

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 4 October 2026. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

Where Is Our God?

Esther 3:8-15

It was 5:00 in the morning, in a small apartment in Afghanistan. A man named **Farid**, and five other Christian brothers, were sitting in a circle on the floor. Farid, who was the leader of this Bible study, whispered, “We thank you, God, for your willingness to meet with us this morning. We thank you for your presence here among us.”¹ Farid then took out a copy of Scripture, and opened it to the book of **Acts**. However, just as he was about to start the Bible study, some men in black clothing, with knives and rifles in hand, broke through the door. They slammed Farid to the floor and held a knife to his neck, as they tied his hands behind his back. Knowing that it might be his time to go to be with Christ, Farid prayed, in his heart, that these men would come to know Christ, and receive God’s forgiveness.

However, as he lay there waiting to receive his deathblow, he sensed, in his spirit, that God wanted him to stand up and leave the room. So, that’s what he did! He stood up; and as he stood, the straps around his hands fell from his wrists. He then walked to the door, and began to walk between the two armed men who were guarding it. One of the guards screamed, “Sit down, dog... You’re not leaving—alive.”² The other pointed an AK-47 at his head, and pulled the trigger; but it wouldn’t fire. He tried to fire again and again; but it was jammed. In those seconds of confusion, Farid bolted out of the room, and then down the stairwell, three or four steps at a time. By this time, the AK-47 was working again, and bullets were spraying behind Farid, and chipping the walls; yet, not one bullet hit him. Not only that, but all five of his friends escaped unharmed, as well! The only person who was hurt was the leader of this terrorist cell, who was hit by a stray bullet. In the police report that was made later, the police found a bag; and in the bag were “an Al-Qaida flag, two swords, and a video camera,” with which these terrorists had intended to make a video of the murder of these six Christians, and then post it on Al Jazeera television.³

It is always encouraging to hear testimonies of God’s miraculous protection. God *is* our Shield and Defender; and He *is* able to deliver us. Yet, God is not *obligated* to deliver His people from death every time an enemy arises. Oftentimes God seems to be silent, while His people go as sheep to the slaughter. That’s exactly how it must have seemed in 510 B.C., when Satan raised up a man named **Haman** to destroy all of God’s covenant people, the Jews. At the time, the picture looked hopeless. Just as it seemed impossible for Farid and his friends to escape death, it seemed impossible for the Jews to escape Haman’s death sentence. No doubt, Jews everywhere were wondering, “Where is our God? Where is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?” This is a question that God’s people often grapple with; and it is this question that we will be addressing this morning, in this message which I’ve entitled, ***Where Is Our God?***

Read Esther 3:7-15.

I. Haman’s plot to kill the Jews (3:7-9)

Every so often in history, a man arises who is so bent on destroying the Jews, that he could be put on the same level as the coming Antichrist. **Antiochus Epiphanes** was such a man; and so was **Adolf Hitler**. Not only were these men very much like the Antichrist, but they were *foreshadowings* of the Antichrist. Well, that is exactly the kind of man that Haman was. He is the one man in history whom God Himself called “*the enemy of the Jews*.” Five times in **Esther**, Haman is called “*the enemy of the Jews*”; and this title was well-earned! Here in **verse 8**, we are told that immediately after Haman had cast the lots to determine the date for the destruction of the Jews, he went straight to the king to make his wicked proposal. He told Ahasuerus that there was a seditious group of people in the kingdom who had their own strange laws, and who refused to obey the king’s laws; therefore, they needed to be eliminated.

Now, interestingly enough, Haman didn’t tell Ahasuerus *who* these people were. He didn’t actually mention the name “Jew.” Why? Because only ten years earlier, this very same king, **Darius Hystaspes**, had given the Jews permission to rebuild the Temple. Darius had a *good* relationship with the Jews: therefore, Haman had to be very careful in presenting his plot to him. Let’s wind back the clock, and look at Ahasuerus’ past dealings with the Jews.

