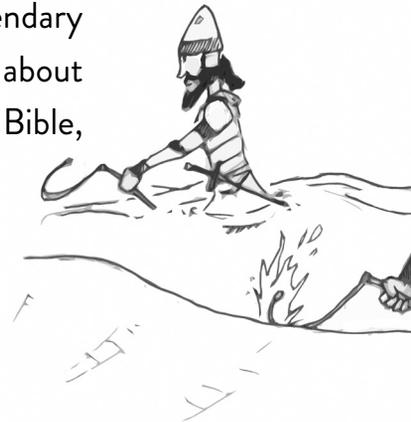


FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Courageous people do not usually intend to be brave. Instead, God's people use the gifts he gives them to glorify God and to serve others. As we look back upon the lives of people in the past, we see how God orchestrates every event to help his children grow in character and to accomplish a specific role in his story of the world. Some lives seem unusually difficult, and some people come to faith in Jesus after terrible sin. It is always fascinating to see how God's people impact history.

Do you know the story of Esther in the Bible? She was a Jewish girl who married Ahasuerus, the king of Persia. Now Ahasuerus was a real hothead. He sent his first wife away just because he was angry. Ahasuerus' anger was so legendary that people in history told stories about it. One story, which is not in the Bible, says that while Ahasuerus was on his way to attack Greece, he ordered his men to build a rope bridge across a strait. The ropes



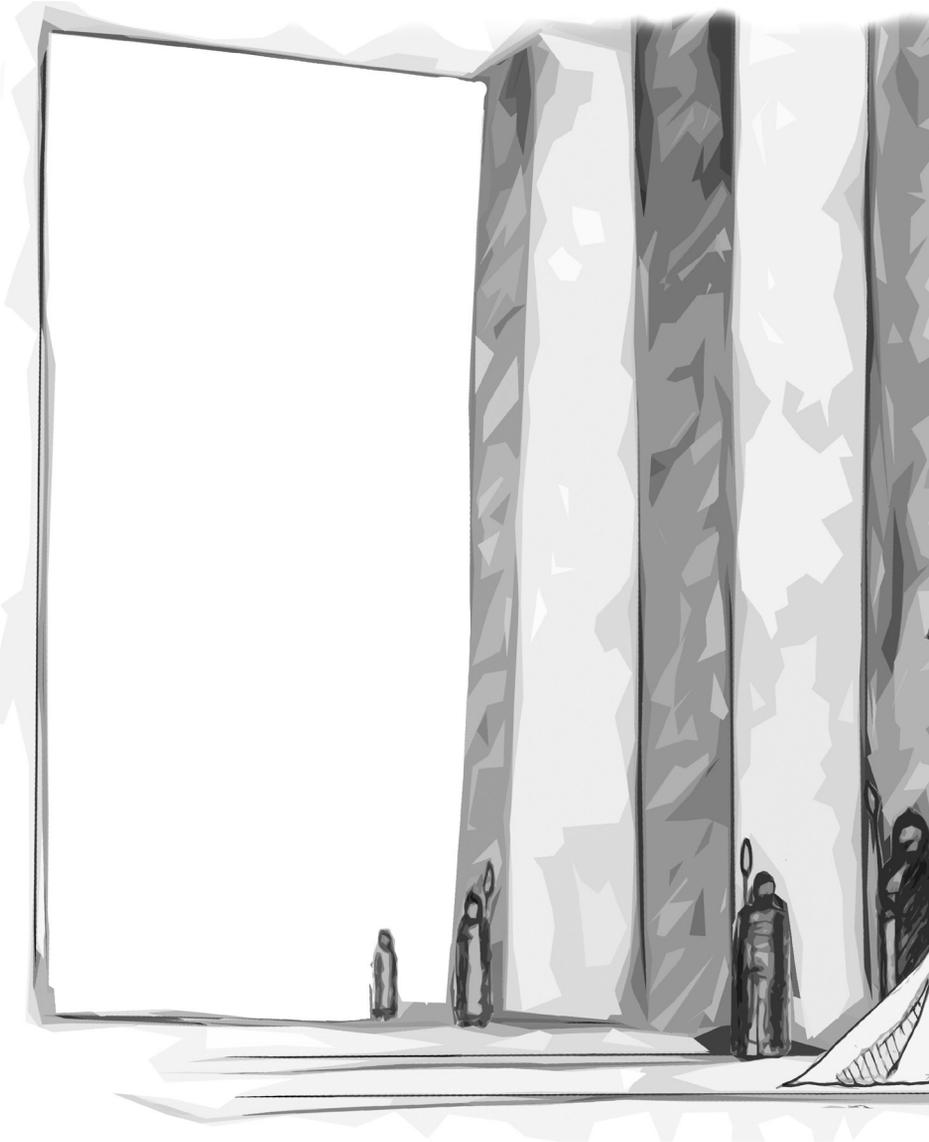
were broken to pieces by rough water during a storm. Ahasuerus was so furious that he had his men whip the water three hundred times. That was the kind of man young Esther was made to marry. You might imagine she was nervous about her new husband. You may just be right.

