

## “The High Cost of Silence”

### Esther 4:1-17

### Prel Rmks

Text ~ Title ~ So many parallels to what is going on right now ...

**(1)** When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. **(2)** He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one *might* enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

**(3)** And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. **(4)** So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed.

Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept *them*.

**(5)** Then Esther called Hathach, *one* of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this *was*. **(6)** So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that *was* in front of the king's gate.

**(7)** And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews.

**(8)** He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people.

**(9)** So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai. **(10)** Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai:

**(11)** "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, *he has* but one law: put *all* to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days."

**(12)** So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

**(13)** And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. **(14)** 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?"

**(15)** Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai:

**(16)** "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"  
**(17)** So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.

## **INTRO**

### **What we have seen:**

1. This book is about a crisis that developed for the Jews while in exile and enslaved in the Persian Empire about 474-473 B.C. In between the first
  - 1) Demonic influences
  - 2) World events
  - 3) A depraved maniacally vengeful tyrant emperor
  - 4) The wicked and evil recommendations from demon worshiping advisors
  - 5) Drunken banqueting and parties that were a mainstay in the Persian empire
  - 6) The manipulative, demon-possessed racial prejudice and political ambitions of the vice-emperor
  - 7) Two lukewarm, compromising worldly people who remained comfortably silent about their God.
  
3. 4 main characters we've been introduced to so far
  - 1) King Ahasuerus – the wicked emperor who deposed his wife, Vashti, as queen because she wouldn't appear and be shown off in front of banquet room full of drunken men
  - 2) Mordecai – whose only real claim to Godliness was that he stepped in and raised his orphan cousin when her parents died.
  - 3) Esther – who went along with an empire-wide beauty contest to be the new queen and be married to the wicked King.
  - 4) Haman – a power-hungry little anti-semitic narcissist ...

## 4. The plot:

- 1) Mordecai, a Jew, refused to bow to Haman, who was 2<sup>nd</sup> in command in all of the Persian Empire.
- 2) This so infuriated Haman that he not only wanted to do away with Mordecai, he wanted to exterminate all the Jewish people throughout the empire.
  - May have been an old grudge that dated all the way back to the time of King Saul some 500 years earlier.
  - 1 Samuel 15 ... God told Saul to wipe out all of the Amalekites ~ He spared King Agag ~ Samuel hacked him to pieces. 2:5 - Mordecai 3:1 - Haman
  - I really don't think this was the reason for Haman's fierce anger ... DEMONIC
- 3) Haman talked the King into it ... the King gave him the authority to carry out his evil plan ... edict by Pony Express

## I. The Mourning of Mordecai and His People

1-3

### Reminds Me of Ezra

- (1) When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he **tore his clothes** and **put on sackcloth and ashes**, and **went out into the midst of the city**. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. **Mordecai: "I should have bowed..."**
- (2) He went as far as **the front of the king's gate**,

**Ezra 9:3-5** So when I heard this thing, I **tore** my **garment** and my **robe**, and **plucked out** some of the **hair** of my head **and beard**, and sat down astonished. (4) Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I **sat astonished until the evening sacrifice**. (5) **At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God.**

**for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.**

laws for everything – to protect the King and leaders from any grief or unhappiness of the people ... out of touch ... disconnect

- (3) And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. **[...]**

## II. Esther's Uninformed Understanding 4-6

(4) So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and **told her about Mordecai**, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she **sent garments** to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but **he would not accept them**. (5) Then Esther called Hathach, *one* of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, **messenger to learn what and why this was**. (6) So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that *was* in front of the king's gate.

## III. Mordecai's Report to Esther 7-9

(7) And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews.

(8) He also **gave the messenger** him **a copy of the written** decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command **tell her to go in to the king** to make supplication to him **and plead before him for her people**.

(9) So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

## IV. Esther's Initial Hesitance 10-12

(10) Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai:

(11) "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, **he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days.**" (12) So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

Reveals something about the actual relationship between the King & Queen – not been called in by him for 30 days

Esther had no real assurance that Ahasuerus would spare her life

[ ... ]

## V. Mordecai's Clear Assessment of the Situation 13-14

**(13)** And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews.

The King has no choice but to carry out his edict

It was sealed with his signet ring

Laws of the Meades and Persians! The rule of law!

**(14)**

For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place,

I believe this was an expression of faith ... **Genesis 12:3 etc.**

**Reality**

but you and your father's house will perish.

**Key phrase of the book**

Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?"

[ ... ]

## VI. Esther's Willingness to Risk Her Life 15-17

**(15)** Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai:

**(16)**

"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan,

and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day.

Implies prayer

My maids and I will fast likewise.

And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and

if I perish, I perish!"

**(17)** So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.

## Implications and Applications

### 1. The importance of: being informed, being bold – speaking out

- **Elie Wiesel**, an Italian born holocaust survivor; author, professor:
  - “The opposite of love is not hate. The opposite of love is indifference.”
  - “The philosophers are wrong. It is not words that kill. It is silence.”

### 2. The importance of fasting and praying ...

- {Elders are going to present a call to the church ...}

### 3. We can expect persecution ...