Read Ezra 5:1-12, 17; 6:1-8, 11, 13.

What is the backdrop for what we just read? The backdrop is that in **535 B.C., King Cyrus** made a decree that all the Jews in the kingdom could return to their land, and rebuild their Temple. Shortly afterward, more than 42,000 Jews returned to the land, and began to rebuild the Temple. However, enemies from surrounding nations weren’t happy that the Jews were back in their land. Therefore, they wrote a letter to King **Artaxerxes** (who was probably Cyrus’ son **Cambyes**, who was ruling in his absence): and they informed him that those pesky Jews were rebuilding that “*rebellious and bad*” city of Jerusalem. They further suggested that if he didn’t do something to stop the Jews, they would soon rebel, and stop paying taxes. And so, Artaxerxes commanded the Jews to stop building. Now, fast-forward another 15 years from there, to **520 B.C.**, and we find that the Jews had responded to the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, and had taken courage, and started to build the Temple again. However, once again, their Gentile neighbours were right there on the spot, to try to stop them. Once again, they wrote a letter to the king (this time to **Darius**), and made slanderous accusations against them. However, God helped Darius to see through their lies. Not only did Darius command that the Jews should be allowed to build the Temple, but he commanded the Gentiles to provide supplies to *help* the Jews build their Temple. He further decreed that if anyone should try to stop the Jews, that person was to be hanged, and his house was to be made a dunghill. (It’s amazing how helpful Israel’s enemies suddenly became!)

Now, Haman knew all about these recent events. He knew very well that Darius had shown favour to the Jews only ten years earlier. Therefore, he had to be very careful as he presented his plan to Darius. For one thing, he had to be as vague as possible about the details, and not let him know that it was the *Jews* that he desired to kill. Secondly, he had to give the king

some kind of extra incentive to do this. (After all, slaughtering hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of his subjects, would be no small matter! Haman had to dangle some kind of “carrot” out there.) Haman’s incentive is that he personally offered to give 10,000 talents of his own money into the king’s treasury, to make up for the loss of revenue that would ensue when millions of tax-paying subjects were “deleted”! In today’s money, 10,000 talents of silver would be the equivalent of *tens of millions* of euros! Somehow or other (probably by extortion and corruption), Haman had come into enormous wealth; and he was willing to part with a large part of his wealth just to satisfy his pride, and his hatred of the Jews.

Now, you’d think that Ahasuerus would have been suspicious of Haman by now. First of all, Haman wasn’t telling him *who* these seditious people were. Why the secrecy? Secondly, you’d think that Ahasuerus would have been wondering, “Why is Haman so *personally committed* to killing all these people, that he is willing to pay such an incredible amount of money to make it happen?” Yet, not only did Ahasuerus give his approval, but he didn’t even make Haman pay the 10,000 talents, as Haman had offered to do. (In **verse 11**, Ahasuerus said that ***“the silver is given to thee.”*** In other words, the funding was going to come out of the king’s treasury.) Furthermore, Ahasuerus handed Haman his signet ring, so that he could use it to seal the decree as soon as the final draft was completed. Ahasuerus didn’t even bother to ask any questions, or to look at the decree himself, to see who these troublesome people were, or what evil they had done. He just let Haman take care of the whole affair.

