



# The Harvester

*Preparing Souls  
To Serve The Lord!*

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## What About the First Part Of Esther 4:14?

Brian R. Kenyon

The Book of Esther is a tremendous lesson in the providence of God. Even though God's name is not mentioned anywhere in the book, He is on every page! Esther, who was very beautiful (Est. 2:7), became queen after her predecessor, Vashti, was de-throned because she refused to "come at the king's command" and "show her beauty to the people and the officials" on the seventh day of King Ahasuerus' feast (Est. 1:11-2). Soon after Esther became queen, it was realized that Haman wanted to annihilate the Jews because of his jealousy and anger at Mordecai (Est. 3:2-6). Mordecai was Esther's older cousin who reared her as his own daughter after "her father and mother died" (Est. 2:7). By God's providence, Mordecai was able to coach Esther through her becoming queen (Est. 2:8-18).

Haman, a newly promoted official of King Ahasuerus, was highly angered at Mordecai because he "would not bow or pay homage" to Haman (Est. 3:1-6). Haman then convinced the king to make a decree that would allow the Jews to be destroyed (Est. 3:8-11). The decree was written and issued to every province under King Ahasuerus' realm. The king gave order "to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day ... and to plunder their possessions" (Est. 3:13). When Mordecai learned of the plot, he was devastated. While in mourning clothes, he went into the midst of the city, even before the king's gate, and

publicly announced the sad news (Est. 4:1-3). Word came to Esther, and she communicated with Mordecai through Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs (Est. 4:5-15). Mordecai had Hathach tell her to "go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people" (Est. 4:8). She reminded the messenger to Mordecai of the king's policy:

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. (Est. 4:11)

It is in response to this that Mordecai spoke the well-known words of the second part of Esther 4:14, "Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" These are indeed encouraging words, perhaps even spine-tingling! Many Christians, including preachers, have been motivated by these words to act courageously in faith when taking on challenging, even life-threatening, endeavors

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for the kingdom of heavens' sake. Christians today need the courage flowing from this statement by Mordecai. Christians need motivation to risk life and well-being to stand for truth and the Gospel of Christ!

Yet, what were Mordecai's words before that better known line? Leading up to that line, he said:

Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. <sup>14</sup>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. (Est. 4:13-14a)

What do these words teach for Christians today?

## The Faithful Are Not Exempt From Harmful Schemes

The king's scribes put Haman's words in writing (Est. 3:12). What is written was not what the king knew, but what Haman told to the king's officials. This document giving orders to annihilate the Jews was written in the name of the king and sealed with his authority. Within the palace, the king and Haman "sat down to drink," but outside the palace, the population was "perplexed" with the decree's orders (Est. 3:15 cf. 7:1-2). Even though Esther was queen, she was still a Jew, and, as Mordecai reminded her, she would not be exempt from being killed as ordered.

Once recorded, "the laws of the Persians and the Medes ... will not be altered" (Est. 1:19 cf. Dan. 6:8, 12, 15).

Sometimes, when people follow the Lord, they think they will be exempt from hardship (cf. Acts 14:22; Lk. 9:57-58; Jn. 6:60-61, 66-67). However, when God's people are known or revealed, they will often be targeted with worldly schemes to destroy them. When Jesus spoke of the influence Christians are to have through the beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-10), He concluded the section by showing two possible reactions from the world. Either it will allow itself to be preserved and guided by the Christian's influence (Mt. 5:13-16) or it will persecute Christians as if they were a lightning rod for wrath (Mt. 5:11-12 cf. 1 Pet. 4:12-16). Christians have to know standing for what is right brings persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). Christians may be killed for being right with God (Rev. 2:10), but they have nothing to fear eternally (Mt. 10:28), for God will vindicate and reward them (2 Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 6:9-11 cf. Rev. 14:13)! Christians must fearfully stand against the world (and false brethren, 2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 2:4) to uphold God's will!

