

The Book of Esther

by Jacob Prasch

God takes people from a despised race and makes them a winner, an instrument to bring deliverance to His people, through the process of preparation, testing, and refining.

Duration: 41:15

Scripture: Esther 2:1, Esther 2:4

Topics: "Esther"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of seasons in our lives, specifically the season of 'mer' (shoes) and the season of 'spite.' The season of 'mer' represents a time of blessing and prosperity, where God begins to bless us and give us success. However, the preacher warns that during this season, we must be careful not to become self-reliant and make our own decisions without seeking God's guidance. The season of 'spite' represents a time of testing and challenges, where we may face difficulties and obstacles. The preacher emphasizes the importance of staying faithful to God's plan and purpose for our lives, as He will raise up someone else if we fail to fulfill our specific calling.

Transcript

If you don't have a Bible, please share a Bible with the person who is next to you. And turn with me please to the book of Esther. Let's commence in chapter 2 of Esther, beginning in verse 1. Esther chapter 2, verse 1. After these things, when the anger of King Ahasuerus had subsided, he remembered of Aspy, and what she had done, and what had been decreed against her.

Then the kings of Canaan who feared him said, Let beautiful young virgins be brought to the king. And let the king appoint overseers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather every beautiful young virgin, this is Zeus of the capital, to the harem, into the custody of Hegi, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women. And let their cosmetics be given to them.

Then let the young lady who pleases the king, be queen in place of Aspy. And the matter pleased the king and did accordingly. And there was a Jew in Zeus of the capital, whose name was Mordechai, the son of Zair, the son of Shemai, the son of Kish, of Benjamite, who had been taken to exile from Jerusalem, with the captives, who had been exiled with Jeconiah, king of Judah, who was never together with the king of Babylon at exile.

And he was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther. She had two names. Hadassah was her Hegi name, and Esther was her Akkadian name.

She was her uncle's daughter, but she had neither father nor mother. Now the young lady was beautiful in form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordechai took her as his own daughter. So it came about when the command and decree of the king were heard, and many young ladies were gathered from Zeus of the capital into the custody of Hegi, that Esther was taken into the king's palace, into the custody of Hegi, who was in charge of the women.

The name Hegi comes from the Hebrew word haq, which means something to do with celebrate or feast. Now the young lady pleased him, and found favor with him, so he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and food, and gave her seven short days for the king's palace, and transferred her and her maids to the best place in the heavens. Esther did not make known her people or her teachers, for Mordechai had instructed her that she should not make them known.

And every day Mordechai walked back and forth in front of the court of the heavens to learn how Esther was and how she served. Now in turn of each young lady came to the winter queen of Halkidush after the end of her twelve months under the regulations of the women, for the days of their deification were completed as follows. Six months with oil of her, and six months with spices and the cosmetics of the women.

The young lady would go into the king in this way, anything that she desired was given to her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. In the evening she would go in, and in the morning she would return to the second harem for the custody of Safchaz, the queen's eunuch who would be in charge of the concubines. She would not again go to the king unless the king be righted in her, and she was summoned by name.

Now in the turn of Esther, the daughter of Adihar, the uncle of Mordechai, who taken her as his daughter came to go into the king, she did not request anything except of Hegi, the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the women advised. And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her. So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus to his royal palace in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebit, in the seventh year of his reign.

And the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found favor and kindness with him more than all the virgins, so that he sent the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Asi. Now just a few more verses in chapter 4, please, turn to chapter 4, verses 13 and 14. Then Mordechai told them to reply to Esther, Do not imagine that you can, in the king's palace, escape more than any of all the Jews.

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, and you and your father's house will perish. Who knows whether you've not attained royalty for such a time as this. And very briefly, please, just one verse in the New Testament, 2 Timothy, chapter 1, verse 9. 2 Timothy, chapter 1, verse 9. God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.

So John and Esther have much literary symbolism. For instance, in chapter 1 of the book of Esther, we see a picture of the royal court of the ancient Near East. The royal court of the ancient Near East.

Now Asian people have many advantages in understanding this picture that Europeans do not have. One advantage that you people have, is that the culture of the Bible is an Eastern culture in many ways, like your own. We normally think of Christianity as a Western European Hellenistic religion.

But it was not. It came directly from the Jewish faith. The Bible is an Eastern book.

Now the Book of Gita is a demonic book, and the Tibetan Book of the Dead is a demonic book, and the Aquarian Bible is a demonic book, and they're all from the East. But the Bible is a book also from the East, and it's the word of God. The Bible is an Eastern book, and Christianity comes from the Jewish faith.