Now, after Esther and Ahasuerus married, an evil counselor to Ahasuerus named Haman plotted to destroy the Jews. Because Esther and her uncle Mordecai were Jews, Mordecai instructed Esther to approach her husband and ask him to save the Jews. Esther explained that she very well might die for the impertinent act of initiating a visit to the throne room.

Wise Mordecai replied, “Do not think to yourself that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews.

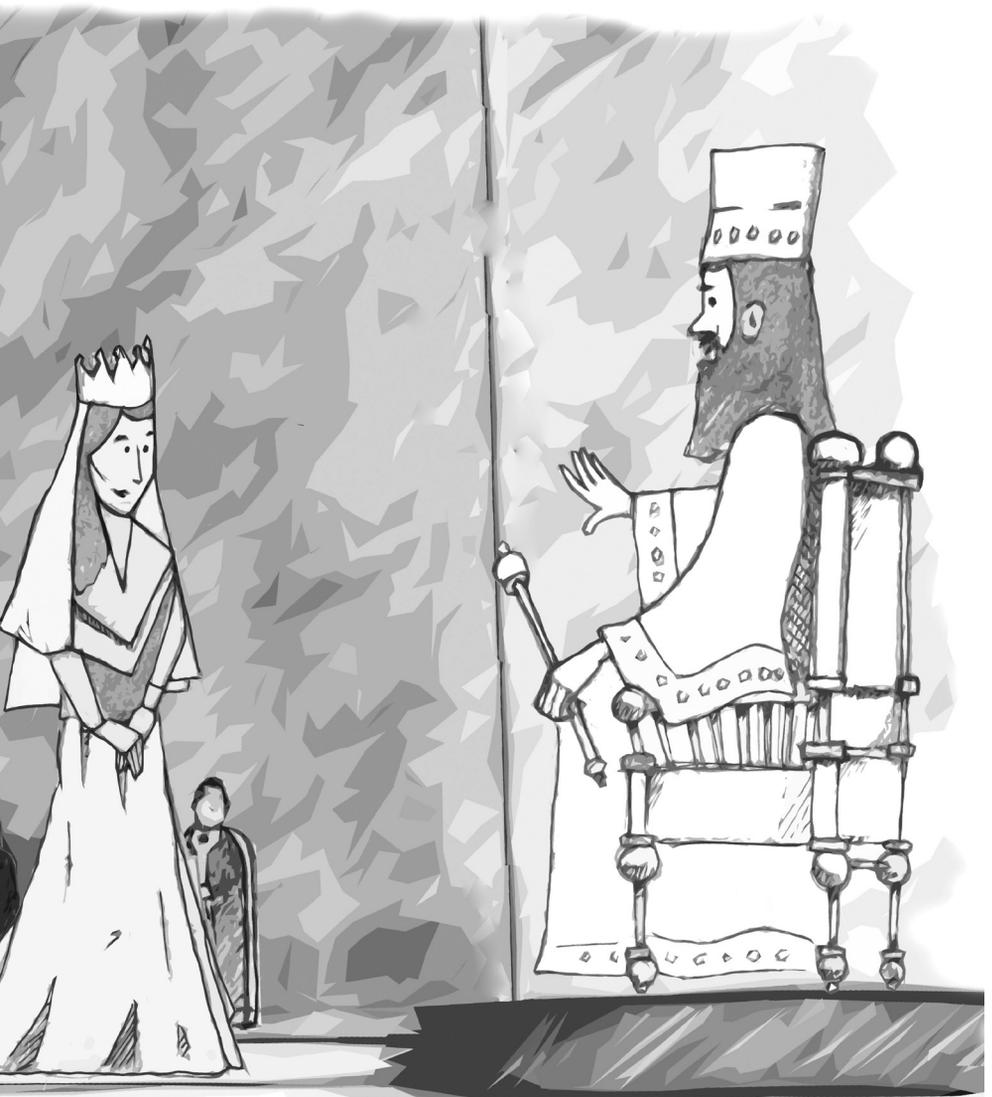


For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish.”



WHO WERE THE ABOLITIONISTS?

