

# REVIVE!

**For such a  
time as this!  
Esther 4:14**

**H**ow would you describe 'these times' in which we are living? Uncertain, chaotic, with the foundations being shaken and maybe Christ's return imminent? The world is certainly a very insecure place right now, with the news full of war, the frightful rising costs of the basics and looming food shortages. It is enough to make anyone very fearful!

I have been struck how much the book of Esther in the Old Testament speaks into our present situation.

Esther was part of the Jewish people who were exiled far from Israel in Susa and under the power of the 5th Century BC Persian empire. She was forcibly brought into the King Xerxes' harem, but was soon wrapped up in political intrigue and plots to exterminate the Jewish people. Her journey was difficult and tortuous, but she eventually became queen and was used by God to save her people.

Her world was one of great insecurity where nothing seemed certain. Her story involves the havoc-wreaking whims of powerful rulers, the self-promoting pride of government officials, racism, sexism, and a vulnerable woman

caught up in an impossible situation not of her choosing or creating. (Can you see any parallels with our world today?)

Where was God in all this? Interestingly He is not mentioned at all in the whole book, yet His fingerprints are there for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. And so Mordacai, Esther's cousin, famously challenges her that she is here '**for such a time as this**' (Esther 4:14).

Maybe you feel unnerved by the shakings taking place in the world at the moment. Maybe you feel trapped in a situation not of your choosing. The message of the book of Esther is that God has a purpose for your life because you are alive on this earth at '**such a time as this**.' There is hope because He is at work. You can make a difference, whatever your circumstances, because you are His.

We are going to explore the book of Esther in this edition of Revive! Take a moment to read it. It is a great story, only ten chapters long. What is God saying to you through it that would give you hope and courage '**at such a time as this**'?

With love, *David*

**In times such as these ...  
know that God is at work!**



**E**sther is the only book in the Bible that doesn't mention God. There is no specific prayer recorded to Him, and He apparently doesn't 'speak.' The name Esther has the meaning of *hidden* in Hebrew. Maybe you are wondering where God is in the current upheavals of the world, or in the pain of your personal circumstances.

In the Esther account, however, God was definitely at work in all the *coincidences* that occurred. Her cousin, Mordecai, '*happened*' to sit down one day, and overheard a plot to overthrow the King. The King '*happened*' to have a sleepless night, and ended up reading of Mordecai's loyalty for which he hadn't been rewarded. The King '*happened*' to enter a room when the villain of the story, Haman, was pleading for mercy from Esther and believed he was witnessing an assault on his queen. The feast that is commemorated from these events is called Purim, meaning 'lots,' referring to the day chosen through the casting of lots to unleash a Jewish pogrom.

In all these *chance* events, God was at work to bring deliverance to the Jewish people. The book seems to winking at us. God is absent, not doing anything ... really?

Take time to find out how God is at work in the world (our news outlets won't tell us)! Take a moment to notice God at work in your life, indeed all around you. He is speaking, leading, giving and caring ... even though '*His footprints are not seen*' (Psalm 77:19).

**In times such as these ...  
know who you are!**

**S**ir Mo Farah, the Olympic gold medalist, recently revealed that this isn't his true identity. He was sadly a 9 year old victim of trafficking and childhood slavery, and his original name was actually Hussein Kahin.

It is powerful, liberating and emboldening to be who you really are. Esther, in the story, initially kept her (Jewish) identity hidden, oppressed as a victim of a godless regime. She had a Hebrew name, Hadassah, which means '*myrtle*,' but in the Persian culture in which she lived, Esther meant '*star*.' She was a hidden star and we see her at a certain point taking ownership of who she really was, identifying with her people and boldly standing up for them.



Philippians 2:15 encourages us to '*be blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine as lights in the world as you hold forth the word of life.*'

In this crooked world, God says, '*be who you are, a precious child of mine, loved, accepted, made holy because of what Jesus has done on the cross. So shine like a star!*'

Read Ephesians 1:3-14 to see who God says you are! Name each amazing trait you find there. Give thanks and ask Him in times such as these to help you shine for Him!

