**Esther 4:1-17 May 2, 2021**

**A Time for Fasting**

The Jews **Mourn** Esther 4:1-3

* Torn clothes, sprinkling of ashes over the head, fasting, and wearing sackcloth were all symbols of death & mourning accompanied by prayers to the Lord
  + Daniel 9:3   
    So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in **prayer** and **petition**, in **fasting**, and in **sackcloth** and **ashes**.

Esther **Joins in the Mourning** Esther 4:4-8

* Esther consoled Mordecai
  + She sent him new clothes to put on to exit the time of mourning
  + Mordecai was unwilling to turn from his grief and continued in the mourning
* The Queen’s eunuch, Hathach, learned how much Haman was willing to pay for the destruction of the Jews
  + Esther, at this point, does not know the fate of the Jews

Esther’s **Dilemma** Esther 4:9-11

* No one was allowed to come to Xerxes unless summoned directly
  + The punishment was immediate death for anyone who dared to do that
  + The only exception was if Xerxes granted permission when he saw the person
  + It had been 30 days since Xerxes had seen Esther

For Such a Time as This Esther 4:12-14

* Esther was under the same edict of death as all the other Jews
  + Mordecai reminded Esther that just because she was Queen she was not exempt
* We see a glimpse of Mordecai’s faith
  + “Relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews”   
    (v. 13b)
  + He asserts that Esther has become Queen possibly to be in the right place at the right time to save God’s people

Esther’s **Preparation** Esther 4:15-17

* All of the Israelites are to fast for 3 days and   
  3 nights of all food and drink
  + Esther was serious about preparing herself before the Lord for this vital opportunity
  + Esther was prepared to sacrifice her life, if necessary, to spare her people
* The extended period required Esther and the Israelites to totally trust in the Lord

Why did Esther call for a fast?

* Fasting is done for many reasons:
  + In times of grief
  + When distressed or anxious about a situation
  + To confess sins
  + To seek God’s leading / guidance / direction
  + To be humble before God in prayer

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