This is an Eastern faith, not a Western one. Let's look more carefully. In chapter 1, verse 10, we read about the seven servants, and it gives us picture of the royal court.

And when you read this in the Sepulchre, the Greek Old Testament instead of the Hebrew, you see that the book of Revelation draws on this kind of symbolism. Additionally, Esther had no father or mother. She was an orphan.

And the rabbis tell us that that has something to do with the Messiah. And as we know, Jesus had no earthly father or mother. But there's much more.

No one can come before the king in the book of Esther unless the king tells out his scepter by invitation. No one comes unless the father draws him. There's much symbolism like that in the book of Esther.

But basically, she is the bride who wins the beauty contest. She has the bride of Christ. All of the good women in the Bible teach something about the bride of Christ.

Ruth teaches something about the bride of Christ. Shulamith in the Song of Solomon teaches something about the bride of Christ. Rachel and Leah teach something about the bride of Christ.

But here is Esther. The Jews were taken into captivity in Babylon. And then the Babylonian captivity was turned over to the Persians.

It's sort of like what happened to you people. You went to India and brought you people from your own country almost as captives to Southern Africa. But then their empire fell and you wound up under the dominion of another foreign people.

So you've been taken from your own land put in a foreign land and then the people who brought you they fall and somebody else comes along. It was something like that. The Jews are now under the Persians.

And this story of Esther is this. There was a madman who was demon possessed. His name was Haman.

And Haman lived on the banks of the Euphrates River in Iraq. And he hated everybody but he particularly hated the Jews. And he demanded to be worshipped.

Virtually to be worshipped. To bow down to. The Hebrew word for to bow down and to worship is the same word.

L'hushakavot. When you see a Roman Catholic bowing down before a statue that is an act of idolatry. It's worship.

That's what the Hebrew word means. Bowing and bending your knee. Bowing down.

Why? This man was determined to exterminate the Jews. But he was beseeeded. He was beseeeded on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Adar.

Roughly the 14th of February. And the reason he was beseeeded was because of Queen Esther. A Jewish woman who won a beauty contest and became queen.

That put her into a situation where she was in a position to save the lives of her people. You think about it. The salvation of God's people depended on a young woman or a woman winning a beauty contest.

There's no second prize. There's no first runner up. If she didn't win the beauty contest she was finished.

God had to get her into a certain situation to do the things he had for her to do and do the things God had for her to do. Now in the Jewish culture we celebrate this feast on a day called Purim. Again around the 14th of February.

The Feast of Purim, meaning luck. And children, Jewish children get dressed up in the costumes of the characters of Esther. And they read the book of Esther they call them Megillah.

And because the book says that Haman's name will be dotted out every time you get to Haman the Jewish children stomp and groan and hiss and make noise with rattle. And they have a play and they put on the story of Esther called a Purim spiel. And then they dance in the streets of the cities of Israel commemorating the deceit of Haman.

Well, in Jewish culture Haman is an archetype. He's a type of the Antichrist. He's a symbol of the Antichrist.

The Antichrist will want to exterminate the Jews the way Haman did when he comes. But every generation has a Haman. For instance Adolf Hitler was considered the Haman of the 20th century.

And the Popes of the Middle Ages who exterminated the Jews they're considered to be the Haman's of their century. So you have a madman who lives on the banks of the Euphrates. He's determined to have absolute dominion.

He's actually demands to be worshipped. He doesn't like anybody, but he particularly hates the Jews and is determined to destroy them. And he succeeded on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Adah.

The year was 1991. The man was Saddam Hussein. What day did he surrender to the Americans and British? The Feast of Esther, the 14th of Adah, the Feast of Purim.

A man in the same exact geographical location where this happened, with the same mentality, determined to do the same thing. The Hebrew term for this is marashot, headship. The Greek word is archae, but in English we call it a principality.

A territorial spirit as some people say. Remember the prophet Daniel saw the vision and Michael of Nicaea, the angel whose life unto God was fighting with the king of Persia? Now Persia is Iran. The Shia Muslim fundamentalism and Islamic extremism you saw with Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, that's the same spirit.

It's the same marashot, the same principality. The same things are over. Now, this man, Saddam Hussein, surrenders when the first came under.

You understand? Don't believe these people who tried to tell you that current events in the Middle East do not fulfill prophecy. The things you see happening in Israel today, particularly in Jerusalem, are all of prophetic significance. They point to the return of Jesus.