Now, how is this possible? How could Ahasuerus have been so charmed by Haman, that he gave him a blank cheque to slaughter millions of his own subjects, without asking any hard questions? It’s simple. You see, it wasn’t really Haman who had Ahasuerus under his spell; it was *Satan*. Satan wields great control over the hearts and minds of most of humanity. Satan can twist lost people around like a pretzel. Satan had *Haman* under his deceptive spell; and he was now using *Haman* to deceive *Ahasuerus*. The Bible says, in **1 John 5:19**, that ***“The whole world lieth in wickedness.”*** That word ***“lie”*** means “to lie outstretched,” as though one were paralysed, and unable to get up. That’s what our sin does: it makes us helpless and paralysed against the devil, and unable to stand against his wiles. **Second Corinthians 4:4** says, ***“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.”*** In **Hebrews 2**, we are told that before Christ paid for our sins on the cross and rose again, Satan, in a very real sense, had the ***“power of death”***; and therefore, people were ***“all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*** (To this day, every lost person is *still* in bondage to sin and Satan, unless he repents and believes on Christ.) In **2 Timothy 2:26**, Paul says that lost people are in the ***“snare of the devil,”*** and are ***“taken captive by him at his will”***; and the saddest part of all is that most people don’t even *realise* that they are in the snare of the devil. Why? Because Satan is a master of disguise. He makes himself look like a *good guy*, and convinces people that they are doing right, when they are actually doing wickedly. In **2 Corinthians 11:14**, the Apostle Paul says that ***“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”***

Folks, nothing has changed. Satan is still blinding the minds of most of the people in this world. I am convinced that if Haman were alive today, he would be a guest of honour at the United Nations, and would be permitted to propose his genocide scheme against Israel with barely any protest. In fact, I am convinced that most world leaders would *praise Haman* for his proposal (or at least, say nothing against it). If you don't believe me, just watch a movie clip of Hitler giving one of his speeches in Berlin in the 1940's, and look at the mesmerised look in the people's eyes! Satan will *always* stir up people against Israel, because he *hates Israel* more than he hates any other nation. And why? Well, this leads me to our next point.

II. Satan's passion to kill the Jews (3:10-11)

(Read Esther 3:10-11 again.) Why was Haman so angry, that he was willing to pay 10,000 talents to obliterate an entire nation? Was this just about his spite toward Mordecai? No, it went much deeper than that. You see, the rage that energised Haman sprang not only from his own sinful heart, but from the prompting of his spiritual father, the devil! *Satan* is filled with every kind of wickedness; and so are his spiritual children. (By the way, when I say "spiritual children," I'm talking about *all of us*. We are *all* naturally in Satan's spiritual family; and we *remain* in Satan's family, unless we receive God's gift of salvation.) Now, not every lost person is given over to outright murderous desires, as Haman was. However, the more a sinner yields to sin and pride, the more tightly Satan has that person in his clutch; and the more that person will mimic the ugly character of Satan. And what *is* Satan's character? His character is that he hates God, and hates mankind, because we are created in God's image. Satan desires to kill, steal, and destroy as many souls as he can, and drag them to Lake of Fire with him, because it grates him that *we* are the crowning jewel of God's creation. Satan is driven by pride, envy, hatred, and vengeance against God. All these things are naturally in *our* hearts, too; and that's why every murder that has even been committed began with *anger* in the heart, which grew into murder. We are all sinners; and that is why we all need a Saviour. We all need to be turned from "*darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.*"

Read John 8:44 / 10:10.

Read Acts 26:9-18.

Why was Haman so hateful against the Jews? Because he was a sinner; and like his spiritual father, the devil, he naturally hated anyone who didn't flatter his ego. However, it went even deeper than this. Haman was also driven by Satan's hatred of *Israel*, in particular. Hatred of Israel is an extraordinary hatred, which energises countless millions of people. Many people don't even know *why* they hate Israel (other than that they have been *taught* to hate Israel from

childhood); but Satan knows *exactly* why he hates Israel. Satan hates the Jews because they are the descendants of Abraham—the man from whose seed God promised to bless all nations.

You see, Satan knows that *Israel* was the nation from which the Saviour of the world would arise. That is why, throughout the Old Testament, Satan was constantly trying to stir up people to kill the Jews. It wasn't merely the *lives of the Jews* that was at stake: *the redemption of mankind* was at stake. Starting with Adam, and going all the way to the cross, there was a particular family line that ran down through history like a scarlet thread: and that line was the line of the Messiah. Satan knew that one day, a perfect, sinless descendant of Adam would be born into our race, to take away the sin of the world; and for the last 2,000 years before that holy Child was born, the family line of the Saviour was to be found within the *nation of Israel, and the tribe of Judah, and the family of King David*. That is why Satan did everything he could to wipe out the Jews. Satan wanted the line of Adam, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Boaz, Jesse, and David to be *wiped out*, because he knew that the Messiah would come from *somebody* in that line. (Have you ever wondered why so many people were constantly trying to kill David? That's why! Satan knew that David's line was the line of the Messiah.) To this day, Satan *still* wants to wipe out every Jew, because he despises the fact that Israel is the human family that God used to bring the Saviour into the world.

