

Esther 2 • Doing It God's Way

Introduction

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Ephesians 2:10

When we are first born again, our initial focus is on the good news that we have been born again to go to Heaven. As our faith matures and we learn more about why God has brought this about in our life, we realize we are also born again to help other people to get there and to do things in this life which is going to go a long way in determining what Heaven is going to be like. We were saved not only to be with Jesus forever, but to do something between now and then.

*Not only does Scripture speak of those whom He foreknow, but it even says “works” which He foreknew. Before God created the universe, before we were born, before we were conceived in our mother’s womb, He had something for us to do. He knew this not just before we were **spiritually** born again, not just before we were **physically** born, but even before the universe was created. There’s something God has for us as a Christian to do, and we were saved for that purpose as well as for an eternal purpose.*

How does God take somebody and get them in the position He needs them to be, to do what He has for them to do, to be what He has for them to be, to do these things which He even intended them to do before He even made them, let alone before He saved them? In fact, even before He created the universe?

¹After these things when the anger of King Ahasuerus had subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her. ²Then the king’s attendants, who served him, said, “Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king. ³Let the king appoint overseers in all the provinces of his kingdom that they may gather every beautiful young virgin to the citadel of Susa, to the harem, into the custody of Hegai, the king’s eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let their cosmetics be given them. ⁴Then let the young lady who pleases the king be queen in place of Vashti.” And the matter pleased the king, and he did accordingly.

⁵Now there was at the citadel in Susa a Jew whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, ⁶who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the captives who had been exiled with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled. ⁷He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

⁸So it came about when the command and decree of the king were heard and many young ladies were gathered to the citadel of Susa into the custody of Hegai,

[Read Chapter 2 & 4:13-14]

Q: How is the book of Esther traditionally celebrated in Judaism today?

A: It is the center of the “Feast of Purim”, celebrated on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Adar, roughly at the end of January/beginning of February. There is a day of fasting in recognition of Esther’s fast, followed by a celebration. It’s traditional to dress up as characters from Esther and to have the book publicly read in its entirety. Whenever Haman’s name is mentioned, everyone makes noise because at the end of the book of Esther it says that Haman’s name will be blotted out. It’s more like a secular version of Halloween.

Q: What does the Talmud have to say about Esther? That is, what do traditional Jewish rabbis teach as the greater spiritual meaning concerning Esther?

A: They associate it in its importance with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which is the holiest day of the Jewish year. They say that Esther teaches something about the Messiah. She is one of the few female types, or prefigurements, of the Messiah in the following ways:

- She brings deliverance for God’s people, which the Messiah would do.
- She has no father or mother as such, and neither would the Messiah. (Jesus, immaculately conceived, had no earthly mother or father in the normal, biological sense.)

Q: So what did Esther have to do in order to become God’s instrument bringing redemption to her people?

A: She had to become queen.

Q: But how could she, not royally born, become the queen?

A: Of all things, she had to win a beauty contest.

Q: And how did she win the beauty contest? What was the deciding factor?

A: She pleased the king.

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that Esther was taken to the king's palace into the custody of Hegai, who was in charge of the women.⁹ Now the young lady pleased him and found favor with him. So he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and food, gave her seven choice maids from the king's palace and transferred her and her maids to the best place in the harem.¹⁰ Esther did not make known her people or her kindred, for Mordecai had instructed her that she should not make them known.¹¹ Every day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and how she fared.

¹²Now when the turn of each young lady came to go in to King Ahasuerus, after the end of her twelve months under the regulations for the women—for the days of their beautification were completed as follows: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and the cosmetics for women—¹³the young lady would go in to the king in this way: anything that she desired was given her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace.¹⁴ In the evening she would go in and in the morning she would return to the second harem, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would not again go in to the king unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

¹⁵Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter, came to go in to the king, she did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women, advised. And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her.¹⁶ So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus to his royal palace in the tenth month which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

¹⁷The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found favor and kindness with him more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.¹⁸ Then the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his princes and his servants; he also made a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts according to the king's bounty.

¹⁹When the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai

Point: *The one who pleases the King will always be the one who God is going to use.*

Q: How could Esther draw close to the king?