The Bible even predicts a fourth peace in the Middle East before Jesus comes, and that's beginning to happen. Do not believe the Kingdom Now preachers and the Restoration preachers who are telling you these things don't fulfill prophecy. They do.

God has an end time prophetic purpose for Israel and the Jews, and the life and the salvation of the world is bound up with God's plan for the salvation of Israel. Nonetheless, let's go back to Queen Esther. She wins the beauty contest.

She had to win the beauty contest to be in the position God needed her to be in, in order to do the things God had for her to do. Now there are a lot of pretty girls. You might be the prettiest girl on your street.

You might be the prettiest girl in your class at school. You might be the prettiest girl in the office where you work. You might be a very pretty girl.

But in a beauty contest, you have a problem. All the girls are pretty. Esther needed not just to be a pretty girl.

She had to be a unique, special woman. The one who would please the king more than all the others. Now again, this alludes to or teaches something about the bride of Christ.

She's coming for a spotless bride who will please her. But let's look further. How does God take somebody, a member of a despised race, the way you suffer under a Popeye, that's the way Jews suffered for centuries in the Diaspora.

Take somebody, even someone from a despised race, and make them a winner. Make them someone who is going to be His instrument to bring deliverance to His people. Once again, let's look at that verse we read in the New Testament in 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 9. Pay attention carefully this time.

God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity. Do you see what that says? It says that you are not only born again to go to Heaven, but you and I were born again to do something in this world before we get to Heaven. And whether or not we do the things God has called us to do in this world, when you read Matthew 25, the parable of the talents, you'll be determined whether or not you're going to look forward to going to Heaven.

Your reward will be determined on the basis of what you do. Not your salvation, but your reward will be determined on the basis of how faithful you've been to your calling. It says here again in Timothy, He saved us and called us.

Yes, God has saved you. That's true, that's your salvation. But when God saved you, when you were born again, when you first came to know Jesus, that's not the end of the story.

God is not only giving you a salvation, it says, He has given you a calling. God has something for you to do. He saved us, yes, but He called us.

Not only that, look further. This calling is from eternity. Before you were born again, God had that thing for you to do.

He had that mission for you. Not only before you were born again, but before you were born, He had this special thing for you to do. But not only before you were born, before He created the universe, He had this thing for you to do.

From eternity, before the world existed, let alone before you did, there was something God had for you to do. A calling from eternity. You think about it.

The God of the universe, before He created the universe, in His plan, there was something for you to do. How does God get you and I into the position He needs us to be in to do it? Esther needed to win this beauty contest. She had to win this beauty contest in order to be in the position and in the right place under the right circumstances to do what God called her to do.

God made her a winner. That same God who had something for Esther to do had something for you and I to do. And the same as He was able to make Esther a winner, He was out to make you a winner.

And He's even out to make me a winner. How does God take people like us and make us a winner? How does He get us to where He needs us to be to do what He had for us to do from before He created the universe? The same way He prepared Queen Esther. Let's look at it more closely.

Once again, look at chapter 2. Now when the turn of each young lady came to go into King Ahasuerus after the end of her 12 months under the regulations for the women. For the days of their judification were completed as follows. Six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and cosmetics for women.

The young lady would go to the king in this way, anything she desired was given to her. This is how God prepares you and me, but it is also how He prepares the church corporately. And how He prepares individual churches like this one.

The season of myrrh and the season of spice. The first thing that God does to make you a winner is He brings you into the season of myrrh. What is myrrh? What is the season of myrrh? Myrrh had only one use in the bible, in the ancient beliefs.

Anointing dead bodies for burial. When the Lord Jesus was born, the Magi from the east bought Him three gifts. Gold, because He'd be a king.

Incense, because He'd be a priest who would offer sacrifices. But myrrh, because He would be crucified. Turn with me please to John 19.

Let's look at myrrh. John 19, verse 39. A Nicodemus also would first come to Him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds in weight.

Myrrh was used to anoint a corpse for burial. The song of Solomon, chapter 4, verse 6, is an allegory. Solomon's romance with Suleiman is a symbol or a metaphor of Christ's relationship with His bride.

And it says in chapter 4, verse 6 of the song of Solomon the bridegroom begins to sing to the bride. We know from the Hebrew what's the bridegroom and what's the bride singing by the gender. And it says I will go to the mountain of myrrh, to the hill of frankincense.

In other words Jesus went to Golgotha, to Mount Calvary. He went to die on the cross anointed for burial for His bride. To offer a sacrifice to God.

I will go to the mount of myrrh, to the hill of frankincense. In Ephesians 5 where it says Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. So how did Christ love the church? He laid His life down for her.

