

## ***“For Such a Time as This”***

Esther 3 & 4 – March 21, 2010

Proverbs 15:3

➤ **Providence: Using A Man With An \_\_\_\_\_**  
\_\_\_\_\_ Esther 3:1-7

➤ **Providence: Using the \_\_\_\_\_ of a Jew-  
Hater** Esther 3:8 – 4:17

Jeremiah 33:25-26

**Principle #1** - God does not need anyone's \_\_\_\_\_  
to accomplish His purpose. Esther 4:14

**Principle #2** - God will keep His \_\_\_\_\_  
with or without anyone's help.

Joshua 21:45  
II Timothy 2:13

**Principle #3** – No \_\_\_\_\_ is outside the  
authority of God.

Proverbs 21:1

**Principle #4** – God uses \_\_\_\_\_ to  
accomplish His purposes.

**Principle #5** – God is not in a \_\_\_\_\_.

**Principle #6** – Trusting God's providence is a \_\_\_\_\_ -  
producer.

Esther 4:16  
Daniel 3:17-18

### **Wrap Up**

God is responsible for the \_\_\_\_\_ of our  
actions.

Proverbs 3:5  
Proverbs 16:9  
Daniel 4:35

### **My NEXT STEP for this Week**

- WATCH THIS three minute video: *Treasuring Him*  
<http://www.1031sermonjams.com/>
- Identify your biggest “problem” and fight to see God's  
hand in it.
- How can I serve? Get information about Sunday morning  
hospitality ministry.
- For those in the “furnace of affliction” - Meditate on Isaiah  
48:10-11.

## ***“For Such a Time as This”***

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**Intro:** So often our lives are filled with events and circumstances that seem random and meaningless. King Solomon lapsed into depression for a season of his life for he lost faith that God was at work around him.

It is my privilege and duty week after week to declare – *MY FRIENDS, GOD IS ALIVE AND WELL AND WORKING IN HIS UNIVERSE AND IN YOUR LIFE! LOOK FOR HIM! SEEK HIM! TRUST HIM! IF YOU ARE HIS CHILD ... DON'T RESPOND TO YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES AS IF THERE IS NO GOD! HE DOESN'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN WHAT HE'S UP TO ... BUT HE MUST BE TRUSTED AND ACKNOWLEDGED AS RULING YOUR LIFE AND THIS PLANET!*

### **Proverbs 15:3**

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good.

We get a great insight into God's work behind the scenes in the Book of Esther ... how the Lord ... in present day Iran ... was clearly watching the evil and the good ... and working to bring about good from that evil.

### **Isaiah 46:10**

Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure

### **Background on the Book ...**

- ✓ The nation of Israel is experiencing the chastening of God for her idolatry and abandonment of God
- ✓ Jews are in present day Iran ... scattered throughout the country
- ✓ King Ahasuerus has a celebration for 180 days to show off his accomplishments as king.
- ✓ Following the 180 days ... he throws a party for 7 days ... where wine was abundant.
- ✓ At the end of the week he wants to show off his wife ... her royal crown and probably less her royal clothes.
- ✓ Queen Vashti refuses ... and the king with a huge ego is humiliated before his rulers.
- ✓ Vashti is banished ...
- ✓ A *MISS PERSIA BEAUTY CONTEST* is held ... God gives Esther (a Jew) a striking-beauty. She's gorgeous! Stunning! She caught the eyes of all the men ... and handled herself wisely ... and is made the queen in place of Vashti

Providence: God's silent, invisible but supernatural work to get His people in the right place at the right time. (The name of God is NOT mentioned in this book, not even one time!)

- ✓ After Esther is made queen ... she obeys her adopted father, Mordecai, (an older cousin) and does not tell anyone she is a Jew ... for Jews in general were hated people

### **GOD IS INVISIBLY - VISIBLE**

The Movie: ***ONE NIGHT WITH THE KING*** – Hollywood's version of the story of Esther ... uses the name King Xerxes rather than King Ahasuerus. The king in the story *IS* King Xerxes, which is rendered Ahasuerus in its Hebrew form. So we're going with the Hebrew form of his name.

**Transition:** We pick up the story in chapter 3 ...

## ➤ **Providence: Using A Man With An INFLATED EGO**

### **Esther 3:1**

After these events King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and established his authority over all the princes who were with him.

Haman is about as evil as they come. His wickedness exceeds the wickedness of Nazi Germany!

