

Esther 4

I. The grief was PERSONAL (v.1-2)

- A. Mordecai learned all about the event – “learned”, lit. full details, intimate knowledge
- B. Tears his clothes, puts on sackcloth – full mourning mode, middle of the city
- C. “Loud and bitter cry”, cried lit. “to shriek” – anguish, bitter crying – often the OT expressed tragic unpleasant experiences in terms of taste
- D. But she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. (Ruth 1:20) - Mara = bitterness
- E. Mordecai goes as far as the king’s gate, cannot enter past it clothed in sackcloth

II. The grief was PERVASIVE (v.3)

- 1. Every province, person was impacted
- 2. “command and decree”, not just the king’s word but was also law
- 3. “great mourning”, coupled with “fasting, weeping, wailing”
 - A. Fasting, denial of basic needs, sacrifice
 - B. Weeping, bitter emotion inside
 - C. Wailing, outward overflowing grief
- 4. Sackcloth and ashes

III. The PLEA from Mordecai (v.4-11)

- A. The DISTRESS of Esther (v.4-5)
 - 1. Maids and eunuchs told her of the decree – “distressed”, lit. whirling around in circular movements
 - 2. Extreme agitation, like writhing in labor pains
 - 3. She thinks of Mordecai’s needs, new clothes – exchange for his sackcloth, he refuses
 - 4. She sends Hathach to Mordecai – learn of the details, the what and why
- B. The DETAILS of the plan (v.6-9)
 - 1. Hathach goes to talk to Mordecai, city center

2. Mordecai tells him all that happened, sum of money Haman will pay
3. Verbal and written confirmation, shown to Esther – how did Esther and the others not know of the decree?
4. The response from Mordecai includes 3 requests: (v.8)
 - A. VIEW the decree – show Esther a copy of the decree
 - B. VERBALLY explain the decree – “declare”, bring to the forefront
 - C. VOICE opposition to the decree – a strong urging to go to the king
5. (v.8) “make supplication”, reflexive voice – what does that mean?
 - A. The subject is acting on behalf of AND in the interests of itself
 - B. The context of v.8, a negotiation between weak and strong – to be kind, gracious, pity, mercy
6. Esther must identify with her people and be one with them – make a request before him for her people

C. The DILEMMA of Esther (v.10-11)

1. Esther sends Hathach back to Mordecai, voices concerns – why didn’t she just speak to Mordecai directly – either not acceptable as queen or another reason?
2. (v.11) “everyone knows”, you don’t go see the king in the inner court without being summoned – death sentence
3. Esther not called for 30 days – why would she mention this?

IV. The PLIGHT of Esther (v.12-17)

1. “they told”, Hathach plus someone else?
2. Mordecai’s response to Esther is brutal truth – “don’t think within yourself”, your inner being, don’t fool yourself
3. King’s palace is not a safe place – cannot escape the effects of the decree – all suffer as the decree is kingdom-wide
4. (v.14) “relief and deliverance”, liberation from distress and escape” – represents emotional and physical liberation
5. “relief shall arise”, lit. “stand up” – cf. Dan 12:1 – will come from another place – Mordecai’s resolve on this issue
6. Esther’s fate is sealed either way, even if silent – her role now is to be the intercessor – the “why” to how she became queen
7. (v.16) Esther calls for a 3 day fast with all Jews in Shushan – her and the maids do the same – why the maids? In support of the queen? Did they know?

8. Esther realizes that she has nothing to lose – even though against the law, the decree is already against her
9. “perish”, lit. “destroyed” – Mordecai goes on to fast, everything Esther told him to do