III. Ahasuerus' proclamation to kill the Jews (3:12-15)

(Read Esther 3:12-15.) What we are reading about in **Esther** is the largest attempted purging of the Jews in history, apart from the Nazi Holocaust. It was a Holocaust that never happened; but it *almost* happened. If it *had* happened, there literally would have been no nation of Israel. Yet, incredibly, there are people who portray the Jews as the *oppressors* in this story, and Israel's enemies as the oppressed ones. For example, a so-called "Christian" journalist named Tucker Carlson has, in recent years, become extremely vitriolic in his rhetoric against the Jews. Seemingly every day he spews out incredibly untrue things about the Jews, and the history of "Zionism." He is now bringing *neo-Nazi sympathisers* onto his show; and in one recent podcast, he actually stated that the *Jews* were the aggressors in the story of Esther! He began by questioning whether the book of **Esther** even belongs in the Bible (since, after all, Martin Luther didn't believe that it belonged there); and then, he gave this evaluation of the story of Esther. He said, "It's the story, among other things, of a genocide of *Persians*. Seventy-five thousand Persians. Not just people who committed crimes, but people who were Persian. And that's why they were killed." He completely turned the story on its head, and made it look as though the Jews slaughtered the Persians simply because they were Persian. He completely left out the fact that it was *Haman* who ordered for the *Jews* to be slaughtered, and that the Jews fought the Persians only in self-defence (and didn't even take any spoil from their attackers)! He portrays Bible-believing Christians who believe in a literal return of Christ one day as crazy "Christian Zionists," who have been "bought out" by the Jews.

Why do so many supposed “Christians” say such nutty things? I’ll give it to you in two words: **Replacement Theology**. Replacement Theology is a heretical doctrine which was taught by the Catholic Church (both Eastern and Western), and which is still taught by most mainline Protestant denominations today. It is the teaching that God has forever abandoned the nation of Israel because of their rejection of Christ, and that the *Church* is the “new Israel,” which has replaced the Jews as the people of God. And of course, since they deny that there is any future for Israel, they also deny that Israel has any right to be back in their land today. (In fact, it greatly annoys them.) They deny the Bible’s clear teaching that Christ is coming back to earth visibly and physically one day, and that He will literally rule and reign from Jerusalem for 1,000 years. Instead, they say that the Kingdom is in progress *right now*, and that Christ is reigning “spiritually” through the *Church*. Why do they allegorize away Christ’s second coming? Because if they admit that Christ is literally coming back to Mount Zion to reign, they would have to admit that God is *not* done with Israel—that one day, Israel *will* actually repent, believe on Jesus, and be exalted among the nations, just as the Bible says.

Folks, Replacement Theology is *not* a harmless doctrine. The tragic reality is that millions of so-called “Christians” have, down through the centuries, considered it their duty to *hate* the Jews, and persecute them. One of the most infamous promoters of persecuting the Jews was none other than Martin Luther. Earlier in his life, Luther had condemned the terrible persecution that the Catholic Church had waged against the Jews, and had said that the Jews should be reached with the Gospel. But then, toward the end of his life, he did a complete, 180-degree turn, and viciously turned on the Jews. In a tractate called *Von den Jüden und iren Lügen* (“On the Jews and Their Lies”), Luther said that “Jewish synagogues and schools” should be “set on fire, prayer books be destroyed, rabbis forbidden to preach, Jewish homes burned, and property and money confiscated.”⁴ He said that “no mercy or kindness” should be shown to them, and that they should “be afforded no legal protection.”⁵ Furthermore, he said that “these poisonous, envenomed worms” should be drafted into forced labour or expelled forever.”⁶ He even said, “[W]e are at fault in not slaying them.”⁷ Needless to say, Luther’s words caused an even deeper bitterness toward the Jews among the Germans, from which Germany is still not purged to this day. During WWII, the Nazis defended their treatment of the Jews by saying that “We were just doing what Martin Luther told us to do.”

