

Esther Risks Her Life

Key Verse: *“Go
gather together all
the Jews that are
present in
Shushan, and fast
ye for me, and
neither eat nor
drink three days,
night or day: I also
and my maidens
will fast
likewise; and so
will I go in unto
the king, which is
not according to
the law: and if I
perish, I
perish.”*
—Esther 4:16

Selected Scripture:
Esther 4,5

FOLLOWING THE END OF their Babylonian captivity, some Jews did not return to their homeland but chose to remain in Persia. One of the officials at the king's palace was a Jew named Mordecai who had a beautiful young cousin named Esther that he had raised as his own daughter.

Eventually, Esther became the queen to King Ahasuerus, but hearkened to Mordecai's advice that she should not reveal her Jewish ancestry. The king's chief assistant, Haman, desired everyone to bow to him but, when Mordecai refused to do so, he persuaded King Ahasuerus that all the Jews throughout Persia should be killed on a given date.

When Mordecai learned of this wicked plot, he began mourning, and throughout the provinces the Jews wept concerning their impending calamity.—Esther 4:1-3

Subsequently, Esther learned of Mordecai's sorrow and inquired as to the cause of his grief. Mordecai responded by informing Esther of the plan to exterminate all the Jews and requested that she approach the king

and ask him to issue another edict that would cancel his initial decree. Esther, however, replied that she had not been in the king's presence for over a month, and to approach him uninvited would bring certain death unless he felt favorably towards her by extending his golden sceptre.—vss. 4-15

Our Key Verse reflects Esther's grasp as to the gravity of the situation for herself and all of her people. She, therefore, sent word to her uncle and through him to all of the Jews to join her in a fast for three days.

One important lesson this narrative underscores is the necessity of having faith in God. (Heb. 11:6) It is for this reason Mordecai impressed upon Esther that it was quite possible that she had come into her honored position as the queen for the very purpose of saving her people from the evil that Haman had plotted.

Following the period of fasting, Esther put on her royal garments and approached King Abasuerus, who favorably received her as he extended his golden sceptre.—Esther 5:1,2

In a series of events that were providentially overruled, Haman was executed, Mordecai was elevated to a prominent position by the king, and the Jews were saved from extermination because of Esther's intervention.

As Christians, none of us is free from trials of one sort or another involving family, health issues, employment, or persecution because of our adherence to scriptural precepts. We are to remember, however, that difficult situations are permitted in our lives to demonstrate our faithfulness and obedience to righteous principles and devotion to God. "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:38,39) With such an exhortation, we should be confident that if we are loyal to our Heavenly Father, we have nothing to fear because of his supreme love and protection to meet all of our needs. ■