

Gods got this

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[0 : 0 0] Esther chapter 4. If you have trouble finding Esther, go to the book of Psalms.! Esther chapter 4 verse 14.

And it says this. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.

But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Esther, you've got a choice to make.

Are you going to hold your peace and not say anything? If you do, God will find a way to deliver his people another way.

God will find a way to deliver his people through someone else. But you and your father's house, you'll be just off into the, nobody will ever know, nobody will ever care, nobody will ever know you even existed.

[1 : 2 6] But, Esther, excuse me, Esther, who knows if God has not put you here for this particular time right now, right here.

God has called you to this place to do this. Excuse me. Jared, would you open us in prayer?

Thank you.

Thank you.

Everything is going wrong. Nothing seems to be going the right way. Why is everything like this? You wonder, does God still know your address? Is he still, you know, God, I'm still living here.

[3 : 0 8] This is where I am, you know. You ever have those times when you're just kind of like, you know, does God really have a plan for my life? Does he really have something he wants me to do?

Is he really there to help me with my needs and the things that are going on? You ever have thoughts like that sometimes? Probably you do. Yeah. God, where are you? What is going on?

As you watch the world, the situations in today, do you ever stop and think, you look at the changes that are taking place and you go, God, why are you allowing this to happen and that to happen and other things?

Why are these things going on? Do you ever look and you say, why does our world celebrate immorality? Why do our leaders seem to be so ungodly at times?

Why is all of this happening? Well, if you've had those times, you can find encouragement in the life of Esther. Esther is going to face some of these times. She's going to face some of those things that are taking place.

[4 : 1 3] And Esther and the children of Israel, you talk about living in a godless culture, they did it. They lived under the Persian rule. I'll talk some more about that in a minute. She faced a lot of heartache.

She faced a lot of disappointment. She had a lot of things that happened in her life. She was an orphan, for one thing. Wound up living with a cousin.

She faced all kinds of things. She lives in the Persian Empire, which was pagan beyond belief. Didn't care a thing about God. They didn't care anything about what God wanted, what God had done.

Even though the Jews had lived there for a while, remember they were taken captive by Babylon, and Babylon was taken over by Persia. And they've been living in this. And they didn't care anything about God and what he wanted.

But Esther's going to learn that men cannot stop God's plan. Men cannot thwart God's purposes.

[5 : 09] God is always going to come through. Isaiah 40, verse 17. It's up there on the screen. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing in vanity.

It doesn't matter who you are. You think of it just in the Bible times. You had Babylon. You had Persia. You had Greece. You had Rome. All of those came and went.

All of those came and went. God is still on the throne. God is still in charge. God is still working. Isaiah 46, verses 9 and 10. Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else.

I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

God says, look, there's no one else like me, and I have prophesied. I have told you things that are going to happen. I have told you the things that are going to take place, and they will happen.

[6 : 19] My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. It reminds me, most of you, if you remember back to your school days, you know who Voltaire is.

You've heard of Voltaire? French philosopher. Voltaire dreamed of the day that Christianity would be gone. He dreamed of the day when the Bible would be a museum piece.

You know, there'd be that, you know, glass thing, you know, and the Bible's sitting in it, and you can go, oh, that's what people used to believe. You know how people today have statues of Zeus and Athena and Aphrodite and all those different ones, you know, he wanted the Bible put right over with those.

You know, those are all fake gods. People made them up, and so is this. And he said that within 100 years of his death, this would be the case.

Christianity would be gone. The Bible would be in a museum. God has a sense of humor. 100 years after his death, his house in Paris was a printing house for Bibles.

[7 : 34] The European, I don't know if they call it European Bible Society or something like that at that time, but that's what they used, that's where they had their shop set up to print Bibles to go out across Europe in different areas.

God's got a sense of humor. No, I'm not going to be gone in 100 years. No, I'm not going to be pushed off to the side and just be some museum piece. I will still be going.

And you look at how many people since that time have tried to do away with God in the Bible. You look at the Stalins and the Mao's and the Hitler's and the people like, God is still going.

God is still there. He's not going to go by the wayside. Esther lives in Shushan, which is the capital of the Persian Empire.

She lives there and some of the Jews have already gone back to Jerusalem. Some of them are already back there. They're working on the city. They're working on the temple. But Esther and some of the others are still in Persia.

[8 : 35] And God is working behind the scenes here to make some changes that are going to take place for those Jewish people that are there. If you read the story of Esther, which we'll be going through, we call it the story of Esther, but it's truly God's story.

It's truly a story of God's redemption of his people. God provided salvation from genocide. You remember, there was a man named Haman. He had worked with the king.