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## God Will Accomplish His Will With or Without Help

With or without Esther's help, God was able to deliver His people from Haman's proposed destruction (cf. Gen. 45:7; Isa. 10:8-19; Jer. 1:15-19; Ezk. 7:24). God has even used pagan nations to accomplish His purpose (Isa. 45:1 [cf. Ezr. 1:1]; Hab. 2:2-18). Esther had a crucial decision to make. No intercession before the king would result in no possibility of the king's policy change, but with a life-risking approach to the king, Esther and her people could be saved. Esther needed (and eventually did) overcome her fear. She interceded for the Jews, which eventually resulted in their salvation (Est. 5:1-7:10). Concerning Esther's momentary dilemma, one commentator correctly noted, "In a crisis situation such as this, there was no neutral position. Failure to decide brings personal loss and misses the opportunity to fulfill God's purpose. In God's providence each person has a unique task" (Breneman 337).

Christians must be willing to wield their influence for good, no matter the consequences, whether those consequences would actually happen or are fearfully imagined. For example, there seems to be some evidence that Timothy may have been a bit fearful, or at least timid. Paul told the Corinthians, "if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do. Therefore let no one despise him" (1 Cor. 16:10-11). Perhaps Timothy was easily frightened, or timid, because of his youth (cf. 1 Tim. 4:12, which was written years later). Timothy certainly showed courage through his work with Paul, but sometimes Christians have to work harder at overcoming some weaknesses (e.g., fear) than they do at overcoming others. Whatever the case with Timothy, Christians must step out in faith to promote righteousness, even against seemingly insurmountable odds (cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-10; 2 Tim. 4:16-18). If they do not, even though God's purpose will still be accomplished, they and those around them may suffer loss.

### "Esther Moments" Today

Christians today are faced with similar opportunities to make a difference for the good of their nation, if they will courageously speak up. Morality has definitely been on the decline for quite some time, especially within recent years as more people and law makers have accepted such immorality as abor-

tion (even to the point of a full-term pregnancy), homosexual marriage, and approved violence as supposed "pay-back" for past injustices. God cannot be pleased with this (cf. Pr. 6:16-19). Approval of immorality will lead to the destruction of a nation (Pr. 14:34 cf. Amos 1:3-2:7; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7).

In that sense, some nations and their people are on the brink of destruction, yet God's grace may still allow them continued existence (cf. Gen. 18:20-33). Like Esther, Christians have to muster courage to promote godly values and speak against immorality. They must carry the conversation not just to their religious neighbors who think similarly but also to their peers who do not. They must speak up for God at PTA meetings, county commissioner meeting, school boards, or whenever the opportunity arises! As God made clear to Esther, His purpose would be accomplished either way, but without interceding, "you and your father's house will perish" (Est. 4:14a). Courageous Christian intercession for doing right will result in blessings (cf. 1 Cor. 15:58)!

A reason why some Christians are hesitant to speak out is that these immoral acts have been touted as "political issues," even among some members of the church. Sheila Butt, who served in the Tennessee General Assembly and who spoke for an FSOP ladies class, correctly pointed out that such sins as abortion and homosexual marriage are not seen by God as political issues. They are biblical issues! She added, "Christians cannot control what society makes political. They can control whether they will take a stand for God and his word, even if they are accused of being political" (248). Let us not be so afraid of being negatively labeled that we fail God!

## Conclusion

The risks are sometimes high for the Christian to stand up for God's will, but God is even higher. Fear not, for "the Most High rules in the kingdom of men," and He "gives it to whomever He will" (Dan. 4:17). May God's people stand with Him and contribute to changing the perilous course of their earthly nation!

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# Studying the Bible Takes Great Effort

When Paul told Timothy to “Study to shew thyself approved unto God,” he was indicating the effort needed to be “a workman ... rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.. 2:15). The word translated “study [give diligence, NKJ; do your best, ESV]” means to do your best, spare no effort, work hard. Peter used the same word when he encouraged his readers to “give diligence to make your calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10). As we begin our fifty-second school year, we request your prayers for our students. The two year program is hard work. Over the years, many students have “scratched off to a good start,” as founding director, B. C. Carr, would say, but did not endure to completion. Some did not realize the amount of work involved. Pray also for our instructors that we may dig deep into God’s word, discovering its truths and communicating them simply and practically. Thanks for your loving support! —*Brian*



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