

Chapter 4

Al the Iewes lament their imminent danger. 5. Mardocheus willeth Efther to intreate the king for their faf-tie. 11. She fearing to goe to the king contrarie to his law vncalled, 15. yet they al fafing and praying for her, she doth it.

V Which things when Mardocheus had heard, he rent his garmentes, and was clothed with sackcloth, fprinkling ashes on his head: and in the ftreat of the middes of the citie he cried with a lowed voyce, shewing the anguish of his mind, ² and with this wayling going euen to the doores of the palace: for it was not lawful for one clothed with sackcloth to enter the kings court. ³ In al prouinces alfo, townes, and places, to which the kings cruel decree was come, there was ^a)great mourning with the Iewes, fafing, howling, and weeping, manie vfang sackcloth and ashes for their couch. ⁴ And Efthers maides and the eunuches went in, and told her. Which she hearing was aftonyed: and she fent a garment, that the sackcloth being taken away, they should put it on him: which he would not take. ⁵ And calling for Athach the eunuch, whom the king had geuen her for a feruant to Mardocheus, commanded him to goe and to learne of him, why he did this. ⁶ And Athach going forth went to Mardocheus ftanding in the ftreate of the citie, before the palace doore: ⁷ who told him al thinges that had chanced, how Aman had promifed, that he would bring filuer into the kings treafures for the flaughter of the Iewes. ⁸ He gaue him alfo a copie of the edict which hong in Sufan, that he should shew it to the queene, and should admonish her to enter in to the king, and to intreate him for her people. ⁹ Athach returning told Efther al things, that Mardocheus had fayd. ¹⁰ Who anfwered him, and bad

The third part.
The deliuerie of
the Iewes from
danger.

^a The firft and beft remedie in diftreffe is to do workes of penance for finnes comitted. *1. Cor. 11. v. 31.*

that he should fay to Mardocheus: ¹¹ Al the kings feruantes, and al the prouinces that are vnder his dominion, know, that whether man, or woman, not called, shal enter in to the kings inner court, he muft immediatly be flayne without al delay: vnleffe perhaps the king stretch forth a golden rod vnto him, for a figne of clemencie, and so he may liue. I therefore how can I enter in to the king, which now these thirtie daies haue not bene called vnto him? ¹² Which when Mardocheus had heard, ¹³ he sent word to Efther agayne, faying: Thincke not that thou mayst deliuer thy owne life only, because thou art in the kings house, aboue al the Iewes: ¹⁴ for if thou wilt now hold thy peace, ^a)the Iewes shal be deliuered by an other occasion: and thou, and thy fathers house shal perish. And who knoweth whether thou camest to the kingdom therefore, that in such a time thou mightst be readie? ¹⁵ And agayne Efther sent to Mardocheus in these wordes: ¹⁶ Goe, and gather together al the Iewes, whom thou shalt find in Sufan, and pray ye for me. Eate ye not, and drinke not in three dayes, and three nightes: and I with my handmaydes in like maner wil fast, and then wil I goe in to the king, doing agaynft the law, not called, and deliuering my self to death and to peril. ¹⁷ Mardocheus therefore went, and did al things that Efther had commanded him.

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^a Great confidence in Gods helpe when mans helpe fayleth: and in dede this meanes by mouing the kings hart to grant Efthers petition was Gods special worke.