN** you will **call upon ME** and come and **pray to ME**, and **I WILL LISTEN** to you. ¹³ You will **seek ME and FIND ME**... **...WHEN** you SEEK ME with **ALL your heart.**

My Life a TAPESTRY

My life is but a weaving - Between my God and me.
I cannot choose the colors - He weaveth steadily.

Off' times He weaveth sorrow; And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper - And I the underside.

Not 'til the loom is silent - And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas - And reveal the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful - In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver - In the pattern He has planned

He knows, He loves, He cares; Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives the very best to those Who leave the choice to Him."