

Esther the Queen

Esther 2

God placed her in position!

An adaptation of an A.B. Simpson quote: "God is preparing heroes and heroines, and when God's time comes, He fits them into their _____ in a moment, and the world wonders where they came from," and no one saw them coming. For example, God had Joseph ready in Egypt, but when he was sold into slavery at 17, no one saw that coming. God had Daniel and his three Hebrew friends ready in Babylon, but... Nehemiah... Peter... Paul... In each of these examples, God prepared them, and when God's time came, He fit them into their place in a moment, and the world wondered where they came from.

The same is true of Esther. **God placed her in position.** He prepared her for her role as the queen of Persia, strategically placing her in position where she could help save Israel long before Israel needed saving, and, believe me, no one saw her coming!

In chapter 1, we saw God providentially remove Vashti from the position of queen (483 B.C.). In chapter 2, we will see God providentially replace her with Esther (479 B.C.). Esther came out of nowhere *to be in the place God designed for her*. Let's watch together as the hand of God so works that His chosen one...

Esther meets her destiny:

1. The king's " _____ " (1-4).

Four years have passed since King Ahasuerus divorced Vashti. According to other historical sources, over the next 3 years-plus, he commanded his military to invade Greece. But, he was thoroughly routed and sent in humiliation back home to Susa.

And, so, it was "after [all] these things," that his anger from the events in chapter 1 subsided, and he remembered his wife with fondness, missed her, and longed for the solace only a wife could've given him.

But, he also remembered what he foolishly decreed against her...and the more he thought about it, the more his depression deepened.

Verses 1-4: It's a beauty contest! _____, _____ at all! These beautiful young virgins were conscripted, and most against their will. Think from the view of the girls and their families...

There's a whole lot of evil going on in the fallen world. But God is providentially using evil, not for everyone's good, but for the _____ of His people, Israel then, the Church today. In the midst of the evil world system, **Esther will meet her destiny.**

2. The two _____ in Susa (5-7).

Verses 5-6: Mordecai is described as a Jew, which means Judean. Centuries earlier, the northern kingdom of Israel evaporated in the Assyrian captivity, so an Israelite was now a _____ from Judah. And, some scholars say that Mordecai may have been a eunuch because no wife or family is mentioned.

Verse 7: Hadassah (myrtle). Esther (star). Mordecai is a much older cousin, who, when Hadassah's parents died, he adopted her, and made her his beloved daughter, and she fully accepted him as her father. And, the young lady was beautiful in form and lovely in features. And, with that, two of the main characters in our story are introduced, both Jews, and future hero and heroine who have a destiny to meet.

3. Esther was _____ (8-14).

The avenue to God's providential place in a fallen world is _____ always pleasant. If you recognize God's providence in your own life, you know that to be true. How did you get here (spiritually and geographically)? It hasn't all been easy, has it?

Verse 8: Josephus estimated that there were four-hundred girls *taken* by force. Harems were luxurious ... _____. Once in this harem, there's only one way out, for only one woman, the one who becomes queen. "Esther also was taken." Now, watch again, God's providential care that moves her ever closer to her destiny.

Verses 9-10: An important element early in the story is that Mordecai and Esther are intentional about not telling anyone that they're Jewish. On a human level, it was of **self-protection**—antisemitism was a real thing in Persia. But, from a sovereign level, it was _____-**protection**. If it was known that Esther was a Jew, her destiny would be jeopardy. So, again, we see the providence of God at work in her life.

Verses 11-14: What an evil-world-system! This is most disturbing. It's not a beauty contest! These girls are being prepared for one thing, to please the king in bed for one night, and instead of returning to the virgin harem, she was taken to the concubine harem. She would not go to the king again, *unless...* Almost all, I'm sure, would be forgotten in that harem. Some have gone so far to call this arrangement _____.

Don't sanitize what God doesn't sanitize. The way to our destiny in a sin-saturated world is not always easy, painless, or clean. *The destiny is pure glory. But, God is working with evil, and from our place in Christ, we will become more than conquerors through Jesus Christ our King!*

4. Esther's _____ (15-18).

Verses 15-17a: "The king *loved* Esther." He loved what he saw. He loved her beauty. The NIV got it right: He was "attracted" to her. God made sure of it, for He uses someone else's evil for our good _____.

Verses 17-18: The year is now 479. Our story began in 483. The current time corresponds to his humiliating defeat by the Greeks, in the seventh year of his reign. At last King Ahasuerus has something to celebrate. At last he has found a queen to replace Vashti! And, the king wanted everybody in the kingdom to feel good about his new queen!

There's two great secrets in this story so far. The first: No one knows but Mordecai and Esther that they're of Jewish descent. The second: All that's happening in this story—the dethroning of Vashti, Esther being taken along with all the other virgins, Hegai favoring her, the king "loving" her, the lifting up of Esther who came from nowhere to be Ahasuerus' queen—all of these happenings are from the Lord. **God _____ her in this position.** God is preparing His hero, Mordecai, and His heroine, Esther, and when God's time comes, He fits them into their place in a moment, and no one saw them coming.

God is providentially preparing, placing, and positioning, His people for His purposes, His glory, and our good! Do you believe that?

God of wonders!

“God of wonders beyond our galaxy. You are holy, holy.” And, all of His purposes and all His plans are holy. That’s not only true for Mordecai and Esther. Did you know that’s true for _____ as well, that God is just as sovereign, just as providential in your life as He was in their lives? Of course, we’re small fish, but God doesn’t care about that. He cares about **you**! So, let me ask you, who are in Christ? *Listen, you are who you are by the _____ of God!*

And, why are you here at FBC? How did you get here? Many different ways, right? But who brought you here? _____ *divinely brought you here, and nobody saw it coming, except God!* His providence is at work in your life just as it was in Esther’s life. He cares for you as much as He cared for her. Life is messy, but God has a plan and place for you.

This is **your place**, and this is **your time**, and God of wonders beyond our galaxy did it! Now, put your stuff down, and listen...