That's how. But let's look further. Myrrh.

The persecuted church in Revelation chapter 2, the most persecuted one who faced the sword was the church of Smyrna. The same word myrrh. Myrrh has to do with anointing for burial.

Remember Jesus at the house of Mary and Martha? He said She's anointed me for burial. Before God ever anoints anyone for power or dominion He anoints them for burial. Before Jesus was anointed for power and dominion He was anointed for burial.

The first thing that's going to happen in your life as a believer the first thing God is going to do to prepare you to do the things He has for you to do is He's going to anoint you for burial. He's going to begin to kill your old nature. We all have an old nature.

It's fallen and it must be crucified. But we also have human sins. We have a wrong idea.

We say well when I got saved I stopped smoking cigarettes. When I got saved I stopped sleeping with people other than my wife or my husband. When I got saved I stopped abusing alcohol or taking drugs.

When I got saved I stopped gambling. That's when we hatch the story. God does not get rid of our sins He gets rid of the sinners.

Everything goes to the cross. It's a good thing to be a musician. But it's another thing to lead worship under the anointing of the Spirit.

Even your musical ability has to be crucified and resurrected. It's a good thing to be a medical doctor. But it's another thing to be a medical missionary.

Even your professional ability has to be crucified and resurrected. Anointed for burial. The season of marriage.

Do you want God to make you a winner? What is going to happen is He's going to bring you into the season of marriage. You will go through a time of prolonged difficulty in your life as a Christian. We have two kinds of trials in the Bible.

The valley and the wilderness. A valley is one trial. A wilderness experience is a prolonged period of God's testing and breaking.

Remember the Jews sojourned 40 years in the wilderness? And the first generation has to die in the wilderness. Only the second can go into the promised land. That teaches us that only the new creation can go to heaven.

The old one has to die in the wilderness. Now, let's look further. There's a big lie being propagated in Western Christianity.

If God wants you rich, name it and claim it yourself. Forget about it. God wants to take care of you.

He wants to meet your needs. But if you are a rich person, count yourself poor. It doesn't belong to you.

It belongs to Jesus. On the other hand, if you're a poor person, count yourself as rich, because you are in a quarrel with Christ. The season of merit comes first.

Before God blesses somebody, before God prospers somebody, He buries somebody. Let's look at Deuteronomy chapter 8. Verse 16. In the wilderness He fed you manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you, that He might tempt you to do good for you in the end.

It even says in verse 3, God let you be hungry. He met their needs, but not necessarily their wants. When you're in the season of merit, when God brings you to a time of breaking in your life as a Christian, which is essential, you can trust Him to meet your needs, but not necessarily your wants.

But what does it say? That He might humble you, that He might tempt you, so that He will do good for you in the end. Whenever God brings us to a difficult time, it is only so He can do good for us once it's over. Only so He can do good for us once it is over.

He does not broadly afflict the sons of men, the Scripture says. The Lord will bring us through difficult times to get rid of our old nature, because only the new creation can properly understand and handle blessings. The old nature can't.

He brings us through difficult times in order that He may bless us once it's over. The first thing that's going to happen in your life as a believer, or in the life of any church that God raises up, will be the season of mercy. A time of difficulty, a time of breaking, a time of hardship.

Once God will meet your needs, He'll give you the grace to get through it, but He's not going to deliver you out of it. The Lord very rarely delivers us out of tribulation. He usually delivers us through it.

But then things change. After the season of mercy comes the season of blessings. Things begin to get good.

Just like the Hebrews in the wilderness. He brings them into the land flowing with milk and honey. Then things get good.

But Moses warned them, he says, once things get good, be careful. Don't trust the things. Remember it's your God who's blessed you.

That is what has destroyed so much of Christianity in the West. These so-called faith austerity gospels, forget about it. Let's look further.

The season of spice. We go through this difficult period but then things get better. The season of spice.

Where Christians make a mistake is they forget that the season of spice is just as crucial, just as essential, just as important to God's preparation as is the season of mercy. In other words, the way we handle blessing, success, and prosperity is going to determine the outcome of whether we win or lose. Just as much as the way we handle trials, failure, difficulty, breaking.

Do you understand? When things are bad, what do we say? Oh, Lord, help me. Please, Lord, deliver me out of this. Please, Lord, give me the grace to get out of this.

I can't stand it. I can't take it. Please, Lord.

We cling to Jesus so much when we're in trouble. When we're broke financially, when we're in adverse circumstances in business, professions, who knows? When our ministries are not succeeding. But when things begin to get good, what happens? We make our own choices.

