

ESTHER 4



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Esther 4:1-2

1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry.

2 He went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth.

Sackcloth and ashes



Esther 4:1-2

- ✓ Mordecai is no longer incognito within the city
- ✓ He publicly displays his mourning over the king's decree
- ✓ No official, no matter how respected, was able to enter the king's presence unhappy
- ✓ Persian monarch lived a very sheltered life and their emotional state was closely guarded
- ✓ Perhaps Mordecai felt somewhat responsible for his defiance of Haman thinking the decree might have stemmed from their encounters

Esther 4:3-4

3 And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 When Esther's young women and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed. She sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.

Esther 4:3-4

- ✓ Esther makes a mistake we often do today – before she inquires of the problem, she wants to present a solution
- ✓ Hurting people cannot skip the natural steps of recovery and go straight to the “changing the garments of mourning to those of celebration”

Esther 4:5

5 Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was.

- ✓ Esther wisely inquired into the “why” of Mordecai’s distress

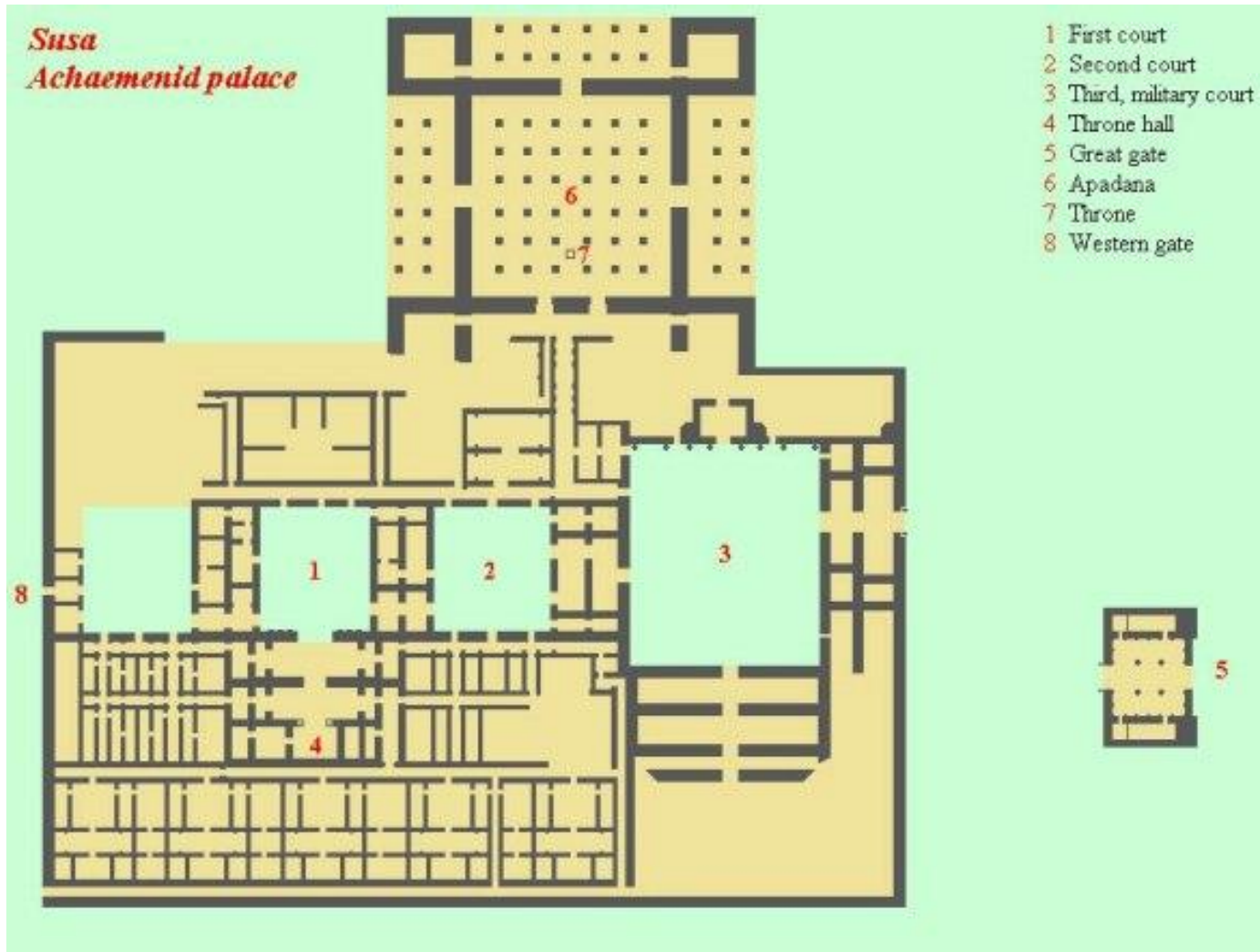
Esther 4:6-8

6 Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate,

7 and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.

8 Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and command her to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people.

Susa Palace Floorplan



Esther 4:6-8

- ✓ Mordecai sends word of the king's decree to Esther so she might gain audience with him
- ✓ He also provides written evidence to support his claims

Esther 4:9-11

9 And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said.

10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to go to Mordecai and say,

11 “All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days.”

Esther 4:9-11

- ✓ The king only accepted invited guests and had guards standing ready beside his throne to behead those intruding into his presence
- ✓ We also see how lonely it could be for the queen within Persian life also as it had been a month since he had sent for her

Esther 4:12-14

12 And they told Mordecai what Esther had said.

13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews.

14 For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Esther 4:12-14

- ✓ Possibly the theme of this book – “for such a time as this”
- ✓ It is important for all of us to consider where we are now and why we are here

Esther 4:15-16

15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai,

16 “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”

17 Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Esther 4:15-17

- ✓ We may debate the how devout this family may have been with Persian culture, but we cannot argue their reliance on prayer and fasting