

## FLEA VIDEO #14: "FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS"

### (Esther 3-4)

7.8.20

Our story today takes place in the ancient empire of Persia (modern-day Iran) a little short of 2,500 years ago. It was a time that many Jewish people had remained living there - their people originally arriving there as captives under the forces of King Nebuchadnezzar. Some 50- 60 years previous, the ruler at that time had signed a decree allowing people to return to the area of Jerusalem if they wanted, but some had remained in Persia.

The book of Esther focuses its primary attention on a little orphan girl who had come into the care of her much older cousin - a man named Mordecai - who had cared for her and loved her like his own daughter. One day the Persian king had deposed his queen because she had refused a command of his. To replace her, an ancient style of beauty contest was held and, because of her beauty and charm, Esther, now a young woman, won the heart of the king. She was taken from her home, received the queen's crown directly from the king, and now lived in the palace.

Over the course of time, a man named Haman had become a major official in the king's administration. For whatever reason, when he would pass by the king's gate where Mordecai would be, and contrary to protocol, Mordecai would not bow down in respect to Haman. This word got back to Haman. Haman, of course, was furious but, when he found out that Mordecai was a Jew, he conceived an idea to not only rid himself of Mordecai, but to rid the entire empire of all Jews.

He passed on a proposal to the king that, in a certain month, on a certain day, as he said it: ***"There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them"*** - Haman, *Esther 3:8*. He persuaded the king to sign a decree that all Jews throughout the empire, wherever they could be found, would be destroyed.

When Mordecai found out about the king's decree, he went into mourning, putting on sackcloth and ashes and refusing any consolation. When Esther found out about it, she sent one of her servants out to him with some new clothes for him to change into, but he refused. So, then she asked what was going on that was causing him such grief.

He responded by telling Esther's servant the entire story of Haman's plot ***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 instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people*** - *Esther 4:7b-8*.

The servant dutifully relayed Mordecai's instructions to Esther. Now it was her turn to be terrified. You see, there was a problem with Mordecai's instructions to her, and it was this: Nobody just went in to see the king whenever they wanted. As she explained: ***"All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king" - Esther 4:11.***

Mordecai understood her fear, but his response was one of somebody understanding that sometimes there are bigger reasons than safety for why we may be in a certain position in life. As he so memorably told her: ***"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 your royal position for such a time as this?" - Mordecai, Esther 4:13-14.***

Esther understood. She told Mordecai to have their people fast and pray, and that she would indeed go before the king. As the story continues, the king did receive her, Esther herself played out a plan that exposed Haman as the author of this evil idea, and eventually resulted in the Jews being allowed to defend themselves against the few Persians who tried to take advantage of the original law.

It's that question that Mordecai poses to Esther that caught my attention: "Who knows but that you have come to your ...position for such a time as this?" You know, many times we look at the world and the times in which we live and see nothing but chaos and dysfunction and divisiveness and violence and destruction and hurt and anger and so many other things, and we think, "What's happened to our country? What's happened to our world?" And it's very easy to feel helpless to do anything about it.

But guess what? Our being here as believers in Jesus Christ is not by accident or any kind of random chance. We are here by God's plan, by His design, "for such a time as this." Whatever platform we operate from - whether from home or career - that is our "launch site" for reaching out into the world with the saving message of Jesus Christ - the only message that can make a difference in anybody's life. God put us here, in this time, in this place, to be His messengers. As He placed us here, He will watch over us here. But we are here for His purpose.

In a way, that is an amazing statement: that God made us exactly as He wanted, and then placed us exactly where He wanted, to be His ambassadors. He has given us everything we need for the work of His kingdom. So, let's not see these times as scary or chaotic. Let's see them as the perfect time and place for us to share the victorious news of the kingdom of God. That's what we're here for!