

The Unnoticed, Unrecognized Presence of God (Esther 4:1-17) Part 2

- Ch. 4 we looked at 4 headings highlighting the dangers Israel faced in Persia
- We noticed that there was fasting, weeping, sackcloth and ashes but no prayer
- Mordecai comes to Esther to appeal to the king, but he does not appeal to God
- 1) **Mordecai's plan**: His plan is to appeal to Ahasuerus through queen Esther
- 2) **Point and counterpoint**: Esther is unaware of the plight of the Jews
 - Esther highlights the dangers of appearing before Ahasuerus unannounced
 - Mordecai warns Esther that deliverance will come from elsewhere
 - She will not escape from the terrible plight that the Jews will face
- 3) **Esther's choice**: she chooses to see the king & seeks fasting & prayer
- 4) **Re-learning to trust & see God again**:
 - God won't allow us to serve our idols & claim to know Him, we must choose
 - We, too, need to humble ourselves & pray, seeking God's face in our trials

V. Fasting and Praying

- Biblical times fasting was a sign of contrition & dependence upon God in trials
- Fasting continues to be an appropriate response for God's people for their trials
- The Jewish community wasn't fasting until the crisis unfolded in chapter 4
- They were assimilated into the empire, but in an instant they had a reality check

VI. Fasting and Acting

- By itself fasting would accomplish nothing for God's covenant people in Persia
- They needed a mediator, one willing & able to plead for them before the king
- They couldn't appear before the king themselves, Esther was to fast as well as act
- It was up to God now to glorify himself through Esther's obedience as He willed

VII. A Better Mediator

- If the Jews needed a mediator before King Ahasuerus, how much more do we?
- God is a great King & sovereign of the universe, against whom we have rebelled
- As sinners we can't just enter the presence of God. Who will plead our case?
- The answer is Jesus Christ, the true mediator between God and man
- At the fullness of time he took on flesh & appeared in this world to take our place
- Unlike Esther, Christ came to perish, the judgment of God would fall on Him
- While we await His appearing we fast; when He returns, our fasting will be over