Why am I saying all these things? I am telling you this because as born-again Bible believers, we need to know what *God’s* plan for Israel is, and what *His heart* toward Israel is. The world hates Israel; but we should *love* Israel. First of all, we should love the Jews for the same reason we love everyone—namely, that they are fellow descendants of Adam, whom God loves, and for whom Christ died. They are dirty, rotten sinners in need of salvation, just like you and me; and we have a responsibility to pray for them, and to tell them that *Yeshua* is their Messiah and Saviour, on whom they must believe. Secondly, we should love them because God has a special love for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The fact that most Jews are currently in a state of unbelief and rebellion against their Messiah doesn’t change the fact that God has promised never to abandon Israel utterly. In **Jeremiah 31:31-34**, God makes

it clear that the New Covenant that He would one day make would be made with the **“whole house of Israel.”** As Gentiles, we are privileged to reap the spiritual benefit of salvation in the New Covenant; but that doesn’t change the fact that God made the Covenant with *Israel*. Later in that same chapter, God says that if the **“ordinances”** of the sun, moon, and stars depart, then God will cast off Israel forever. In other words, if the sun, moon, and stars are still making their usual rounds in the sky, then you may be assured that God has *not* cast off Israel. The last time I checked, the sun came up over the eastern horizon this morning, and the moon and stars are still in their courses. This means that *God isn’t done with Israel*.

“But Pastor, what about all the terrible things that Israel has done? They rejected Christ, and crucified Him.” Yes, they did; but so did the Gentiles! The Romans crucified Jesus, too; and in our hearts, we *all* crucified Him. “But what about all the terrible things the Jews have done? Throughout history, they constantly disobeyed God; and they killed the Apostles and prophets. God was so angry at them, that He allowed the Romans to destroy the Temple in A.D. 70, and scatter them. And Jesus said that He would take the kingdom of God from Israel, and give it to a people bringing forth spiritual fruit.” Yes, all this is true. However, this doesn’t change the fact that one day, Israel *will* repent and believe, and will be restored to God’s favour. It also doesn’t change the fact that any nation that harms Israel (even when God Himself is displeased with them) *will* suffer God’s judgment! In **Zechariah 2:8** the LORD said to Israel, **“He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.”** In **Genesis 12:3**, God said concerning Abraham’s descendants, **“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.”** In **Zechariah 1:15**, God said that He would punish the heathen. And why? Because when He was displeased with Israel, the heathen **“helped forward the affliction.”** In other words, the Gentiles saw that God was angry with Israel, and said, “Aha! Even Jehovah is angry with the Jews. This gives us the right to persecute them!” Not a good idea, folks! God *always* promises to punish those who hurt Israel.

Read Jeremiah 25:8-14.

What is Jeremiah saying here? He is saying that God used Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians as a vessel to chastise Israel. God even called the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar His “servant.” Yet, when Israel was nearly finished with their 70-year captivity, and many of them had turned back to the LORD, God *punished* Babylon for what they had done to Israel, by allowing them to be destroyed by Persia. Why? Why did God *use* Babylon to punish Israel, but then *punished* Babylon for punishing Israel? Because God often uses man’s wickedness to accomplish His own plan. God says to the nations, “You want to destroy my people Israel? Fine. I’ll let you do your worst; and I’ll use you to chasten and purify Israel, and bring them to repentance. But when my purpose is accomplished, I will punish *you* for daring to touch the ‘apple of my eye.’” For now, most Jews are “cut off” from the spiritual “olive tree” of Israel because of their unbelief, and many Gentiles who believe on Christ has been “grafted in.” However, one day, when Israel finally repents, they will be grafted back in

to their own “olive tree.” This will happen on the day when Israel finally says to the Lord Jesus, **“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”**—and means it with all their heart!

