

1 When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. 2 But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. 3 In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 When Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.

6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. 7 Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. 8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to urge her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

13 he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (NIV84)

THE REAL KING DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE FROM DESTRUCTION

Esther is an interesting story, one of few that we have when God's people were in captivity. The Jews were now being controlled by the Persian empire – who conquered the Babylonians. King Xerxes was on the throne and as the story unfolds, we see God intervening in world history to work his will for his people.

It's really an interesting story – you should read the whole thing sometime soon. It's 8 pages long in my Bible and that's even with the notes at the bottom. It's a short story that is packed with the divine providence of God.

Xerxes and his Queen have a fight and she gets kicked out of the palace, when in comes Esther – a Jewish girl, raised by her cousin. She wins the favor of Xerxes and becomes the Queen.

An evil man named Haman comes on the scene and plots to exterminate the Jews from the Persian Empire. He convinces Xerxes to sign the edict and the die was cast. This spelled doom for the Jewish race. They would be legally and forcibly wiped from the face of the earth – if Hamann's plan would come to fruition.

But God had different plans. He placed Esther on the throne "for such a time as this!" She risked her life and approached the king. She told him that she was Jewish and that Hamann's plot would spell the end of her people. She entered the king's presence uninvited, a move that could have cost her her life, but Xerxes heard her plea and took action.

Esther 4:1-4, 6-8, 13-14

Xerxes reversed the plot and instead of the Jews who perished it was Hamann. He tried to take down the Jews, but it ended up being his downfall.

King Xerxes and Queen Esther ruled in a way that was beneficial for the Jewish people. Esther put her trust in the real King and knew that God would protect her, even if she fell out of favor with the King. God took even an evil plan and worked it into blessing for his people.

Are there times that you feel that everything is working against you? Hardships are getting extra hard, life's hurdles seem extra tall, the challenges seem extra challenging. Have those things sometimes led you to despair? We don't always trust in God's plan or God's ability to work blessing for us. Too often when we can't see the good, we get depressed and assume that the good is impossible.

We are God's people, but too often we trust in what we can see, and when things look bleak, so does our faith. When we can't figure it out, we assume that it's all going to fall apart. We don't always have the faith that Esther had! We think it depends on us to get through life and too often we forget that our God is mighty to save.

For the times that we fail to trust in God, for the times that we forget who the real king is and put our trust in princes, in mortal men who cannot save, we deserve punishment, we deserve death.

But even though we don't always trust him, he always loves us. God worked a plan to save us from destruction. He sent one who would risk life to save us, but even better than Esther, Jesus really gave up his life. He risked, forfeited his throne to take on flesh and to live a human life. He set aside his power so that we could be made strong. He willingly suffered and died to give us peace. He knew that his payment was the only one that could save us, and so he was glad to give himself to save us. It's that love that makes him the real King.

Esther is a good story, a short read, a powerful reminder that God is in control. Read it, be encouraged by it. But whether you remember names like Vashti and Mordecai or Hamann matters very little on grand scale – what truly matters is that like Esther you remember who the Real King is! Put your trust in him and he will bless you! But your faith in him and watch his love transform your life. Willingly serve the Real King, who was so willing to serve you. And wait for him, watch for him, rejoice that his coming is near!! The Real King is Coming, He's coming soon!! Amen.