



## TIMED FOR DESTINY

### The Story of Esther

Right around 2500 years ago, Hitler's "older brother" was born. No, they weren't blood kin, but these two were out of the same mold in terms of pure evil and egomaniac insanity. His name was **Xerxes**, King of the ancient Medo-Persian empire. His stunning capital (Susa) was in what is now the nation of Iran. The Bible refers to Xerxes by another name, *Ahasuerus*, but they are one-in-the-same. He was fixated on ruling the world so that everyone, everywhere, would do exactly what he told them to do or be executed. This included worshipping him. Xerxes really didn't care how many people (soldiers or civilians) died to achieve his goal, and he seemingly had all the armies and money he needed to make it happen. He also had a political advisor at his side, **Haman**, who had the unique talent of bringing out the worst in Xerxes. Haman's counsel turned the mad King into a genocidal monster who issued orders to murder every single Jew on Earth. But **God** had a different plan. God used an orphan girl, raised in her cousin's (**Mordecai**) non-religious, secular Jewish home, to save the **Jews** and shape the course of the world. Her Jewish name was Hadassah, but most people knew her as Esther. This is her story. As we learn about Esther, she is going to puzzle you, disappoint you, and inspire you. Ultimately, you are going to love this lady. In the end, Esther's story will help you see how God also wants to work in and through **you**, just like He did her, even when you find it hard to see what He is doing. The truth is, as we study through the book of Esther, starting with today's overview, we will learn over and over again that God has your life, just as He had Esther's life, **timed for destiny**.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Deuteronomy 28:15,36; Jeremiah 24:6; 29:10

### THE STORY IN SHORT

CHAPTER 1 -

CHAPTER 2 -

CHAPTER 3 -

CHAPTER 4 -

CHAPTER 5 & 6 -

CHAPTER 7 -

CHAPTER 8 -

CHAPTER 9 & 10 -

### UNIQUE FEATURES

1. God is ...
2. No one ...
3. The Jewish Holiday of Purim is ...
4. Esther isn't ...

### TODAY'S TAKEAWAYS

God never ...

God never ...

God never ...

Though God is \_\_\_\_\_ ... He is \_\_\_\_\_ !

*Now to the King eternal, immortal, **invisible**, the only God,  
be honor and glory forever and ever. (1 Timothy 1:17)*

### FOR THOUGHT & TALK

*In your small group take 5-10 minutes to review the main points of Pastor John's message. Discuss the following questions, taking your time as the Spirit leads, realizing you don't have to cover them all.*

1. Way back in Genesis, God promised Abraham that he would forever have descendants (the Jews); that those descendants would forever have a land of their own (Israel); and that through his descendants of that promised land, the world would be given a Messiah (Jesus Christ). How does knowing these promises to Abraham and the Jewish people help us see and appreciate the story of Esther all the more? Why does it matter to your life today, that God saved the Jews 450+ years ago? What if He hadn't? How would your life be different? What does Esther's story tell us about the validity of God's promises to us?

2. From what you know of Esther's story, what are some of the similarities you see between life then and life now? Pastor John mentioned several times in his teaching that both Mordecai and Esther were "secular" Jews who had little time for God and little thought of God. What are some of the characteristics that Esther and Mordecai displayed that marked them out as secular? Many Christians today are as secular as Esther and Mordecai were back then. What are some of the ways you see the secularization of believers in our society demonstrated? How are you personally feeling the pull toward secular living in your own experience?

3. Take another look at the four unique features of the book of Esther. Can you see why Martin Luther was hesitant to believe that the book belonged in the Bible? Even though God is never mentioned in the whole book, how is His presence communicated to the reader? Even though no prayer is ever spoken, how do you see God responding to the needs of His people? Even though Esther was no "posterchild" for virtue and spirituality, how do you see God shaping her into a woman of faith and faithfulness? Thinking about all of these things, what does God's way of working in Esther say about how He wants to work in your life?

4. God never forgets His promises. God never is absent from your life. God never is defeated by circumstances. Though God is invisible ... He is invincible! How do you see these principles illustrated in the life of Esther? Why do we sometimes struggle with believing such conclusions? What are some of the ways you have experienced the reality of these principles in your own life recently? Why is it important to share these principles with others and illustrate the truthfulness and trustworthiness of them, from your own life, to others? **Pray for God to use this Esther series in a mighty way at NCFF ... and in you.**

*02.27.22 - "Esther, Timed for Destiny," message by Pastor John K. Nagle.  
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