Persia at that time was dominated by polytheism – the worship of many gods. If you were a high ranking official ... the king would let you become a god to the people. This is precisely what King Ahasuerus did ... he made Haman the Prime Minister of Persia ... and let him become a god.

### **Problem**

If you are a God-fearing Jew ... and have learned by your captivity in Persia that you are in captivity because of bowing down to false gods ... you will not fall into that sin again. Even if it means losing your life ... you won't disobey your God!

And here where the problem comes ...

### **Esther 3:2-6**

All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman; for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage.

3:3 Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?"

3:4 Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew.

3:5 When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage.

3:6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him who the people of Mordecai were; therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

### **We discover**

Haman has been granted permission to be honored as **DEITY**

Haman is infuriated Mordecai would not worship him! But God would keep Haman from immediately dealing with Mordecai.

### **Don't miss this**

God intentionally let Haman discover that the gatekeeper who wouldn't bow down to him ... was a Jew! His hatred for one Jew makes him hate all Jews. For if one Jew wouldn't bow to him – an entire race of Jews wouldn't either. And he wouldn't put up with that!

### **What Comes to Light:**

God allows evil and evil that may even terrify godly people ... to bring about His pre-determined results!

## ➤ **Providence: Using the LIES of a Jew-Hater**

### **Esther 3:8**

Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of all other people and they do not observe the king’s laws, so it is not in the king’s interest to let them remain.

Mordecai discovered a plot to kill the king and saved the king’s life – a loyal citizen.

God’s instructions to the Jews in captivity ...

### **Jeremiah 29:7**

“... seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.”

- ✓ Jews were law-abiding citizens ... but learned a hard lesson as a result of being taken captive – DON’T WORSHIP OTHER gods!
- ✓ That’s a lesson the Jews learned well. Polytheism among Jews was eradicated from their captivity.

Haman is lying through his teeth to get his way. He’s deceiving the king. He’s using his position to get away with a holocaust. If we were present in that room we would be inclined to say, “*HE’S LYING! JEWS ARE LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS. THEY ARE HARD WORKING AND WANT YOU, O KING, TO BE SUCCESSFUL AND PROSPER!*”

### Interesting aside

This holocaust was going to happen in Persia – present day Iran. And Iran is again today threatening to annihilate Jews in Israel.

### **Esther 3:9-11**

“If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed **that they be destroyed** ...

3:10 Then the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, **the enemy of the Jews.**

3:11 The king said to Haman, “**The silver is yours**, and the people also, to do with them as you please.”

### Notice

The king does not ask any questions

He believes Haman and trusts him

He grants permission ... and a holocaust is about to occur

### **Esther 3:14-15**

A copy of the edict ... was published to all the peoples so that they should be ready for this day.

3:15 "...while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa; and while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was in confusion.

### **Panic follows ...**

- Mordecai hears about the edict ...

#### **Esther 4:1**

"...he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly

- Word spreads throughout Persia ... and people are in despair

#### **Esther 4:3**

In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.

- Esther hears ...

#### **Esther 4:4**

Then Esther's maidens and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen writhed in great anguish ...

- But Esther has no clue how or why this has all come about ... and so she sends a messenger to Mordecai ... and Mordecai tells the messenger all the details ...

#### **Esther 4:9**

Hathach came back and related Mordecai's words to Esther.

- Esther gets the message and responds to her father ... and reports a problem ...

#### **Esther 4:11**

"All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live ...

### **Notice**

This king has issues

His mood swings are so severe that he's made a law ...

- ✓ *YOU COME INTO MY PRESENCE UNANNOUNCED ...*
- ✓ *AND I DO NOT HOLD OUT MY GOLDEN SCEPTER ...*
- ✓ *MY SERVANTS ARE AUTHORIZED TO TAKE YOUR LIFE IMMEDIATELY*
- ✓ *NO QUESTIONS ASKED! YOU ARE HISTORY!*

### **Esther makes it clear to Mordecai**

You don't just walk into the palace uninvited ... even me!

If the king is in a bad mood ... as he was with Queen Vashti ... life will be short.

AND TO MAKE MATTERS EVEN WORSE ...

**Esther 4:11**

“... I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days.”

What I see here...

This king is clearly messed up because he's got the most gorgeous wife in the entire nation ... and he's not been with her for 30 days? This guys got a problem!

He is one unstable guy.

He appears to be manic depressive ... maybe suffering from psychosis and paranoia

This would account for Esther's fears. This guys down-right scary!

