

Bailey  
7/16/58  
dms

"For such a time as this" N. Linn

11/27/58  
dms

Scripture Lesson: - Esther 4: 1-end.

Text: - Esther 4: 14.

Introduction: - Not to know when history has reached the boiling point or when in one's life have arrived, that is tragedy indeed. It was fear of this very thing that led Mordecai to lay against the heart of Esther, the queen, the challenge of our text.

A century and a quarter had passed since the Hebrews of Jerusalem and Judah had been taken into exile by the men of Babylon. Meanwhile the seat of power had shifted from Babylon to Persia. At the end of captivity many of the Hebrews refusing to return to Jerusalem, chose rather to strike root here and there throughout the Persian realm. Now, however, they were threatened with annihilation. The Prime Minister of King Xerxes, the vain and vicious Haman, had secured a court order calling for the destruction of all Jews in all the provinces of the empire.

This was the crisis that hung over Mordecai, the Jewish gate-keeper, when he addressed to his young Queen Esther, his cousin, the stirring summons to action that we have in our text: "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Mordecai had a sense of history and of destiny. More than that, he had unquenchable faith in God. Still, more, he believed that God works through human agency in dealing with crises and in working out his purpose. If the hour was gloomy with the threat of doom, it was also glorious with the thrill of opportunity. It was precisely this that Mordecai wanted Esther to feel. "God has given to you, Esther, a privileged position" said the aroused gate-keeper. "You must not fail him nor the people who look to you for deliverance. You are where you are for just such a time as this."

I.

What sort of "time was it. For one thing it was

a day of Tyranny. The absolute power of life and death lay in the capricious hands of the ruler. With the flick of his finger he could have a man "rubbed out". With another flick he could have a whole community liquidated. Liberty and justice were little known. Totalitarianism was the order of the day.

It was a day of CRUELTY. Haman, who was a match for any modern Himmler or Gehring, was furious because Mordecai did not treat him as a god. The decree having been issued, we read again, "and the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day." (Esther 3:13). A brutal tuthlessness sat astride that far-off pagan land.

Moreover, it was a time of INIQUITY. The passions of evil and practices of vice found little check or rebuke anywhere. Also it was a time of COMPLACENCY. Even the "Covenant people" of God, although they held a certain stubborn hold on their belief in him, had settled down to the business of getting along as best they could. Tyranny, cruelty, iniquity, luxury, and in the last place complacency, these were some of that terrible and yet glorious hour when the hand of Divine Providence reached out and caught hold of beautiful Queen Esther.

## II.

Are there any similarities between Esther's day and our own? That her times and ours are in many ways unlike we know well. The city of Susa or Shushan where the emperor reigned, had no airport. No jets helped the king to win his battles. There was no public address system in the banquet hall. No telephones connected the numerous suites and apartments of the royal harem. No blinking lights on radio towers could be seen at the edge of the city. No diesel-powered streamliners glided in and out of the city. Visions of these modern wonders never came to those

Persian lords and lackeys; and if they had come, those to whom they came would have been thought stark mad. The dissimilarities between the sixth century before Christ and the twentieth century after Christ are easy to see.

Nevertheless, there are similarities also. Does anyone need to tell us that our world holds an enormous amount of Tyranny? Since world wars ~~are~~, the dictators have had an inning that has brought civilization to the brink of disaster. It is doubtful if "man's inhumanity to man" has ever reached more barbaric extremes than in the manifold atrocities of World War II. *• Korean War*

And then ours is a day of Iniquity. Some months ago Canon Roger Loyd of the Anglican Church delivering an address over the British Broadcasting Company network said, "Our own time is unique, I think, in the extent to which the power of evil has got a stranglehold on all the instruments of power in the modern world. Never before has there been spiritual wickedness in high places to the extent that we have known it and never have those in high places so deliberately corrupted themselves. Nero was a mere amateur in evil by modern standards."

A G.I.'s experience. He had been in Europe. He was afraid Uncle Sam would go bankrupt if he did not pull out. What the G.I. saw.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

*young people*

What do we need, we of the Christian church, if God is to use <sup>us</sup> as he did queen Esther, "for such a time as this?"

Well, for one thing, we need to rediscovers the importance of ~~the~~ individual responsibility. Esther was the single, frail soul that stood between her race and destruction in Persia. How big the crisis must have loomed before her eyes. How imposing and forbidding the king's throne must have appeared as she visualized herself going single-handed

handed to plead for the life of her people. What could a young woman do to meet that situation: We too, are tempted to feel as she did. In the day of mass movements, mass production, mass athletics, mass psychology, there easily develops the feeling that your tiny efforts count for nothing. In tackling ~~in~~ our political, social, and economic problems this feeling of personal futility is one of our deadliest enemies. It is the very thing that gangsters, demagogues, and the iniquitous political Pied Pipers use to support their interests. *Saying, you can't do anything one young person would be laughed at. So keep still, go with crowd.*

But let us see what happens when a single individual steps out with initiative and courage. The young Negro who was going to college to be a teacher. ~~He~~ worked at a part time job at a filling station to support himself and his wife. He found that some white men objected. He was about to fire the negro when a woman, of the white race stepped in. She secured 25 new customers for the filling station. What can one woman do? She might have said, "nothing". *if they wouldnt fire him*

And learn again and again, that one, plus God is a winning combination. Just one Noah lead his family into the ark. Just one Joseph to save Egypt and Canaan from famine. Just ~~one~~ David to walk out against Goliath. Just one Paul to stand before caesar and win converts to Christ in the emperor's pagan palace.

*Young Person* Conclusion:- It is not different today. God needs only one to start some movement of his grace and power. One who will get busy and lead another member of his family to Christ. One who will start a prayer-fellowship or a Bible study class. One who will become a Christian doctor, or banker, or engineer, or farmer. Just one who will go out to some spiritually destitute corner of this planet and carve out something new for Christ and his eternal kingdom. *Someone maybe lost of yours dont step out & speak to them*

Are you willing to be that one: to stand alone for God? God grant that you may be the one. *He will give you strength & bless you for standing for him. Seth a time as this.*