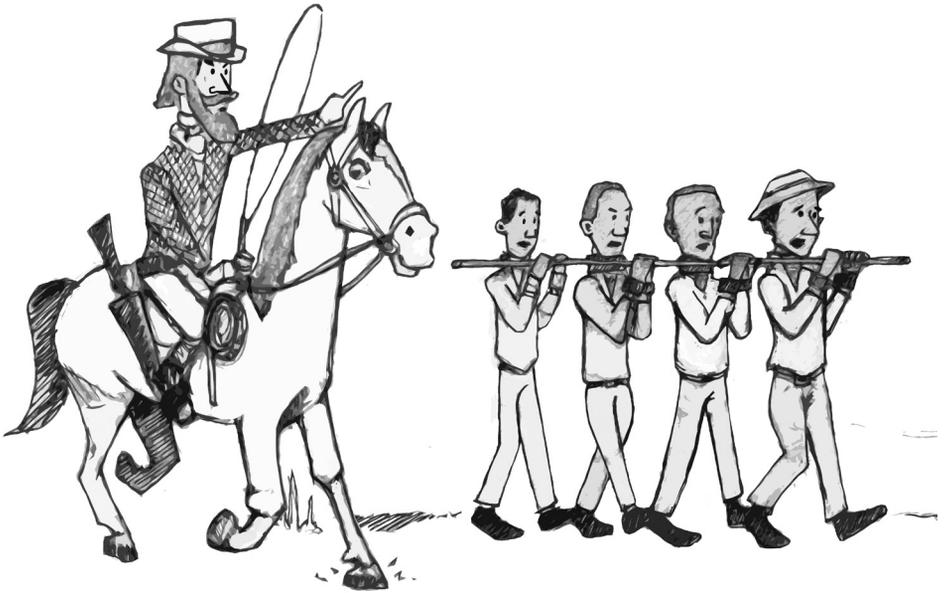
Looking back on the events of Esther's life, Mordecai's advice to Esther makes a lot of sense, doesn't it? Esther was, indeed, placed in a specific



time and place for “such a time as this.” Even though she was married to a hot-headed king and even though she had to risk her life, Esther was in a position to help her people.

The Bible tells us that God is sovereign over all of history. That means he is the ruler of time, events, kings, and ordinary people. During the time of global slavery, when God’s created human beings were owned like cattle across the world, men and women who loved Jesus fasted, prayed, and—like Esther—refused to be silent in the face of injustice.

From AD 1688 until 1888, thousands of abolitionists joined the fight to end slavery. Most abolitionists—



people who fought to abolish, or end, the slave trade—were motivated by their love for Jesus and for God’s Word. They spoke, wrote, and preached about God’s love for all people. Often, they risked their lives to love their neighbors as themselves in the fight to end slavery. Sometimes they even broke man’s law to honor God’s law.

We are going to take a look at the lives of ten abolitionists who dedicated their lives to glorifying God. They were black and white, poor and rich, enslaved and free. Many Christian abolitionists knew each other and sometimes they worked together to help free human souls. Each one used the gifts God gave them to serve him in the best way they were able. In the end, we know that God in his providence—that means the way God cares for us and arranges the events of our lives—planned the lives of the abolitionists “for such a time as this.”

THE SIN AFTER THE SIN

As Europeans began sailing the world and taking over other countries, many people—especially Africans—were enslaved. Slave owners wanted free labor for plantations or farms, which grew crops like cotton,



Zachary Macauley



William Knibb



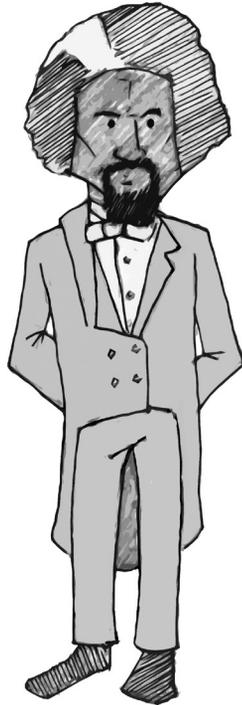
Sojourner Truth

coffee, or sugar. Chattel slavery—treating people like property—was a terrible sin.

Every sin has a way of producing more sin. Many slaves were kept from reading God’s Word, praying, or learning about Jesus. Slavery also destroyed families. After all, when people are treated like cattle, marriage



Harriet Tubman



Frederick Douglass

and children are not cared for. God created us to worship him and live in families, and the sin of slavery hurt the hearts of the abolitionists, just as it must hurt our hearts.



Granville Sharp



Phillis Wheatley