

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS...

Esther 4:13-14

1) The Setting of the Story of Esther

- a) The reign of Xerxes the Great (Ahasuerus)
 - i) The height of the Persian empire
 - ii) Xerxes threw a 6-month “party” in his honor for all the “military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces” (Es. 1:1-3, niv)
 - (1) Likely to discuss and plan his invasion of Greece two years later
 - iii) He concluded with a 7-day feast for the men of the palace
 - (1) While the Queen, Vashti, held a banquet for the women
 - iv) He commanded his eunuchs to bring Vashti “to show her beauty,” but she refused to come.

When this command came from the king, Vashti did not carry out his orders, because she knew... [he] was under the influence of the intoxicating liquor. For her husband's sake as well as her own, she decided not to leave her position at the head of the women of the court [Esther 1:12 quoted] {3BC 1139.7}

- v) Vashti was deposed from her position, and a replacement was sought out (Es. 2:1-4)

2) Brave Queen Esther?

- a) Mordecai, a Jew born in captivity, had taken in Hadassah, his uncle’s daughter, and raised her as his own after her parents had died.
- b) Cyrus had decreed the release of the Jews from the land of captivity nearly 60 years prior to the events in the book of Esther

Under the favor shown them by Cyrus, nearly fifty thousand of the children of the captivity had taken advantage of the decree permitting their return. [However] ...the great majority of the Israelites had chosen to remain in the land of their exile rather than undergo the hardships of the return journey and the re-establishment of their desolated cities and homes. {PK 598.1}

- c) Esther was “taken to the king’s palace” as a possible replacement for Vashti
- d) Some curious things about the story of Esther
 - i) Mordecai and Esther did not return from the captivity
 - ii) Esther was offered as a replacement for the queen
 - (1) This would mean she would be unequally yoked, contrary to plain direction in the law of Moses
 - iii) Her name was changed from Hadassah, her Hebrew name, to Esther, a Persian name connected to the goddesses Ishtar and Ashtoreth
 - iv) Under Mordecai’s command, she did not reveal her people or family (2:10)
 - v) During her 12 months of preparation, no one figured it out
 - (1) Would anyone who lived with you (or even close to you) be able to figure out you’re a Seventh-day Adventist in 12 months time?
 - vi) The process was that each young woman went in to the king a virgin in the evening, and returned as a concubine in the morning (vs. 14)

3) Crisis in the Kingdom

- a) Haman, the Persian Prime Minister, an “Agagite”
 - i) Agag, king of the Amalekites (1 Sa. 15:8, 32-33)
- b) Haman conspired against the Jews and obtained the consent of the king to annihilate the Jews from the realm
 - i) All because Mordecai would not bow down or show homage (3:2)
 - ii) When the other servants asked why, he told them he was a Jew (v. 4)

The Persian edict sprang from the malice of Haman toward Mordecai.... The king’s decision against the Jews was secured under false pretenses, through a misrepresentation of that peculiar people. Satan instigated this scheme in order to rid the earth of those who preserved the knowledge of the true God. {CTr 366.3}
- c) When Mordecai learned of the decree, “he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city” (4:1)
 - i) Esther hears of it and sends garments to clothe him, but he refuses
 - ii) She then sends one of her attendants to find out what’s wrong
- d) Mordecai gives a copy of decree to explain the situation to Esther

4) For Such a Time as This

- a) Esther points out that she could lose her life by going into the king uninvited (vs. 11-12)
- b) Mordecai responds, “Do you think you will escape just because you’re in the palace?” (vs. 13-14)
 - i) Law of the Medes and Persians (Da. 6:8, 14-15)
- c) If you remain silent, deliverance will come from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish!
 - i) He who seeks to save his life will lose it (Lk. 17:33)

“First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.” – *Martin Niemoller, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in view of his 1937 arrest by Nazi forces.*

- d) “...For such a time as this?”
 - i) “If I perish, I perish!”

The trying experiences that came to God's people in the days of Esther were not peculiar to that age alone.... The same spirit that in ages past led men to persecute the true church, will in the future lead to the pursuance of a similar course toward those who maintain their loyalty to God.... The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews. Today the enemies of the true church see in the little company keeping the Sabbath commandment, a Mordecai at the gate. The reverence of God's people for His law is a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling on His Sabbath. {CC 245.3}

5) Appeal

- a) How many SDAs are like Esther; not the Esther of the storybooks, but the Esther of the Bible.
- b) The story of Esther is not about how great Esther was, but about how great the God of Esther was; and He still is! He’s the same God who brought Esther to a place where her life could make a difference. He’s the God who created you with divine purpose “for such a time as this.”

God's purpose for the children growing up beside our hearths is wider, deeper, higher, than our restricted vision has comprehended... Many a lad of today... will yet stand in legislative assemblies, in halls of justice, or in royal courts, as a witness for the King of kings... To every household and every school, to every parent, teacher, and child upon whom has shone the light of the gospel, comes at this crisis the question put to Esther the queen at that momentous crisis in Israel's history, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14. {Ed 262.2}