

A Time to Stand

...for such a time as this. Esther 4:14



For Such a Time...
Esther 4
Lesson 4

Background Information

God uses people to accomplish His purposes, and Esther was God's prepared servant for "such a time as this." If Mordecai had not been appointed as a high official at the king's gate it is unlikely that he would have known about Haman's plot to exterminate the Jews. We can see that he too, was providentially placed by God to use for His purposes.

The practice of putting dirt, dust or ashes on one's head was a typical sign of mourning in the Middle East. Many mourning rites function as a means for the living to identify with the dead. For the believer it reminds us that we are to present our bodies as *living sacrifices*, as part of our service to God.

Oriental monarchs were only supposed to hear good news; they reigned in a world of illusion, sheltered from reality. If someone didn't intervene, Haman's wicked plan would endanger all of the Jews in the province. We have all heard the saying, "*All that is required for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.*" Esther understood that Mordecai was asking her to risk her life to intercede on behalf of her people. Mordecai understood that in God's providence, deliverance would come from another place if Esther was not willing, but he clearly saw God's hand in placing her, a Jewish Queen in the exact place where she could be used to save the Jewish people. We need to ask ourselves, what can God do with a life totally surrendered to Him, willing to be used to accomplish His purposes? What could He do with you?

Treasures of the Heart

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

Esther 4:14

What are the facts? - Observation

The first step is **Observation**. Carefully **read the text** in several translations, paying close attention to the **facts**. **Mark your text**: look for repeated words, contrasts or comparisons. Look for answers to: Who? What? When? Where? Why or How? Studying a narrative requires following the key characters and paying special attention to what God says and does. Note a key verse in each section, to help you understand the main emphasis of the section?

Esther 4:1-3

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.

Dig Deeper - Interpretation

The second step is **Interpretation**. This is the time to dig out your study tools, such as a bible dictionary, concordance, maps, or word study tools. Keys to correct interpretation are **context, repeated words, word definitions, patterns (similarities/differences), culture and cross-references**. **Notate** where you found it to share with the group. Interpretation answers the question, "What was the original author trying to convey?"

Esther 4:4-14

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?"

Dig Deeper _____

Esther 4:15-17

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. 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.

Dig Deeper

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Lesson

What lesson can I draw from my observations? A lesson is a general principle or basic truth drawn from the passage. **Note** the verse you took the lesson from. (aim for 10 words or less)

Esther 4:1-3 _____
verse _____

Esther 4:4-14 _____
verse _____

Esther 4:15-17 _____
verse _____

Application

Pray! – Simply state how you will apply each lesson. Is there a challenge, a command, a warning or an example? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What is God saying (to me) through this truth? What am I going to do practically in response to God's Word? (aim for 10 words or less)

Esther 4:1-3 _____

Esther 4:4-14 _____

Esther 4:15-17 _____

Words or repeated phrases

Repeated words help us discover the **main point**.

Getting the point!

State the "Main Point" of each section. See if you can boil down the meaning of each section into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try)

Esther 4:1-3

Esther 4:4-14

Esther 4:15-17

Main idea

Simply state the main idea of the whole passage in one or two sentences.

Title

State the main point of the entire passage in the form of a title.

Flex Your Muscles

Find a New Testament example of this Old Testament truth.

Time to stand

Time to think: How will we know how to respond to life's ups and downs? God's Word is always the basis of our choices. Knowing who He is helps us face whatever circumstances we find ourselves in. **What did you learn about God, that will help you stand firm...in such a time as this?**

Radiating His Truth

Crisis does not make a person; it shows what a person is made of.

Warren Wiersbe



