

June 28th 2004

Welcome to  
**Wake Up Call**  
Your weekly email support from WorkNet



**Flying blind...**

There are times when you are doing all you can to make something happen or resolve a problem. You are working hard, you are praying about the problem and you are asking others to help. Although it is difficult and costly, it is possible in all honesty to say that there is nothing more you can do.

The nerve-wracking aspect of some of these situations is that even given all your effort you cannot control or predict the outcome. There is an element of risk and uncertainty. There is an unknown quantity in the system which means that to an extent you are "flying blind" or unable to see the full picture.

If you have any biblical knowledge, you will also know that trusting in God was and is not a guarantee of an easy ride or a pain free experience. Short-term outcomes vary tremendously, even for the faithful. It is a time to hold your nerve and trust with a faith which by definition cannot see or understand the whole drama.

Such was the situation facing Esther in Iran. She had listened to her advisor, taken her life in her hands, fasted, approached a king with the power of life and death and started to implement a very risky plan. This plan was to come to a head on the fourth day of the project. Esther had no way of knowing exactly how this would turn out. She had already taken risks and there was little else she could do. She could not go back nor change her mind; she was now committed. If you freeze-frame that night, you will probably be able to recall in your experience similar circumstances, where having done all you can, you face an anxious night before the big day tomorrow.

What Esther could not control or know, was that the king himself was to have a strange night. Unable to sleep, he asked to read a bit of his own biography. The piece they chose to read happened to be about Esther's own adviser who had gone unrecognised for a previous act of faithfulness. The king decided to rectify the situation and honour the individual. This incident turned the tide in the larger context and guaranteed the success of Esther's plan. In an instant, her people would be rescued and the problems resolved. She knew nothing of this.

While she tried to sleep, God had awoken the king, pointed him in the right direction and underwritten her plans.

When you are faced with the end of your plans, the limit of your control and the exhaustion of your possibilities, there are dynamics about which you know nothing. God works to create environments and outcomes which you cannot possibly predict. He alerts those who need alerting, he reveals what needs to be shown and leads people to your aid. Even kings can't sleep when God wakes them so it not unreasonable to work as hard as you can, trusting in your God to do things which are way off your radar screen and beyond your computing. He did it yesterday; he still does it today and tonight and tomorrow.

**WORK WELL**

Geoff Shattock, National Director

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## Here is some biblical background for this week's Wake Up Call

### Esther 4:15- 7:10

#### Esther 4

<sup>15</sup> Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: <sup>16</sup> "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

<sup>17</sup> So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

#### Esther 5

##### *Esther's Request to the King*

<sup>1</sup> On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. <sup>2</sup> When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the sceptre.

<sup>3</sup> Then the king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you."

<sup>4</sup> "If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him."

<sup>5</sup> "Bring Haman at once," the king said, "so that we may do what Esther asks."

So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. <sup>6</sup> As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, "Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted."

<sup>7</sup> Esther replied, "My petition and my request is this: <sup>8</sup> If the king regards me with favour and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question."

##### *Haman's Rage Against Mordecai*

<sup>9</sup> Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. <sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home.

Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, <sup>11</sup> Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honoured him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. <sup>12</sup> "And that's not all," Haman added. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. <sup>13</sup> But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate."

<sup>14</sup> His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy." This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the gallows built.

#### Esther 6

##### *Mordecai Honoured*

<sup>1</sup> That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. <sup>2</sup> It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

<sup>3</sup> "What honour and recognition has Mordecai received for this?" the king asked. "Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered.

<sup>4</sup> The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows he

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had erected for him.

<sup>5</sup> His attendants answered, "Haman is standing in the court."

"Bring him in," the king ordered.

<sup>6</sup> When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honour?"

Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honour than me?" <sup>7</sup> So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honour, <sup>8</sup> have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. <sup>9</sup> Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honour, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honour!' "

<sup>10</sup> "Go at once," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended."

<sup>11</sup> So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honour!"

<sup>12</sup> Afterward Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, <sup>13</sup> and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.

His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, "Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him-you will surely come to ruin!" <sup>14</sup> While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

## **Esther 7**

### *Haman Hanged*

<sup>1</sup> So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther, <sup>2</sup> and as they were drinking wine on that second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted."

<sup>3</sup> Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favour with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life-this is my petition. And spare my people-this is my request. <sup>4</sup> For I and my people have been sold for destruction and slaughter and annihilation. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king. "

<sup>5</sup> King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is the man who has dared to do such a thing?"

<sup>6</sup> Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this vile Haman."

Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. <sup>7</sup> The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.

<sup>8</sup> Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining.

The king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?"

As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. <sup>9</sup> Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A gallows seventy-five feet [ high stands by Haman's house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king."

The king said, "Hang him on it!" <sup>10</sup> So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.

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