

“For Such A Time As This”

Esther 4

God's final solution to the Jewish question...

God *is* sovereign, and He *does* care. But the world in which we live is not _____ or heavenly. It's not sinless, holy, or pure. It's _____. It's a world that has been darkened by the fall, which took place because sin entered the hearts of humankind, which brought the curse on humankind and on the world. It's not God's fault; it's our fault.

God *is* sovereign, but He's sovereign over a fallen world that atrociously violates His will and His way every day and in every way.

God *is* sovereign, but within His sovereignty is the human _____ and ability to choose. And God doesn't violate our human ability to sin, to hurt, to harm, to injure, to abuse, and to kill for no good reason.

God *is* sovereign, but the human heart is desperately sick, and Satan and his demonic hosts are on the loose, and *you* choose. But, thankfully, in the midst of all the fallenness in this fallen world, God sovereignly and providentially intervenes to fulfill His master plan for the world and to ultimately fulfill His promises to His people.

Israel, for the most part, has chosen not to accept Jesus as their Messiah even though He proved that He is their Messiah. There are consequences for that—natural consequences, rooted in their fallen hearts, the hearts of hate-filled people, and the heart of Satan. Consequently, they have suffered holocausts or attempted holocausts throughout their history. Yet God has providentially preserved them even down to this day, even as they continue to reject His desire for them: to accept His Son and their Messiah-King. He *will* save Israel one day, but in spite of them and only in the midst of great trouble and tribulation.

Question: “Why does God at times providentially deliver Israel from holocaust at some points, but didn't providentially protect them during the great Holocaust under Hitler's Nazi regime?” Even though God does not prevent the consequences of desperately sick human beings and Satan, he always _____ Israel from total annihilation. Not even Satan's future antichrist will totally destroy Israel during “the time of

Jacob's trouble." And perhaps, we came into the war *when* we came into the war "for such a time as this," to join our allies as God's chosen vessels to prevent a desperately sick man and his desperately sick minions from totally destructing Israel *and* other people groups in the world. It's lesser known that the Jews were targeted for extermination as part of a larger plan involving the murder of other groups, resulting in up to _____ million deaths overall. God's sovereign purposes always include protecting Israel from ever going away. Many other nations in history have been totally wiped out, but Israel never will be, because God has plans and purposes for Israel, and they are "plans for welfare and not evil, to give [Israel] a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

The Jewish response to Haman's plot:

1. The Jews' great _____ (1-4).

One scholar estimated that there may have been fifteen million Jews scattered throughout the Persian empire. And, because of Haman's plot, all of them were destined to die. While the king and Haman toasted their plan, and the city of Susa was thrown into confusion (3:15), the Jewish people everywhere were greatly distressed.

Mordecai earlier had told the other gate officials that he was a Jew. Now he's identifying himself publicly as one in great distress, broadcasting in loud and bitter cries before the entire city that he's Jewish *and* he's under the decree's sentence of death.

And as word got out to the provinces, one province after another, eventually to all 127 provinces, including Judah and Jerusalem, Jews everywhere greatly mourned with fasting, weeping, loud laments, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes, as was their custom. But within the bubble of the palace, Queen Esther was oblivious to the confusion of the city, the deep mourning of the city's Jewish population, and even of the distress of her adoptive father, Mordecai.

2. The Queen's great _____ (5-11).

Verses 5-8: Think about Hathach. It's doubtful he knew what an important part he was playing in God's sovereign, providential plan to save the Jews from total annihilation. But that's how the Lord works. He

so often uses obscure people accomplish His _____ and to fulfill His plans and purposes. Much is being entrusted to Hathach. Now, the big question: How will Esther respond to this heavy situation?

Verses 9-11: I don't think Esther is making excuses to Mordecai, but seeking from her trusted father counsel on how to proceed. She especially wanted him to know that she may've fallen out of favor with the king, since she hadn't been summoned for a solid month. This king is fickle, unpredictable, impulsive... The penalty for breaking the law was death... *Unless* he offered a pardon by extending his golden scepter.

3. The Queen's great _____ (12-17).

Mordecai gave three reasons why Esther only has one right decision in her dilemma: **One, Verse 13:** *Don't think for a moment that being in the royal residence will _____ you from the sentence of death.*

Two, Verse 14a: *If you take the coward's way out and remain silent, God will deliver us from another _____. He will deliver! But, you, Esther will go down in infamy and shame, not in esteem and glory.* Mordecai knew of and had faith in the promises of God. He was aware that if the entire nation was destroyed, God's promises to Abraham wouldn't be fulfilled. God *never promised* trouble wouldn't come upon Israel. He *did* _____ that Israel had an eternal future on earth.

Three, Verse 14b: *And who knows, Esther, perhaps this is the purpose God elevated you in the kingdom, for the very purpose of intervening for our people, at this very time!* It's not an exaggeration to say that at this very moment, her life's _____ is at stake.

What's her decision? Verses 15-17: She took the way of courage, and willingly submitted to Mordecai's biblical insight and wisdom. "And if I die, I die!" I think that means, "I'll do God's will no matter the cost, even if I perish in the process!"

Take-aways:

Some of the take-aways concerning the sovereign providential care of God as it relates to Christians today: 1. God has divine plans and purposes to accomplish in a fallen world. 2. God accomplishes His purposes through _____. 3. God uses prominent and obscure

people to accomplish His purposes. 4. God will accomplish His purposes even if His people _____ to obey His will.

If Esther would have chosen the coward's way, which would have been Satan's way, God would still save Israel another way, but Esther would lose out in so many ways it's impossible to fathom. If we choose to not obey God's providential placement and will for our lives, we _____. It's up to Esther, and it's up to me and you. You choose.

In conclusion, to help us understand the way God providentially works in a fallen world where we have choices, but in the end God's purposes will be accomplished: A.W. Tozer compared God's sovereign purposes to an ocean liner leaving NYC, bound for Liverpool, England. The people on board the ship are free to do as they please, but they aren't free to change the course of the ship. "The mighty liner of God's sovereign design keeps its steady course over the seas of history. God moves undisturbed and unhindered toward the fulfillment of those eternal purposes which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began." And yet within God's plan, we are _____ to make choices. Israel has chosen to not accept their Messiah, and there are grave consequences to that. But they can't change their ultimate course.

Personally, I would rather stay on the good side of God's sovereign purposes and plan, and to be *in* God's will and *do* God's will no matter the cost. And if I perish in the process, I perish!