

Message #9**Esther 4:1-17**

Esther is an amazing book of God's providential sovereignty. There are human causes and effects for everything that happens in the book, yet behind the scenes was the sovereign hand of God, moving and directing things in His direction.

GOD PUTS HIS PEOPLE IN VARIOUS POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND BY THEIR HUMBLE DEPENDENCY ON GOD AND BY THEIR FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE AND STAND FOR GOD, HIS PEOPLE WILL BE GREATLY USED BY GOD AND WILL SEE GOD DO GREAT AND WONDERFUL THINGS.

This text speaks of two key theological realities: God's sovereignty and human responsibility. God can carry out His plan with or without us. But if we will do what we can in obeying Him, we personally will see God do great things with us and for us.

RESPONSE #1 – The response of Mordecai to the news of extermination. **4:1-2**

The combination of wearing sackcloth and ashes and wailing loudly was a sign of great despondency and of great humility before God. Often times it was accompanied by prayer.

It was this same kind of response that actually prompted God to be merciful to an evil Ahab (I Kings 21:27-29).

Whenever any person is willing to humble himself before God, the grace and mercy of God becomes a possibility no matter how rebellious or evil the person has previously been.

What most people in this world don't realize is that a death sentence has been leveled against them. Every man, woman and child has sinned against God and is doomed. Every person is under the wrath of God and heading for hell. There is only one chance one has; to humble yourself before God and stop relying upon your own goodness and beauty and start relying upon Jesus Christ and you will be saved and spared.

RESPONSE #2 – The response of the Jews to the news of extermination. **4:3**

This was a national revival in which Israel, as a nation, humbled herself before God.

The Jews are a proud people and it takes much to humble them. In fact, according to Revelation it will take an extermination plot of the antichrist to finally bring Israel to the point again where, as a nation, she will humble herself before God and cry for God's delivering grace (Matt. 23:39; 24:21-22, 29-31; Rev. 12:13-17).

It took a plot of extermination to humble Israel before God during the time of Haman and it will take a plot of extermination to humble Israel before God during the time of the antichrist.

RESPONSE #3 – The response of Esther to the whole situation. **4:4-16**

Heading #1 - Esther's first response to Mordecai.

(Reaction #1) - Esther “ writhed in great anguish.” **4:4a**

Some believe that Esther was embarrassed by Mordecai's state, but I see it as she was very concerned. The Hebrew verb used here indicates that Esther was greatly grieved and pained in herself. In other words, when she learned of Mordecai's sad state, she herself personally experienced the pain (Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 265).

(Reaction #2) - Esther sent new clothes. **4:4b**

These clothes would have been the finest clothing in the Persian world; expensive and elegant. But all the fine clothing in the world could not bring Mordecai out of his depression or change the edict of extermination of the Jew.

(Reaction #3) - Esther sent her eunuch, Hathach. **4:5-9**

Mordecai wanted him to show this proof to Esther for two reasons:

- 1) To inform her of what was happening. **4:8a**
- 2) To order her to go to the king in behalf of the Jews. **4:8b**

There was nothing that would pacify Mordecai except the knowledge that he and his people had been set free from the edict against them.

Heading #2 - Esther's second response to Mordecai. **4:10-12**

In many respects, Esther was treated like all other people, even though she was the queen, she too was required to keep the same laws as all others (**4:11**).

We also learn that it had been 30 days since she had been with the king, which tells us he was probably still involved with other women, for King Ahasuerus was too undisciplined to go 30 days without wine or women.

It may be that not having been with the king for 30 days lent itself to her sense of insecurity. It is very possible that she felt threatened in her relationship and figured to rush in before the king meant the king might not hold out the golden scepter and she might die. King Ahasuerus was surrounded by other beautiful women and Esther could lose her own life.

Fear is an excuse most of us have used for not standing up for God.

Heading #3 - Mordecai's first response to Esther. **4:13-14**

Mordecai must somehow convince and motivate Esther into laying her own life on the line and going before the king in order to ask mercy upon the Jew.

Mordecai does not tell Esther what she wants to hear. He doesn't pacify her, appease her or water things down. He takes a strong stand for God and, ultimately, it will be that which will cause Esther to do the same.

(Argument #1) - Esther will not be exempt from judgment. **4:13**

If ever you want a good motivation for doing what is right, it is the motivation of future judgment. No matter who Esther was, no matter how much status she had, no matter where she lived, she would not escape judgment any more than any other Jew. She would not be exempt from this edict just because she was queen. She knew the king's laws applied even to her (**4:11**).

(Argument #2) - God will deliver his people with or without Esther. **4:14a**

Most believe the phrase "from another place" means Mordecai believed God would deliver Israel with or without Esther.

Mordecai truly believed God would deliver the Jews because he obviously knew of God's O.T. promises to always protect and preserve Israel. He knew that if Esther didn't do what was right, God Himself would deliver His people; but Esther would be highly accountable for her neglect.

(Argument #3) - God will hold Esther accountable for her disobedience. **4:14b**

Mordecai predicted that if Esther did not obey him and go to the king, he would destroy both her and her family. In other words, Esther and Mordecai would physically die under this edict.

When God raises a person to a level of leadership, there is a serious responsibility and accountability before God to obey His commands (i.e. Ezekiel 33:1-9).

(Argument #4) - God raised up Esther for this purpose. **4:14c**

Mordecai sensed that God had worked behind the scenes of this whole ugly story and had made Esther queen for this main task of delivering His people.

The pieces of this ugly puzzle were beginning to come into full focus for Mordecai. He was now seeing the guiding hand of God in allowing Esther to become queen.

The primary emphasis of the argument Mordecai uses is God is sovereign and can do whatever He wants with or without you; but by virtue of the fact He has allowed you to be in this position at this time, you are responsible and accountable to God to do what is right.

We will never get people to obey God by lowering the perspective of how great God is. Obedience comes when people begin to realize how sovereign and majestic God really is.

Heading #4 – Esther’s third response to Mordecai. **4:15-16**

Esther was moved by the commitment level of Mordecai.

Mordecai shot straight truth at Esther and that truth changed Esther’s perspective and her life.

Literally her perspective was “If I perish, I perish.” She was willing to lay it all on the line for God and for His people.

It is far better to lose everything on earth having done what is right before God, than to lose everything in eternity having done what is easy on earth.

RESPONSE #4 – The response of Mordecai to Esther. **4:17**

There are many powerful lessons to be learned from this passage:

- 1) When faced with threatening and intimidating situations, we should immediately humble ourselves before God and purpose to obey God regardless of our previous shortcomings and failures.
- 2) God will often times use threatening situations and people to bring us to the point where we will fall down in total dependency on Him.
- 3) The thing that can bring one out of depression is knowledge that they are doing what is right before God and are cared for by God.
- 4) No one will be exempt from God’s future judgment.
- 5) God can work out His will with or without us.
- 6) God is majestically sovereign and this accurate view of God promotes faithfulness in life.
- 7) People are not changed by watering down the truth of God, but by laying God’s truth straight open, regardless of how it makes one feel.
- 8) It is never too late to humble oneself before God and experience His delivering power.