



May 29, 2016

Esther 3 - 4

*"For Such a Time as This"*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Have you ever wondered why you are where you are? Why it is that you live where you live? Why it is that you have the job you have? Why it is that you have the friends you have? God has a providential plan for each of us that involves the weaving of our life's story. There is no coincidence with God, only providence. God chose Esther for a special purpose "for such a time as this." How might God be working in your life "for such a time as this"? Pastor Gary examines this topic from Esther 3 - 4 in today's teaching.

### Historical Background

1. Pastor Gary said, "The hatred of another race is not only prejudicial, but in this particular case, it is also anti-Semitic. Prejudice in general, and anti-Semitism in particular, is rooted [in] and inspired [by] Satan himself."
2. Satan understands that the redemptive plan of God involves the Jewish Messiah, Jesus.
  - a. [John 8:44](#) - [Jesus said,] *"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for his a liar and the father of lies."*
  - b. [Revelation 12:4](#) - *"His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon [Satan] stood in front of the woman [Israel] who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child [the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob] the moment it was born."*
3. Haman, under the inspiration of Satan, was filled with hatred and animosity toward Mordecai and the Jewish race.

4. Pastor Gary said: “The characteristic of prejudice is when one person offends you, and you then hate all of the people that that one person represents.”
5. Haman couldn't bring himself to even mention the Jews by name when he came to Xerxes with his murderous plan.
  - a. **Esther 3:8-9** - *“Then Haman said to King Xerxes, ‘There is a certain people dispersed and scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people and who do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will put ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out this business.’ ”*
6. King Xerxes, without any hesitation gave Haman his signet ring as the sign of approval.
  - a. **Esther 3:10-11** - *“So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ‘Keep the money,’ the king said to Haman, ‘and do with the people as you please.’ ”*
7. **Esther 3:12-13** - *“Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned, they wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman's orders to the king's satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring. Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews - young and old, women and little children - on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.”*
8. This situation is the first time the Bible records an intentional effort to annihilate the Jews, but it won't be the last.
  - a. The Chinese, who trace their history back about 5,000 years, have a world population of about 1.2 billion today.
  - b. The people of India, who also trace their history back about 5,000 years, have a world population of about 1 billion.
  - c. The Jews, who trace their history back about 5,000 years, have a world population of only 14 million.
9. The reason there are only 14 million Jews in the world today is because they have been slaughtered and dispersed from their homeland unlike another other people group on earth.

- a. Approximately 6.5 million Jews live in the United States.
  - b. Approximately 6 to 7 million Jews live in Israel.
10. It wasn't until 1948 when the Jewish people reasserted their claim on the land that the nation of Israel took form again.
- a. This was a fulfillment of the prophecy of [Ezekiel 37](#).
11. It doesn't matter whether it is Haman, Hitler, Hamas, or Hezbollah; there has been a concerted effort over the centuries, inspired by Satan, to annihilate the Jews.
- a. In 2008, on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation of Israel, then president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said: "Those who think they can revive the stinking corpse of the usurping and fake Israeli regime by throwing a birthday party are seriously mistaken. Today the reason for the Zionist [Jewish] regime's existence is questioned, and this regime is on its way to annihilation."<sup>1</sup>
  - b. In 2015, the current leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, said: "[Allah] willing, there will be no such thing as Zionist regime in 25 years. Until then, struggling, heroic and jihadi morale will leave no moment of serenity for Zionists [a backhanded reference to Jews]."<sup>2</sup>
  - c. In March 2016, Iran launched two ballistic test missiles, and written upon them in Hebrew was this message: "Israel must be wiped out."<sup>3</sup>
  - d. On May 16, 2016, Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said: "... it must be understood what our problem with Iran is. It is not just its policy of subversion and aggression in the region; it is the values on which it is based. It denies and belittles the Holocaust and it is also preparing another Holocaust."<sup>4</sup>
12. Today, some 2,500 years later, we can see an amazing similarity between the events of the book of Esther and the greatest potential threat to the safety and security of the nation of Israel.
13. The greatest threat to the Jews is still Persia, which became the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1935.
14. Pastor Gary said: "I think America should be pro-Israel as [much] as we can be. We should be on the side of what God has said in [Genesis 12:3](#)."<sup>5</sup> I think

<sup>1</sup> <http://archive.adl.org/nr/exeres/ae96e291-9da7-4148-af14-273a06174a7b,db7611a2-02cd-43af-8147-649e26813571,frameless.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/10/middleeast/iran-khamenei-israel-will-not-exist-25-years/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-fires-2-missiles-marked-with-israel-must-be-wiped-out/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/212270#.V1HqSFfZeJU>

<sup>5</sup> [Genesis 12:3](#) - "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

personally, as a nation, we should be intentional about supportive and a good ally of Israel. That said, Israel doesn't need the United States. [Psalm 121:4](#) says, *'[He] who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.'* Israel has a better friend than the United States. Israel has God, and Israel will be defended by [God] who neither slumbers nor sleeps!"

15. God often expresses his divine and providential purposes through people, and in this account, that person is Esther.

### The Providence Of God

16. God intentionally positioned Esther as the Queen of Persia, so that she would have an influential role in speaking to King Xerxes in an extremely critical time.
17. [Esther 4:6-8](#) - *"So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to urge her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and please with him for her people."*
18. Esther told Hathach to tell Mordecai that the only way she would be allowed to come into the presence of the king was if he extended the golden scepter.
  - a. Pastor Gary made reference to the *"golden scepter"* as being a picture of Jesus Christ.
  - b. We don't have access to God, because God is seated on his throne, except that God has made gracious provision for us by extending the *"golden scepter"* so that we might have mercy and forgiveness.
  - c. Jesus Christ is the one who gives us access to the king.
    - i. [Hebrews 4:16](#) - *"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*
  - d. Jesus Christ is our *"golden scepter."*
19. [Esther 4:12-14](#) - *"When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: 'Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?'"*

20. There are two important lessons we can learn from Mordecai.
  - a. God's purposes are not dependent on anyone of us.
    - i. If we are disobedient to God, his purposes are not limited or hindered by our disobedience, because he will find someone else.
  - b. God has orchestrated the events of our lives and he has positioned each of us so that he can use us to accomplish his purposes!
21. We should not have any doubt about the fact that God orchestrated every event and every detail of our lives for specific reasons and for his greater glory.
22. God is always positioning us according to purpose.
23. A proper understanding of God includes understanding that there are no coincidences in life.
24. God will use the "good" in our lives for his glory, and he will redeem the "bad" in our lives for his glory.
  - a. The account of the life of Joseph is evidence of this biblical truth.
  - b. **Genesis 50:20** - *"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."*

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Esther 3:1-15** to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comment concerning prejudice. (See #4 above)
4. Spend time talking about the ways Satan has inspired hatred toward the Jews throughout history. (See #11 through #14 above)
5. Have you ever considered why it is that you have the job you have, the place you live, the friends and relationships you have, or why you attended a particular college, why you attend Cornerstone Chapel, why you have the neighbors you have, etc.?
6. What is God up to in your life and how does he want to use you *"for such a time as this"*?

7. What is the real purpose you are in the place you are *“for such a time as this”*?
8. How does a proper understanding of God help us realize there is no such thing as coincidence?
9. Read and discuss [Genesis 50:20](#).
10. How has God used the “good” in your life for his glory?
11. How has the Lord redeemed the “bad” in your life?
12. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).