He wanted all the Jews to just be wiped out. Sound familiar? We've seen that scenario scenario before, haven't we? Never seems to work. But it's more than just a story about Esther, more than just a story about the Jews.

It is God's story. Him working behind the scenes. So that's the first thing I want to look at. It's the fact that this is his story. God's story.

God is the author of history. God, we study the past and it reminds us that God has always been at work. Revelation chapter 1, verse 8, it says, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.

[9 : 56] I'm the beginning and the ending. I'm the first letter of the alphabet, the last letter of the alphabet. I am all-inclusive of everything. I am right now, I was before and I will be in the future.

I am the Almighty. I will always be there. And Esther's the title character of this book. But it's all about God and his work and what he was doing.

You know what's interesting about the book Esther? You've probably heard this before, but here's this book in the Bible. God's book, God's story, God is not mentioned once in this book.

You read through the entire book of Esther, God's name is not there. Not there at all. As a matter of fact, if you read through the book, it'd be like some of their novels today. It's got political intrigue.

It's got possibly wiping out an entire nation. It's got a girl who's going to be the heroine. She has courage and she stands up to everybody else.

[11 : 02] It has a happy ending. It's a great novel. But it is more than that. It reveals how God works behind the scenes to take care of Esther and his people.

Matter of fact, some of the great commentators of the Bible, G. Campbell Morgan, he put up this, he says this, while there is no name of God and no mention of the Hebrew religion anywhere, no one reads this book without being conscious of God.

He's not mentioned, but you know he's at work behind the scenes and everything that takes place here. Matthew Henry, probably the greatest of the commentators, if the name of God is not here, his finger is.

God is always moving. He's always touching. He's pointing out things. He's got people going in the direction that he wants. Maybe he's putting the finger on the scale a little bit so things go the way they're supposed to.

God is always at work. And you know what? God is always at work in our lives. God is at work in our lives. We may not see everything.

[12 : 16] There's a song called, When You Can't Trust His Hand, Trust His Heart. When You Can't Trace His Hand, When You Can't Trace His Hand, Trust His Heart.

God is at work and you may not see everything that's going on, but trust the heart of God. He loves you. He cares about you. Jesus Christ came to this world to give his life, to die for you so that you might have forgiveness of sins.

He loves you. God commended his love toward us and why we were yet sinners. Christ died for us. He loves us. We become discouraged today because we look out and we see all the immorality.

We see all the things that are taking place. We see the decline in our culture and everything. But Esther reminds us God is at work even when we don't see it.

God is at work even in an ungodly culture. He is at work. You know, and it's not always, you know, we think, well, God's at work in the great things. You know, he's doing this and he's doing that trying to get the country back and get this.

[13 : 19] God is also at work in our lives individually. God is at work in your life individually. God has you here for a reason. God has you in this world for a reason.

He has you in this church this morning for a reason. Notice the title I had up there. God's got this. So often we think God is just gone.

No, God has this. He's got it. He's willing and able to help us. He has his plan. It's his story and it will be fulfilled. It's a story, first of all, of providence.

A story of providence. God has a plan. And the book opens with a political setting. He's showing us what's going on.

Go back to chapter 1, verse 1. Chapter 1, verse 1. It's a political scene. He tells us what's going on.

[14 : 20] Verse 1 says this, Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus. This is Ahasuerus that reigned from India even to Ethiopia over 107 and 20 provinces.

Ahasuerus. He's a king. You go, I've never heard of Ahasuerus. I studied history. I've been in school. I've never heard of Ahasuerus. That's his Persian name.

He's better known by his Greek name. Xerxes. If you remember back to your history, you know about Xerxes. The battle of Thermophilus where he defeated the Greeks and other battles where he defeated the Greeks.

He's this king. And notice what it says about him. He rules from India to Ethiopia. That's a whole lot of territory. This guy was powerful.

This guy was great. This guy was a phenomenon. He rules over 127 provinces, it says. This guy had it all together.

[15 : 33] But you know what's interesting about this? that verse says, okay, Ahasuerus is king, he's ruling. But the entire rest of the book says, God is in control.

God is in charge. Ahasuerus may think he's in charge, he's ruling and everything, but God is really in charge and really got things under control there. He was not the kind of leader that you would like.

Ruling over that much territory, having that much, he is not the kindest person in the world. He wants what he wants and he's going to get what he wants.

You know, we've had other leaders like that. He worked together with that man I mentioned earlier, Haman. He worked together with him to make a law. Eventually, they're going to make a law.

And basically, the law says, we're going to wipe out all the Jews. We're going to kill them all. I don't usually believe in reincarnation, but I wonder if Haman and Hitler were kind of the same.

[16 : 43] No, never mind. That's a side note. Never mind. Anyway, he wants to just wipe them all out. And one of the things about the person country, the Persian Empire, they had a law.