Read Romans 11:7-29.

Read Matthew 23:37-39.

IV. The perplexity of God’s people (vv. 3:15 – 4:1)

(Read Esther 3:15 – 4:1 again.) When the news of the decree to destroy all the Jews hit the “newsstands,” the people were shellshocked. The Hebrew word that is used here is ***nahvukah***, which means **“perplexed, confused, or wandering aimlessly.”** Even **the Gentiles** in Shushan were shocked. Why would *they* be shocked? Well, for one thing, not all Persians hated the Jews. Many Persians, no doubt, interacted with Jews every day, and had come to like them. Others might have been stunned not because they personally loved the Jews, but because they had come to rely on them for their financial and business dealings; and they knew that their business would take a serious blow, or even collapse entirely, if the Jews were to be obliterated. There were probably also ethnic minority groups within the Persian Empire that were now wondering, “If Haman can order the mass genocide of the Jews, who’s next? What *other* undesirables will be wiped out? Will they come after *us* next?”

But, of course, the *Jews* were *extremely* perplexed. Mordecai himself was in deep grief, and wandered about the city with sackcloth and ashes on his head. The question that must have been running through his mind was: “Where is God? Where is the God of our fathers? Where is His promise of redemption? Why has He allowed us to come to this?” Now, with our perfect 20/20 hindsight, we can answer Mordecai, and say: “God has been there all along, Mordecai!” God had placed his cousin Esther right there in the palace, in the position of queen; and God had used Mordecai to instruct her not to reveal her ethnicity. It was now obvious why God had put it in Mordecai’s mind to give her that instruction. Mordecai surely must have realised that God *had* been at work. Yet, what good would Esther’s being in the palace do? Mordecai knew very well that the law of the Medes and the Persians could not be changed. *How* would God save them from this cruel edict? All he could see in the future was gloom and darkness; and it seemed that all he could do was cry out in despair. Yet, even in his grief, he undoubtedly remembered God’s promises to Israel. Let’s close with that Scripture.

Read Isaiah 43:1-2.

Conclusion: Folks, the shock and awe that Israel was going through may not seem very relatable to us; but I believe that if the Lord should tarry His coming for another ten or twenty years, this story will become *very* relatable. I believe we will see things unfolding in our world that will blow our minds. I believe we will see persecution that we *thought* could only happen in places like Iran, China, or North Korea. The Bible says that ***“in the last days perilous times shall come.”*** (The word for ***“perilous”*** means “violent, dangerous, furious, or fierce.”) When such times come, how will we respond? I can tell you how the *world* will respond. For one thing, I believe that most of apostate “Christendom” will simply evaporate, and disappear. Why would people who never truly knew Christ be willing to suffer for His name? Other professing “Christians” may join some sort of state-approved “church” (just as there is a state-sanctioned “church” in China, which is no church at all). However, those who truly know their God will, like the godly Jews of old, ***“be strong, and do exploits”*** (extremely difficult, and even impossible things). Christian, are *you* ready to do exploits? Should you be half-hearted in your service, it’s time to get serious. Jesus is coming; and those who suffer for Him will reign with Him! **If you are not sure that you are saved**, it’s time to repent and believe on Christ. Jesus has paid for your sins in full: you simply need to admit that you can’t save yourself, repent in your heart, and put your complete faith in Christ, and in what He did for you on the cross. Cry out to the Lord, and ask Him to forgive you, and save you!

¹ The Voice of the Martyrs editors, *I Am N* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook Publishers, 2001), pp. 137-139.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ “On the Jews and Their Lies,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Jews_and_Their_Lies

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*