

For Such a Time as This

Mordecai...sent back this answer, “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 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?” (Esther 4:12-14)

Meet beautiful Queen Vashti, wife of Xerxes, the King of Persia and the most powerful king on earth at the time. (Her story is found in Esther 1:1-18.) She’d been entertaining the women in the citadel of Susa at a seven day banquet when she was summoned to appear before her husband, the King, wearing her royal crown. However, Queen Vashti refused to come. There’s no indication in Scripture that she was being mistreated or had anything to fear in complying with the King’s request. Her very public disrespect for her husband, the King of the land, in front of both the men and women of the citadel of Susa quickly cost her position.

Her replacement, Queen Esther, approached King Xerxes in a very different manner. Esther, following her uncle Mordecai’s advice, did not let it be known she was a Jew. When an irrevocable law of the Medes and Persians proclaimed anyone who wanted could annihilate all Jews in the land on “the thirteenth day of...the month of Adar” (Esther 3:12) Mordecai came to Esther. He urged her to go to the king and beg for mercy for her people. Esther heeded the advice of Mordecai even though it filled her with fear. After all, she was queen because Vashti had dared to disregard the expectations of her husband the king. Now Esther would be putting herself and her position in jeopardy approaching Xerxes uninvited. In addition, she would risk her life revealing she was a Jew.

Mordecai encouraged Esther to take such a risk for her people saying, **“And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14)** Esther and all the Jews in Susa humbled themselves before God, prayed, and went without food and water for three days. Then she approached Xerxes with respect for her husband the king and with wisdom supplied by God. In the end, the Jews of Susa were not annihilated. Fifteen years later, Ezra, then Nehemiah, returned to Jerusalem with the second wave of captives to complete rebuilding the temple. God’s people were reestablished in Jerusalem, setting the stage for the coming Savior of the world.

Had Esther not followed the way of the Lord one can only guess at the course history may have taken. Would there have been Jewish captives to return to Israel? Humanly speaking, Nehemiah wouldn’t have existed, much less been cup bearer to the king and able to lead a group back to Jerusalem, if the Jews had been annihilated. Yet there Esther was, following the way of the Lord and heeding the advice of her uncle, in a “royal position for such a time as this”. It isn’t known whether Esther was even alive to see the blessed result of her action fifteen years later.

I have often wondered what I'd do if I were Esther. But I realize that in many ways I am. Each of us has been called to the royal priesthood of believers "for such a time as this." Each of us has daily opportunities to serve God and others in whatever circumstances to which God has called us. He has prepared us for service, to reflect the love of Christ in what we do and say. We're often as fearful as Esther. Yet as the Lord gave her wisdom and courage, he will do the same for us. We may never see the full extent of our actions and lives on others. Nevertheless, our gracious God has seen fit to use us to reflect him to those around us. Daily he calls each of us "to royal position for such a time as this".

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, Lord God Almighty, I am awed and overwhelmed that you would choose me to reflect you to all those around me. Forgive the many times I fall short of being the Christ-like example you call me to be. Let your Holy Spirit strengthen, comfort, and lead me with your Word to reflect you to others and to bring their needs to you. In Jesus' name I ask this. Amen.

For Further Reading:

Ephesians 2:10

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