Interesting law. Here's what their law said. If you make a law, you can't change it. I guess it was to make them stop and think before they ever did anything.

Are you sure this is what you want to do? Because when you do it, there's no going back. You cannot change it. King, you can make this law. But king, even you cannot change it once it's been made.

When they put a law in place, it was there to stay. No going back. And Haman's going to talk him into making a law about getting rid of the Jews during this book.

But you know what? Even when the most unpredictable things take place, God is still there. God's providence. When I use that word providence, what do I mean? Well, it comes from a Latin word.

[17 : 54] Pro, beforehand. Video. To see. We're used to videos. We see things. He's going to see beforehand.

God's providence, he sees beforehand. He knows what's going to happen. He knows the direction people are going to take. He knows what's going to be done. And he is there working already to make sure that that thing doesn't come to pass or that it doesn't turn out the way people think it's going to.

He's already there at work taking care of his people, working in their behalf. Augustus Strong, you know, Strong's concordance that we use so often. He said this, Providence is God's attention concentrated everywhere.

See, God can see everywhere at all times, all things. He knows what's going on. He knows what's happening in Jared's life. He knows everything that Jared is doing.

He also knows everything that's happening in Corey's life. And he knows Tristina's life. He knows what's going on and he's there at work in those lives. And you look sometimes and you go, I don't understand why this happened.

[19 : 03] I don't understand why that happened. Trust him. Watch and see what he is doing. What direction he is going. See, Babylon took over Judah.

and Israel. They're later defeated by Persia. And God knew beforehand what was going to take place. Isaiah 44, 28.

Thus saith of Cyrus, catch that. Thus saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure. Even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid.

The Jews were part, were not part yet, they're going to be part of Babylon and Persia. They're still in Judah and Israel at the moment. God says, there's a guy named Cyrus.

And this guy named Cyrus is going to help you to go back after you're in captivity. Isaiah wrote this 150 years before Cyrus became king in Persia.

[20 : 16] 150 years before. See, God providence to see before. God knew it was going to happen because what did he tell his people when they went into captivity?

You're going to be there 70 years. At the end of 70 years, you're going to get to come back. at the end of the 70 years of captivity between Babylon and Persia, Cyrus becomes the king.

He takes over. And he's going to fulfill this prophecy here in Isaiah. Listen to 2 Chronicles 36, 22, and 23.

2 Chronicles 36, 22, and 23. Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah, he also prophesied this, might be accomplished.

The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and put it also in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me, and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah, who is there among all of you, who is there among you of all his people?

[21 : 37] The Lord his God be with him and let him go up. He says, you know what? God has told me he wants his city rebuilt, he wants his temple rebuilt, all of you Jews who are part of my empire, and you want to go back to Jerusalem, you want to go back to Judah, you want to go back to Israel, go, and go with my blessing.

As a matter of fact, you read other places, Cyrus gave them letters, so that when they went through countries that were part of his rule, part of his empire, nobody would bother them.

He gave them materials so that when they got back there to build, they had the materials to build with. He gave them everything, and again, this was prophesied 150 years before.

when Nebuchadnezzar ruled with the Babylonians, a lot of the Jews felt abandoned by God because Nebuchadnezzar came in, took over, took people back to Babylon.

Remember Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Daniel, they went back to Babylon. And they felt abandoned by God. Why is God allowing this?

[22 : 46] God had told them over and over again, if you don't change your ways, if you don't follow me the way you should, if you don't do, bad things are going to happen. People are going to come in and take over because you're not following what I'm telling you.

And they did. So instead of feeling abandoned, they should have felt, you know what, we messed up. We didn't follow God as we should. But they kept going their own way.

You know what's one of the great things about this, though? when you look at all the things that happen to them, God's presence and intervention in our lives may at times seem invisible, but he is always invincible.

invincible. Let me read that again. God's presence and intervention in our lives may at times seem invisible, but he is always invincible.

We may not see God's hand, but God is working and he is never going to be defeated. He's always going to do things for his good, for his purposes, and it will be accomplished.

[23 : 53] Psalm 145, verses 15 and 16. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat and do season. Thou openest thy hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

God's people are watching. They're waiting to see what God's going to do. Even others, like Cyrus, they're waiting to see what God's going to do. And he says, look, he's going to do things as you wait and you watch.

He's going to give you what you need. He's going to open his hand and it's going to be taken care of. God is going to give you the things that you need. And this book of Esther, this is all introduction to the book of Esther.

The book of Esther was written to assure us that God is working. We may not see everything that he is doing, but he is working. It's a story of his providence.

It's also a story of his grace. A story of his grace. You know, God's gracious. He allowed some of the Jews to return already because of Cyrus.