Look what it says happens in the season of Christ. The young woman could have anything she wanted when it was her turn. What kind of cosmetics do you want? Do you want Max Factor or Helena Rubinstein? Do you want to have a green dress or a blue dress? Do you want fancy lace? Do you want red shoes or black shoes? What kind of jewelry? Do you want this necklace or that bracelet? What do you want? She could have whatever she wanted.

The season of spite has come to a climax. But what did Esther do? I could have this, this or this. It says she didn't request anything.

Except what Mordechai and Peggy advised her. Mordechai and Peggy. Mordechai was her uncle who raised her as a father, a man of God.

God will bring people into our lives, such as parents who are Christians, such as older brothers or sisters in the Lord. God will speak to us through people like that. I'm not talking about heavy shepherding, I'm talking about wise counsel from people who love us and who love God.

But then there was Peggy. Peggy here is a type of the Holy Spirit. Peggy knew how to please the king.

The Holy Spirit searches the depths of God, we're told. It's the Holy Spirit who's going to lead us to make the right decisions. It's the Holy Spirit who tells us how to make the right choices.

God is out to make us a winner. But when things are good, the natural propensity of our human nature, our natural tendency to be instead of seeking God is to make our own choices. Do you want to study at Oxford or Cambridge? Do you want to live in Durban or Cape Town? Do you want to marry Henry or Philip? Do you want to marry Doris or Beatrice? Do you want to be a lawyer or an engineer? What do you want to do? Here it is, it's the season of fight, take your pick.

Be careful. The way you handle blessing and opportunity will determine whether you win or lose just as much as the way you handle trials and breaking. Young believers, weak believers might drop their cloth in the season of marriage.

During times of trial people will lose their faith sometimes. But older believers, people of more experience, they tend to lose the blessing in the season of fight when things are good. Think about what the Lord Jesus said about the last days.

Many were coming as in the days of Noah, eating and drinking and getting married and being given in marriage. But they didn't know when the time came. Notice that Jesus talked about things that are not wrong but things that in and of themselves are right and perfectly natural.

There's nothing wrong with drinking or eating or getting married. But they became obsessed with temporal things. The things that are for here are not the things that we are here for.

The things that are for here are not the things we're here for. There's nothing wrong with marriage, food, children, career, none of it. But when that becomes our focus we're heading for trouble.

The season of fight. You can blow it. You can lose it.

You can miss the blessing. You can utterly fail to do what God has for you to do. Because in the season of fight, when things are good you begin to run your own life.

When things are bad Lord show me I'll do anything to get out of this. When things are good we make up our own mind. Let's look what happens with us there.

What does it say in chapter 4? Verse 14 If you remain silent at this time relief and deliverance will arise from another place. Yes God has something for you to do. Something He's always had for you to do.

But if you fail to do it He'll get somebody else. So if you fail to do that specific special thing He has for you to do He will get somebody else. And if I fail to do what He has called me to do He will get somebody else.

What a tragedy that will be. What a tragedy it is. Right there at the moment of opportunity when we can be in the right place at the right time under the right circumstances to do what God has for us to do and to get the blessing He has for us to receive.

We lose it. We lose it. Because things have become so good that we take our eyes off the one who did the good things and put it on the things that are good.

We take our eyes off Jesus. We make our own decisions. I'm going to do this.

I think I'll do that. I've got money in my pocket. I've got an education.

I have freedom. I can come. I can go.

That's what happens. And that's where we lose it. Friend God has something for you to do.

If you don't do it He's going to get somebody else. Not only that we're going to give a chance to Him why we didn't do it. But He wants us to do it.

He has a mission a calling and a blessing just for you. Just for you with your name on it. How is He going to get you into that position? The same way He did it for Esther.

How is He going to make you a winner? The same way He made Esther a winner. He's going to bring you into the season of mirth. You're going to experience death through yourself.

Death of ambition. Death of a vision. You can't have a ministry that's successful until you've had one of those.

A truth and the death. Then comes the life. Then comes the season of life.

God will begin to bless you. Then you're not going to be so broke. You're going to have some money.

Prosperity. Then you're not going to have so much failure and setback. You're going to have success.

Then you're not going to be constrained by circumstances beyond your control. You're going to have freedom to make a choice. Even now in South Africa, you people have very little choice as to where you would live, where you would work, what you would do.

Even what church you would go to. Are there part 5? Now you have a choice. The way that you people handle this time of opportunity and blessing, the way you handle prosperity and success, that is going to determine whether or not you turn out to be a loser or a winner.

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