

If I Perish, I Perish  
(Esther 4)

Queen Esther, a Jewish woman, married to a Gentile King named Ahasuerus from the Persia Empire, found herself to be in a crossroad, when her uncle Mordecai let her know of the plot Haman, who held the highest position in Ahasuerus's kingdom, had to kill all the Jews. Comfortable in the position of a queen, she had no idea that her life was on the line, neither that of her people's. What was Esther to do? For no one could go into the inner court to the king without being called. But her uncle Mordecai had these warning words to tell her: "Do not flatter yourself that you shall escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews; for if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance shall arise for the Jews from elsewhere, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows but that you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this and for this very occasion (Esther 4:14)? Esther then suggested a three day fast for all the Jews of that province on her behalf and she together with her maids did the same.

Prayer and fasting go hand in hand; it is an act of seeking the Lord's face by supplication with humility, as it is described in Daniel 9:3, when Daniel sought the Lord for answer concerning the time of the Jewish captivity in Babylon. Esther needed the courage to enter the king's court to plea on behalf of her people; but before she entered the king's court, she sought the strength from above, from YAHWEH her true God, Whom she worshiped. She acknowledged Him as sovereign and in control of the destiny of Israel, so she went to His presence before she faced the danger of death in the presence of the king and trusted not in her own position of queen. With the courage of faith she said, If I perish, I perish; meaning nothing will stop me from accomplishing YAHWEH'S will for my people; if I die, I die for a good cause. That was quite a statement of courage as she entered the battle field to deliver her people from Haman, unafraid of the consequences. She had then become a true soldier. Not considering her life to be more precious than that of her people, she put it in danger of death. On the third day she went to the inner court of the king's palace, dressed in her royal robe ready for whatever was to come. But when the king saw her, she obtained favor with him and granted her to draw near him to hear her petition, by holding out to her the golden scepter and letting her speak what was in her heart. God had placed her in the right place for the right time to fulfill His purpose of salvation for His people Israel. He used a woman to save Israel from the hands of Haman, who had come from the lineage of the Amalekite of the house of Esau, the brother of Jacob. The house of Esau has been enemies of Jacob since he stole the blessing of his birth right. In Exodus 17:14-16 we read that shortly after Israel's exodus from Egypt, the Amalekites attacked them, but the Lord used Joshua to mow them down and disable them with the sword. The Lord said that He was going to utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens; Moses prophesied and said, Because theirs is a hand against the throne of the Lord, the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Plotting to kill Israel, Haman was going against the "Throne of the Lord". So God placed Esther in the Palace as queen for such a time. He used her to side with Him, to bring deliverance to His people, Israel. "If I perish, I perish".

The plan she had to reveal Haman's plot to the king was very successful, because she sought the Lord first of all. Neither the king nor Haman knew what was to be the outcome of the dinner she had prepared for them for two days. And on the second day, when the king again asked her, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted. And what is your request? Even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be performed". He had given her the freedom to present her request, promising her to satisfy her request beyond what she had asked. Confidently she answered him saying, If I have found favor in your sight, O king and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition and my people at my request; if I found favor in your sight; if it pleases the king; let not my request to you destroy my life neither the life of my people; but at my petition, let me live and let my people live also. She continued, for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, slain and wiped out of existence! But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I would have held my tongue; for our affliction is not to be compared with the damage this will do the king. When the king asked her who was the person presuming such plan? She then answered, An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman! The king ordered that Haman be hang on the gallows he had made to hang Mordecai, Esther's uncle and granted her request to reverse the letter written by Haman to destroy the Jews of the king's province (Esther 5; 7). So in courage of faith, Esther became a heroine of faith and the Lord, through her, saved Israel once again from the hand of Esau's descendants.

If I perish, I perish was also the moto of the apostle Paul in pursuit of the salvation of his people Israel, as well as of the Gentiles. That was his determined purpose. He said, I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience [enlightened and prompted] by the Holy spirit bearing witness with me that I have bitter grief and incessant anguish in my heart; for I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off and banished from Christ for the sake of my brethren and instead of them, my natural kinsmen and my fellow country-men (Rom. 9:1, 2). When Paul was in one of his missionary journeys, he had a vision in the night: a man from Macedonia stood pleading with him and saying, Come over to Macedonia and help us! At once endeavored to go on into Macedonia, confidently inferring that God had called him and those with him to proclaim the good tidings to them, they left for Macedonia. There, he and his companion suffered great persecution; they were beaten and put into the inner prison (dungeon) and fastened their feet in the stocks. But not even that kept Paul and Silas from proclaiming the good news. At midnight when all seemed quiet, Paul and Silas were found praying and singing hymns of praise to God and the prisoners were listening to them (Acts 16). While they were praising Him and praying, God caused the earth to quake so greatly that the foundations of the prison were shaken and its doors were opened and everyone's shackles were unfastened (vs.26). Everyone felt free but the jailer. When he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword to kill himself; when Paul stop him from doing that by saying, Do not harm yourself, for we are all here! Presumably, he heard the singing coming from Paul and Silas; songs of the good news of salvation; and when the opportunity came, he asked the right question: Men, what is it necessary for me to do that I may be saved? Paul answered: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household as well. That night salvation came not only to him, but also do his family, because Paul had not consider his life worth more than of those who needed to be delivered and saved; he did not complain when in

the inner part of the prison with his feet fastened to the stocks; he did not question God's sovereignty. He obeyed and many were saved at the cost of his life and of his companions.

If I die, I die, so that others can be saved from the power of eternal death. Our Lord YAHSHUA gave His life for our salvation; shouldn't we do the same? From the beginning, many believers have given up their lives for the sake of the good news of YAHSHUA. Many have not ceased to proclaim the truth of the Gospel even today, with the price of their lives. We are greatly indebted to you for such a sacrifice of faith and love. But there are many of us who are not so zealous to bring salvation to others. We are afraid, ashamed, we are spiritual cold, almost dead; we are too hot, too busy, while the world turns around heading to eternity.

Wake up; wake up to the "Macedonia" call! This is the eleventh hour for many who are drawn away to death. Hold them back; hold them back from their destruction. Let's follow the example of Paul, who warned by the Holy Spirit of his suffering in city after city, said, But none of these things move me; neither do I esteem my life dear to myself; if only I may finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have obtained from the Lord Jesus, faithfully to attest to the good news of God's grace (Acts 20:23-24). And again, For the love of Christ controls and urges and impels us, because we are of the opinion and conviction that [if] One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, **so that all those who live might live no longer to and or themselves; but to and for Him Who died and was raised again for their sake** (II Cor. 5:14-15).