

—{1}. **Esther 4:14** **For Such a Time as This**

- A. Our text is taken from the words spoken by Mordecai to his niece, Hadassah, or as we better know her, Esther, in 4: 14^b (NAS): [And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?](#)
- B. What led up to these words?
 - 1. let's refresh our memories from last week
 - a. we looked at Josiah, a godly king of Judah, whose reign provided the Jews with 31 years of grace; a time to repent
 - b. but judgement was already announced and was coming
 - 2. now, let's fast forward about 150 years to the book of Esther: it doesn't contain the name of Jehovah, the Lord God, but it is a story of God's providence, of His secretly working His purposes
 - 3. chapter 1: the scene in the city of the royal palace, Shushan (Iran)
 - a. 3rd year of reign of Ahasuerus (Artaxerxes I) India–Ethiopia
 - b. brought rulers from all over his domain – 127 provinces
 - c. spent ½ year entertaining, showing off his wealth and works
 - (A) wound up with 7-day banquet to his nobles; Queen Vashti was entertaining their wives
 - (B) on the 7th day, he had drunk too much, and
 - (C) then did something very foolish – decided to show off his most beautiful possession – Vashti
 - (D) she said “no” – quite right by reason and by custom
 - d. her being right didn't matter – the king lost his temper
 - (A) asked princes, rulers – “What shall I do?”
 - (B) “King Ahasuerus, you can't allow this; Vashti has not only wronged you, but every man in the kingdom ...
 - (C) “now no man's wife will any longer obey him ...
 - (D) “so depose her from being Queen” – and he did

4. time passed – some think that Ahasuerus went on a long campaign at this time – and we come to chapter 2
 - a. Ahasuerus looks around, notices he has no Queen
 - b. his servants organize a beauty pageant of whole kingdom
 - c. the prize to the winner? ... Ahasuerus (some prize!)
 - d. enter Hadassah, an orphan, raised by her uncle Mordecai
 - (A) a young woman; possibly still in her teens
 - (B) she is noticed, put in the contest, gains favour with the servant running the pageant; is given maidservants
 - (C) she spends a year getting ready – perfume, cosmetics...
 - (D) then comes the judging: Hadassah wins and is renamed Esther (Ister, Aphrodite, Venus; goddess of beauty)
 - (E) Mordecai cautions her not to reveal her nationality
 - e. more about uncle Mordecai, a minor court official
 - (A) waiting in the gate for orders he overhears a plot
 - (B) he passes the information along to Esther, she tells the king, the plot is foiled, Mordecai's name is recorded
 - f. now in all these things we can see God secretly working
5. chapter 3: enter Haman, oiling his way onto the scene
 - a. this Agagite – possibly of royal descent from the Agag kings of the Amalekites, bitter enemies of the Jews – is made vizier by Ahasuerus, that is second in command
 - b. a novel new command; everyone is to bow before him
 - c. but Mordecai disdains to do so
 - (A) possibly due to ancient enmity Jews vs Amalekites
 - (B) LXX: suggests Haman behind plot Mordecai foiled
 - (C) possibly because such worship only due to God
 - d. so Haman hates Mordecai, and finding him to be a Jew
 - (A) hatches a plot, against not just Mordecai, but all Jews
 - (B) throws lots (or Purim); finds 13th day of 12th month is the best day to destroy the whole nation of

the Jews

- (C) now, in first month of year, he sleazily slips it over Ahasuerus, as being in the interest of his kingdom -- and, oh yes, Haman will slip millions to the King – and the King in the ninth year of the reign says, go ahead
- (D) the decree is published, goes out to all the kingdom, and the enemies of the Jews have almost a year to plan

6. bringing us to chapter 4

- a. Mordecai goes into mourning before the palace gate
- b. Queen Esther sends word to him: “Here are some clothes, get dressed and stop your mourning.”
- c. Mordecai sends word: “Esther, Haman has plotted to kill all Jews; go into the King and do something about this!”
- d. Queen Esther: “I can’t just go into the King; he hasn’t seen me for a month; if I go in without being called then I shall die, unless he raises the golden staff” to which Mordecai answers
- e. “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews. 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?”

C. Some thoughts from this text

- 1. in carrying out His purposes, God is not limited, as we can see in Mordecai’s statement, by our human plans and actions
 - a. rather God works despite what we may do to the contrary
 - b. or even using our very contrariness to work His purposes
 - c. but God often chooses to have a prepared people in a prepared place at just the right time ready to do His will
- 2. Consider the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10)
 - a. man who was seeking God; a just man in a corrupt society
 - b. he showed his sincerity by his giving to the poor

- c. but, he did not know the gospel, he did not know that Jesus Christ had died for his sins and risen again
- d. until God intervened – in this case through visions – Peter is sent and explains the gospel; Cornelius is saved
- e. it was “for such a time as this” that God prepared Peter to tell and Cornelius to receive the message of salvation

3. Then, there is Gideon (Judges 6–8)

- a. the armies of Midian had wasted Israel for 7 years
- b. they would come destroy the crops and livestock
- c. the Israelites became troglodytes — living in dens, caves
- d. there was Gideon, threshing in secret in the winepress
- e. occupied in providing food for his father’s family
- f. then the messenger of God came and enlisted him to be the one through whom Israel was delivered from the Midianites
- g. it was “for such a time as this” that God prepared Gideon, occupied in serving his family, to serve God as a deliverer

4. There was a man named Ananias (Acts 9: 10-19 – 10 verses)

- a. otherwise unknown, but when God called him, his answer was “Here I am, Lord”
- b. when he found that he had to face the terrible Saul, he described the situation to God (who already knew it!)
- c. God patiently explained, and we read “And Ananias went”
- d. it was “for such a time as this” that God prepared Ananias, an obedient servant, to give Christian greeting to one who would be an obedient and more renowned servant, Paul

5. There are each and every one of you who have trusted Christ

- a. God has been working in your life – perhaps a week, a month, a year, a decade or longer – to prepare you today
- b. he has placed you in a unique way – only you know your friends, your work-mates, your neighbours the way you do

- c. is it all by chance? ... I think not — you are where you are and you are who you are for God's providential purposes
- d. it is "for such a time as this" that God has prepared you to be occupied in His service, to be obedient to His call, to be attentive to the leading of His Holy Spirit each day

D. Well, back to Esther; what happened? ...would Esther go in to the King? ...would he raise the golden staff? ...would the Jews be saved?

- 1. well, first Esther had some important business to attend to
 - a. she asked that all the Jews in Shushan fast — and that meant they were to be earnestly engaged in serious prayer
 - b. her maidservants would fast, and she would fast
 - c. because "for such a time as this" serious prayer is needed
- 2. yes, Esther did go in to the King! Yes, King Ahasuerus did raise the golden staff to spare her life! Yes, the Jews were saved!
 - a. in dramatic fashion Mordecai is exalted to Haman's chagrin (remember that plot?) – the tables are turned on Haman
 - b. all those people gloating at the prospect of killing Jews are slain themselves in a just reprisal
 - c. but all this is a story for another day or you can read it yourself in the book of Esther – just 10 short chapters
 - d. the joy of this deliverance is commemorated by Jewish people in the feast of Purim to this very day

E. Conclusion

- 1. God has put each one of you into a unique situation that "for such a time as this" you may carry out His will — who knows what untold blessing will result from your obedience to Him!

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

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| ASV | American Standard Version of 1901 |
| AV | Authorized (King James) Version |
| NAS | New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation |
| NIV | New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society |
| NKJV | New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers |
| PHIL | New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips |
| RSV | Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. |
| WEY | The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth |

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