This crazy king may be irrational for a moment ... allow his wife to be killed ... and later come to his senses.

Something else to observe ...

When the king granted wicked Haman his request ... he not only granted the request ... he made it into a law ...

Reminder ...

THE LAW OF THE MEDES AND PERSIANS ...

**Esther 1:19**

"... let a royal edict be issued ... and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be repealed ...

Mordecai is quite candid ....

**Esther 4:13**

“... Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.

In other words ...

No Jew will escape this holocaust ... even the queen of Persia – even you, Esther!

The Persian Gestapo WILL find every Jew ... every person who has come to this land from Israel ... and there will be no escape.

We come to our key verse ... verse 14

**Esther 4:14**

“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”

Mordecai is one wise and godly man. He has a strong belief in the sovereignty of God. And He also knows something about some promises of God ...

**Jeremiah 33:25-26**

"Thus says the Lord, 'If My covenant for day and night stand not, and the fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established, 33:26 then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from his descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.' "

**Principle #1** - God does not need anyone's **HELP** to accomplish His purpose

**Esther 4:14**

“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place ...”

Don't miss this

God uses people to do His will. But we must never think that He's dependent on us!

God will accomplish His purpose **WITH** or **WITHOUT** anyone's help

God will accomplish His purposes even if His people refuse to obey.

God is not dependent on anyone to do what He plans to do.

God's hands are not tied when we are unfaithful ... and refuse to obey His will.

If we do not do what God would have us do ... we are the ones who will miss out.

And God will find someone else to do His work.

**Principle #2** - God will keep His **PROMISES** with or without anyone's help

**Joshua 21:45**

Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.

**II Timothy 2:13**

If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

**Principle #3** – No **RULER** is outside the authority of God

**Proverbs 21:1**

The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Application

There are a lot of people in our country in despair over the decisions of our president. But let's not forget this truth. Our president's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord. Any time God wants He can turn it wherever He wishes.

**Principle #4** – God uses **PEOPLE** to accomplish His purposes

There is a connection between the **SOVEREIGNTY** of God and **HUMAN** responsibility

**Esther 4:14b**

“... And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”

God has a divine **PURPOSE** for this world

Warren Wiersbe

*“There is nothing in this world that is outside the influence of the purposes of God.”*

**Principle #5** – God is not in a **HURRY**

- ✓ It looks like ... after Queen Vashti was banished ... God waited four years before putting Esther on the throne.
- ✓ It was not until the king’s twelfth year that God allowed Haman to concoct his plot to annihilate all Jews
- ✓ And then I find it quite interesting that Haman decreed that the day the Jews would be slaughtered would be almost a year away ... why not get it done next week ... or next month?

**Illustration:**

God’s sovereignty is like an ocean liner. People leaving for Hawaii from the west coast are free to do as they please ... but they are not free to change the course of the ship.

Well said (A.W. Tozer)

*“The mighty liner of God’s sovereign design keeps its steady course over the sea of history.”*

**Principle #6** – Trusting God’s providence is a **COURAGE**-producer

**Esther 4:16**

“Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.”

But notice her courage was reinforced by fasting. And fasting is always coupled with prayer in the Bible. So her courage was fed by her prayers and the prayers of the Jews – and people who fasted – a sign of diligence and seriousness.

Her great statement of courage ...

*“... if I perish I perish.”*

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego had similar courage before being thrown in the fiery furnace ... unwilling to worship an object, an idol of the king.

**Daniel 3:17-18**

“If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.  
3:18 “But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

## Wrap Up

God is responsible for the **CONSEQUENCES** of our actions when we are completely obedient.

As my friend once said (Cam Arensen),

“We can’t base our actions on **OUTCOME**. We must base them on **OBEDIENCE**.”

Our job is to be obedient!

God’s job is to determine the outcome.

**BUT WE’RE STUBBORN!**

It’s not unlike us to try to figure out how our obedience is going to work. And this is not our department! Our department is Proverbs 3:5

**Proverbs 3:5**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.

My responsibility:

Do what is right and trust the Lord!

**Proverbs 16:9**

The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.

Exhortation:

Rest in a sovereign God ... who can bring peace to your soul when you believe what Daniel said ...

**Daniel 4:35**

“All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”

*God is dealing with an incredibly unstable king ... but trust me ... that’s no problem for Him. And when we get into chapter 5 ... we’ll see this ...*