

3. Esther Took Steps to Resolve the Problem

a. She both sought help and surrendered.

- 1) Entering the king's court uninvited could cost her life; thus, she asked Mordecai and the Jews to join her and her maidens in fasting for three days and nights. Again, this seems likely to have included prayer.
- 2) She then surrendered to visit the king, saying, "***If I perish, I perish.***" She would do what she could.

b. We must take action to resolve our troubles.

- 1) We, too, must take action and do what we can. Our action may be repenting of a sin, choosing a treatment, changing our attitude, obeying the Lord, seeking help, asking forgiveness, searching the Scriptures, trusting God for victory over a sinful habit, or just patiently waiting on the Lord instead of worrying.
- 2) God rarely resolves our troubles miraculously without our participation. He expects us to do our part obediently. If we are not willing to do our part, we should not expect God to do His part. Yes, when troubles come, God wants us to act biblically.

Conclusion: When troubles come your way, remember what we have learned from Esther 4. The Jews fasted, mourned and wept. Mordecai petitioned Esther's help. Esther surrendered to do what she could, even if it cost her life.

God may want the troubles you are facing to draw you near to Him. Perhaps, you need to receive Christ as Saviour. You may need to repent, mourn and weep over your sin. Perhaps, like Mordecai, you need to seek help with your troubles. If so, humble yourself and do it. If God has identified an action you must take, then seek His grace and step out and do it. Act biblically. Do what the Bible says and what you know God wants.

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When Troubles Come – Act Biblically

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Introduction: The year was about 479 BC. The place was Persia. Esther, the beautiful, young, Jewess had been Queen of Persia for about four years. In the previous chapter, we learned that Haman, the proud, top prince in Persia, was furious that Mordecai the Jew would not bow to him. His anger led him to plot to kill every living Jew in the kingdom, which included the land of Israel. With the king's permission, he wrote a decree that every Jew was to be killed on the 13th day of the last month of the year.

This was a time of great trouble for the Jewish nation. Imagine how you would feel if a national law was passed stating that you and all your relatives were to be executed in less than 12 months.

Chapter 4 opens with Mordecai, a leading Jewish citizen, standing in the midst of the city, with his garments torn, wearing sackcloth, covered with ashes, crying with a loud and bitter cry. He could not do his daily work in the king's gate while dressed in sackcloth, for that was not permitted, so we find him standing outside the gate weeping.

Being Queen, Esther was limited in her public appearances, so she did not know what Haman had done. However, her maids and chamberlains (palace eunuchs), saw Mordecai and told her. It appears that some of her closest servants knew of her former acquaintance with Mordecai. She sent Hatach, her trustworthy chamberlain, to speak to Mordecai on her behalf (v.5).

Mordecai told him of Haman's plot and gave him a copy of the edict for Esther to read (v.8). He also charged Esther to make supplication to the king for her people.

When Esther heard Mordecai's words and had read the edict, she sent word back to Mordecai that if anyone entered the king's inner court without being called, he or she would be put to death, except if the king should hold out his golden sceptre. In addition, Esther had not been called by the king for thirty days.

Mordecai persistently urged Esther to take action (v.13-14). His plea ended with the words, "**who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?**"

Esther's response displayed her exceptional character. She commanded Mordecai and all the Jews in Shushan to fast for her for three days, and then she would break the law and enter the king's court uninvited. Her note ended, "If I perish, I perish." That takes character!

Life is full of troubles. Your life may be threatened by disease, sickness may be hindering your abilities, your marriage may be struggling, your job may be unstable, your children may be wayward, your finances may be tight, or your life may be full of stress. These are real troubles. When troubles come, God wants you to act biblically.

Transition: I want us to see how the characters in this chapter acted biblically when troubles came to them, so that we might learn from their examples.

1. The Jews Fasted and "prayed".

a. They mourned, fasted, wept, wailed and lay in sackcloth and ashes

- 1) The Bible contains many examples of people doing these things as they sought God for His mercy and grace. Thus, I believe that as the Jews in Shushan fasted, wept and mourned that they were praying to God for deliverance. I suspect that the reason "God" and "prayer" are not directly mentioned in this book is because it was written in Persia, where including specific references to God may have endangered the Jews.
- 2) These mournful acts often accompanied repentance and getting right with God. Thus, they acted biblically by humbling themselves and seeking God's mercy.

b. We, too, must respond biblically to troubles.

- 1) God sometimes uses troubles to bring a person to salvation. In John 3, the religious Pharisee, Nicodemus, was troubled by his sin and came to see Jesus. Do you remember Jesus' words to him? (John 3:3) **"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."** He needed a spiritual rebirth to cleanse his heart from sin and prepare him for heaven. That is our first and greatest need as well.
- 2) When troubles come, we must draw near to God. (James

4:8) **"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."**

- 3) When troubles come, we must not worry, but give our burdens to God. (Philippians 4:6) **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."**
- 4) It is easy to worry, but it takes discipline and commitment to draw near to God and give him our troubles.

2. Mordecai Petitioned Help

a. He asked Queen Esther to do what she could.

- 1) As Mordecai fasted and prayed, God must have prompted him to seek Esther's help. She had been his "little girl", but now she was the Queen of Persia.
- 2) He charged her to make supplication to the king (v.8).
- 3) In reply to her fear (v.11), Mordecai gave her two words of wisdom (v.13-14).
 - a) If you do not speak to the king, then (God) will provide another deliverance, but you and your people will be destroyed (v.14).
 - b) Remember, (God) may have allowed you to become the queen **for such a time as this** (v.14). As we look back on the story of Esther, we can see that these words were absolutely true.

b. We must not be too proud to seek help.

- 1) God often uses people to help resolve our problems. Seeking a biblical counsellor or other help is not a weakness or shame, it is the wise thing to do.
- 2) Seeking help may be humbling, but if you need help, do not wait until your situation is beyond hope. Solomon wrote, (Proverbs 11:14) **"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."**