In times such as these ...  
**REJOICE!**



**W**e may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing,' Winston Churchill famously said on his VE Day speech on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

Jesus, preparing His disciples at His last Passover feast as He anticipated the dark days of the cross, told them to continue to love and obey God's commandments *'so that you will be filled with my joy, yes, your joy will overflow!'* (John 15:11 NLT). Wow!

In the dark days of the times of Esther, there are ten banquets mentioned in the book! The annual Jewish feast of Purim which celebrates God's deliverance from the planned genocide in Esther, is the most raucous and joyful of all the Jewish feasts. People dress up in costumes, and when the story is read out, it is accompanied by pantomime booing and hissing! Purim is playful and subversive, like our Mardi Gras on the eve of Lent in the days before Easter. It seems God has a sense of humour! Even during the most tragic days in Jewish history, Purim is celebrated, as Elie Wiesel, a holocaust survivor, shows in his book ***'The Trial of God.'***

In the midst of our hopes, or even maybe our fears and dread, take a moment now to receive a baptism of His joy, whatever circumstances you are facing. He can fill our lives with His power and this fruit of the Spirit because He has the ultimate victory.

In times such as these ...  
**fast and pray!**

**F**aced with the destructive forces of evil about to be unleashed, Esther fasted for three days and called others to fast with her (4:16). She then went into the King's presence, unbidden, at the risk of her life, to boldly make a request that would lead to the salvation of her people. It is interesting to note that Haman, the powerful minister who instigated the persecution, was a descendant of the Amalekites. They had attacked the people of Israel as they came out of Egypt, but were defeated as Moses kept his arms raised on the hill above the battle – a powerful symbol of the efficacy of prayer (Exodus 17:8-16).



Fasting is about seriously seeking God in prayer, being prepared to give up what we like or are used to doing for a time (it can be food or TV or the use of a mobile phone, for instance). With that sense of urgency, God meets us in a special way. He can also call us to take courageous steps to see His will done on this needy earth.

In these tumultuous times, do not despair. Rather, is He calling you to a new and deeper walk of prayer and intercession, to lift up holy hands so that the battle to see His kingdom established on this earth might be won? What is He saying to you today?



In last month's Revive!, we asked for captions for this photo of Colin Crook. What do you think of these two?



Speaking of the young gentleman above, Colin led his last official service here on Sunday July 10<sup>th</sup>. He and his wife, Diane, have been ministering at Crowhurst in such servant-hearted, humble and anointed ways for the last 30 years. They have served in varied guises, such as Deputy Warden, Visiting Chaplain, Chair of Trustees, magazine editor, librarian and archivists. Colin, incredibly, has been involved in over 700 services, and preached in well over 500 of them! We are so grateful for their deep impact on the life and work of CCHC. They will be sorely missed!



## FROM OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Along with many households and businesses, we too are experiencing a difficult financial squeeze at the moment. The loss of Facebook for several weeks may have contributed to a drop in our residential bookings and visitors to Howard's Well, but other pressures that householders are facing of inflation, rising fuel and petrol costs, may also be adding to the downturn in bookings. The result for us is a big drop in the regular income we usually see from bookings at this time of year. As always, we are trusting the Lord to sustain His work here, which He does through varied means including you, our loyal supporters and donors. It would benefit us enormously if you are able to book a residential stay (and maybe bring a friend with you!), visit Howard's Well Cafe or if the Lord prompts, send a donation. Thank you so much!

## Please pray for our up-and-coming events:

**Quiet Day:** *'Enjoy the Presence of God'* (July 29<sup>th</sup> - John Ryland); **Teaching Days:** *'Hope: Heaven's View'* (Aug 12<sup>th</sup>) and *'Our Identity in Christ'* (Sept 17<sup>th</sup>); **Healing Weekend** (Aug 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>); **Thanksgiving Day** (Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>); and a **Healing Week – Healing Safari** (Sept 26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>).

## OTHER NEWS

We are really looking forward to Steve and Veronica Gendall returning in August. They have certainly been missed!

And in case you hadn't heard, there are half price offers at our Howard's Well on Mondays July 25<sup>th</sup>-August 29<sup>th</sup>! Well, what are you waiting for! 🤔

**Our chief prayer is that we would know the tangible presence of the risen Christ in all we do and in every aspect of the ministry here.**

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