

## ESTHER 4

## ESTHER MAKES A RESOLUTION

This chapter gives us an account of the general sorrow among the Jews after the publishing of Haman's bloody edict against them. It was a sad time indeed with the people of God. Mordecai cried bitterly, tore his clothes, and put on sackcloth. He knew that Haman's spite was against him primarily, and that it was for his sake that the rest of the Jews were struck at. And therefore, although he did not repent of what he did (for he continued to refuse to bow to Haman, even in chapter 5:9), yet it troubled him greatly that his people should suffer for his obedience to the Lord and his conscience.

When Queen Esther heard of the trouble that Mordecai was in, she was exceedingly grieved. The Jews' danger was her distress also; for although she was a queen, she did not forget her relationship to the people of God. But so strictly did the laws of Persia confine the king's wife, that it was not possible for Mordecai to speak face-to-face with Esther about this important matter. Instead, messages were carried back and forth between them by Hatach, a trustworthy attendant whom the king had appointed to serve Esther. Mordecai sent her an authentic account of the whole situation, with a petition to her to intercede with the king on behalf of the whole Jewish nation. She reminded him of the difficulty of her own situation; for she could not, without peril of her life, address the king. And therefore, he put a great hardship upon her in urging her to do so. The law was clear – and everyone knew it – that whoever came into the king's presence uncalled would be put to death, unless the king was pleased to hold out the golden scepter to them. And it was extremely doubtful whether Esther would find him in a good humor. She had not even seen her royal husband for a whole month. How awful it was that not even the king's own wife could come into his presence unbidden! Happily, this is not the law of the court of the King of kings! To the footstool of His throne of grace, we may come boldly at any time; and we may be sure of an answer of peace to the prayer of faith. We are welcome to enter even into the Holy of holies, through the blood of Jesus! He is not only ready to receive His people, but He even stands waiting to be gracious. His hand is full of gifts, His heart is full of love, and grace is dropping like honey from His lips.

In light of her situation, Esther's case was very discouraging. But Mordecai still insisted that no matter what hazard she might run, she must go to the king as an advocate for the Jews! He reminded her that the decree to destroy all her people did not exclude her; she could not promise herself that she would be

**Outline of the chapter:**

- ❖ *The danger to the Jews is mourned by a general lamentation – verses 1-4*
- ❖ *Mordecai urges Esther to intercede for the Jews before the king – verses 5-9*
- ❖ *She objects to the danger of going to the king uncalled – verses 10-12*
- ❖ *After being pressed by Mordecai, she agrees to see the king – verses 13-17*



spared simply because she was in the palace. He told her that the Jews' cause, one way or another, would certainly prevail; and therefore, she might safely venture in it. This was the language of a strong faith, which did not stagger at the promise of God, even when the danger was very threatening. Mordecai further reasoned that the Lord's Providence had brought

Esther to be the queen of Persia at "such a time as this," for the express purpose of saving her people. There is always a wise and good intention in all the Providences of God, even though it may be unknown to us until it is accomplished.

Hereupon Esther bravely resolved that no matter what it might cost her, she would appear before the king. But she would not do so until she and her friends had first sought the favor of God through fasting and prayer, and then she could hope to find favor with the king. She was going to Ahasuerus in peril of her life; but she knew she would be safe when she had committed the keeping of her soul to God, and when she had put herself under His protection. She desired Mordecai to direct the Jews who were in Shushan to call a solemn assembly, and to keep a solemn fast – abstaining from all set meals and all pleasant food for three days, in token of their humiliation for sin, and in a sense of their unworthiness of God's mercy. And no doubt she also desired them to pray for her, although prayer is not expressly mentioned. Esther promised that she and her maidens would also observe this fast in her apartment of the palace, for she could not come to their assemblies. She spoke with the courage and resolution that was fitting for a queen. "When we have sought God in this matter, I will go unto the king to intercede for my people," she resolved. "I know it is not according to the king's law, but it is according to God's law. And therefore, no matter what the result may be, I will venture. I will not count my life dear to me, so that I may serve God and His people. And if I perish, I perish. I cannot lose my life in a better cause. Better to do my duty and die for my people, than to shrink from my duty and die with them." When nothing is ventured, nothing is won. Esther did not make this resolution in despair, but in a holy submission to do her duty and to trust God with the outcome. And in the next section of this exciting narrative, we shall find that God did not say to the children of Jacob, "Seek me in vain!"

*Lord, as we admire Esther's faith, we pray for grace to exercise that faith still higher in our own case; for none can perish who hold on to Your Covenant-promises in Jesus. We pray for faith to believe the record which You have given of Your Son; and in this faith, to go in before You, the King of kings and Lord of lords, with firmness of assurance! Amen.*