

For Such a Time as This

Mordecai calls Esther to risk her life by approaching the king uninvited, reminding her that she may have come to the kingdom for such a time as this.

Esther 4:1-17

CHARACTERS: Mordecai, Esther, Hatach, The Jews

THEMES: Calling, Courage, Faith, Purpose, Divine timing

WHEN MORDECAI LEARNED all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth with ashes, and went into the midst of the city, crying out with a loud and bitter cry. He came before the king's gate, for no one could enter wearing sackcloth. Throughout every province where the decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews—fasting, weeping, wailing, with many lying in sackcloth and ashes.

Esther's maidens and chamberlains came and told her. The queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai and remove his sackcloth, but he refused them. So Esther called for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains appointed to attend her, and commanded him to learn what troubled Mordecai and why.

Hatach went to Mordecai in the street before the king's gate. Mordecai told him everything—all that had happened, the exact sum of money Haman had promised to pay into the treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. He gave Hatach a copy of the written decree issued in Shushan, charging him to show it to Esther, declare it to her, and command her to go before the king to make supplication and petition for her people.

Hatach returned and told Esther Mordecai's words. She sent this reply: 'All the king's servants and the people of the provinces know that any man or woman who comes to the king into the inner court without being called

faces one law—to be put to death, except those to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that they may live. And I have not been called to come to the king these thirty days.'

When Mordecai received Esther's words, he sent back this response: 'Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'

These words pierced Esther's heart. Her position of safety was an illusion—Haman's decree condemned her too. Her silence would not save her. But more than that, Mordecai suggested divine purpose in her elevation. God had positioned her precisely here, precisely now, for this very crisis.

Esther sent her answer: 'Go, gather all the Jews present in Shushan, and fast for me. Neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maidens and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is not according to the law. And if I perish, I perish.'

Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther had commanded. The orphan girl had become a woman of extraordinary courage, willing to lay down her life for her people.