[24 : 59] But there are still a lot of them in Persia, including Esther and Mordecai, her cousin. Some went back to rebuild the city and rebuild the temple. Some stayed. The ones that stayed, they made the decision to stay.

The ones that stayed, they had a job too though. In the book of Ezra, two books before Esther. In the book of Ezra, chapter one, verses three and four, Ezra wrote this.

Ezra was a priest. Ezra was also one of the leaders of the rebuilding. Here's what he says. Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel.

He is the God which is in Jerusalem. Notice his next sentence. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver and with gold and with goods and with beasts beside the freewill offering of the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

You that stay behind, you got a job too. You take the stuff that you're earning, you take the silver and the gold and all the other stuff, you send some of it back to Jerusalem to help them with the building that is going to take place there.

[26 : 22] God says, I am going to be with you, I am going to help you as you do this. And how did God show his grace to these people? First of all, in God's remembrance. In God's remembrance.

What do I mean by that? Here's these Jews. They're in Persia. They're in Shusan. They have been under Babylonian rule. They're now under Persian rule. They've been there for 70 years.

They've gotten used to the lifestyle there. They've gotten used to the culture there. They've gotten used to everything that has taken place there. Sort of sounds like some of us Christians.

We've gotten used to the things that are taking place in our world. We've gotten used to the sin that is looked upon as like, no big deal. It's okay. We can do this and we can do this and we can do that.

We've gotten used to it. And we just kind of live it out. But God has not forgotten you. God has not forgotten his promises to you.

[27 : 25] God has not forgotten that you're his people. And he wants to see you living for him. And he wants to help you to get back to that where you're living for him. You know, one of the great things about being a Christian, new God, it doesn't matter where you are, whether you're in Jerusalem or whether you're in Shushan.

God is with you. In my lifetime, I grew up in Maine. I have lived in South Carolina for five years.

I moved back to Maine. I lived in Port Lauderdale, Florida for seven years. I moved back to Maine. I lived in Dothan, Alabama for two years. I moved back to Maine.

You know what? God always seems to bring me back to Maine. But it doesn't matter where I am, God is at work. It doesn't matter where I am, but God sees.

And God knows, and God is watching out for me. I can be anywhere in this world, and God is going to be there. Because he hasn't forgotten me.

[28 : 32] He is still there with me. I may wander around and do things like God doesn't exist anymore, but he hasn't forgotten about me. He knows I'm there. God's remembrance, but also God's purpose.

Grace in God's purpose. He still has a purpose for us. Even though we could be far from home. Like I said, I wound up in Greenville, South Carolina, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Dothan, Alabama.

God had a purpose for all of us. God had something he wanted done. God had something he wanted me to learn. God had a reason for me to be in those places. And even in Persia, God had a purpose for his people to be there.

There are times we go through suffering. There are times we go through problems. Esther teaches us that God has a purpose. You all know this verse, Romans 8, 28.

All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. all things work together for good.

[29 : 42] And as I always point out, it does not say all things are good. You say, I'm going through this, this isn't good, I'm going through this, this isn't good, I've got this illness, this isn't good, I've got this.

But he says all things work together for good. There are lessons we learn sometimes going through the hard times. things. Then make it so we can be what God wants us to be.

That we can move forward the way God wants us to move forward. God works in our lives in so many different ways. Romans 3, 24.

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He says Jesus Christ came to save you. Jesus Christ came to give you new life.

Jesus Christ came to give you eternal life. You are justified just as if I never sinned. You're justified freely by his grace.

[30 : 41] God has a purpose for you. God has something for you to learn. God shows throughout this book of Esther he's going to show his redemptive power. He is going to bring his people back to himself.

And he's going to use a young orphan girl people. Now I want you to stop and think about that. Persia Ahasuerus Xerxes India Ethiopia all of that.

And here's Esther she's going to change the course of history here with three strikes against her. She's young. Who listens to young people?

Nobody. Especially when you got a king like this guy. I got all the answers. I know everything. I don't need any help from young whippersnapper.

She's an orphan. She has no family. She has nothing other than a cousin. She has an orphan. So as an orphan, strike two, it's like, who's going to listen to an orphan?

[31 : 52] What does she know about anything? And then to top it all off, she's a girl. In a man's society there. A young orphan girl.

Strike three, you're out. But yet, God's going to use her to change the course of history. How is he able to do that?

Well, you're going to have to come back next week to find out how he's going to use her to change the course of history. But what I want you to learn today, how can God use you and I?

When we go through this, we're going to learn some things about Esther. She trusted God, and she obeyed God. She trusted God and obeyed God.

You want to change the world around! You learn to trust Him and obey Him. Take your hymn book, God of praise 418.