A: The king had to set out his scepter; you couldn't approach unless the king set out his scepter.

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."

John 6:44

Point: *No one comes to the Father unless they're drawn or called.*

[NOTE: *If you were to read chapter 1 of the book of Esther in the Septuagint – the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament -- as it describes the seven servants of the king and his court, you would discover that it's re-described in the Greek text of Revelation as the celestial court. The court seen in the ancient Near East in Esther is repainted in the book of Revelation.]*

Q: So going back to the introduction quoting Ephesians 2:10, that God has things for us to do, how might He get us into that position?

A: The same way He got Esther into that position: He made her a winner over all the rest of the competition.

Q: But what happens if you don't WANT to allow God to make you a winner? What happens if God gets you where He wants you to be in order to do what He wants you to do, and you don't want to do it?

A: It's just as Mordecai told Esther in 4:13, do not think you can escape; how do you know whether or not you've obtained royalty for a time like this? In other words, if you don't do what God wants you to do at this time, deliverance for the Jews will arrive from another place.

Point: *If we don't do the things God has for us to do, He's going to get someone else to do it. He wants **YOU** to do it – that's His plan – and in order to get you to do it, He's out to make you a winner to put you in the right place at the right time.*

Q: One of Esther's foremost defining characteristic is that she seeks to please the king. Based on your observation of how she relates to others, how would you describe another of her defining attributes?

A: She's willing to listen to people who know better than she does like Mordecai and Hegai.

Q: What does Mordecai most likely represent?

A: The counsel of Christian parents, pastors and leaders in the church, and in general of those who God brings into our life who are simply older in Jesus than ourselves.

Q: What might Hegai represent?

A: Hegai somehow typifies the Holy Spirit. He knew **HOW** to please the king, and the Holy Spirit searches the depths of God to know how to please the King.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

1 Corinthians 2:10

Point: *God may have pre-ordained good works for us to do, but a big part of the*

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was sitting at the king's gate. ²⁰Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her; for Esther did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care.

²¹In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's officials from those who guarded the door, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. ²²But the plot became known to Mordecai and he told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. ²³Now when the plot was investigated and found to be so, they were both hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the king's presence.

^{4:13}Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. ¹⁴For 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. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"

process of getting us into the position to use them is the process of discipleship through more mature Believers, and actively seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Q: How does the overall, specific process of God getting Esther into the right place begun in v.12? How is it structured?

A: Esther under went "six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and the cosmetics for women." A "Season of Myrrh" was followed by a "Season of Spice".

Q: What was the purpose of myrrh in the ancient world?

A: It's sole purpose was anointing a corpse for burial.

Point: *When Jesus was born, the Magi brought to Him gold because He would be a king (like David), frankincense because He would be a priest (like Aaron), and myrrh because He would be anointed for burial. (Matthew 2:11)*

*"Until the cool of the day
When the shadows flee away,
I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh
And to the hill of frankincense."
Song of Solomon 4:6*

Q: What is this passage from the Song of Solomon expressing in regards to the "Season of Myrrh"?

A: It's an allegory – or basically a typology – of Solomon's relationship with Shulamite wherein the bridegroom goes, anointed for burial, to give his life for the bride. It's a foreshadowing of Jesus going to die for the church, going to Mt. Calvary – the mount of myrrh – to bring a sacrifice on behalf of the bride.

*Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.
John 19:39-40*

Point: *Even Jesus had to be anointed for burial.*

Q: If Jesus had to be anointed for burial, why should WE expect to ALSO have to be anointed for burial?

A: It's the teaching that a servant is not above his master.

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him."
John 13:16*

Point: *Before the Lord will bring a faithful Christian – a true Christian – into a place of real power, He will anoint that person for burial before He anoints them for power and leadership. Jesus was anointed for burial before He was anointed to reign from the throne of David in the heavenlies. If it happens to HIM, it happens to us because a servant is not above his Master.*

²⁴You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

¹⁶“In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. ¹⁷Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’ ¹⁸But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

²⁸Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

³⁰If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. ³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

³²In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, ³³and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.

¹⁷From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.

[Read Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 16-18]

Q: Before God brought the Jews into the Promised Land which would flow with milk and honey, where did He first take them and why?

A: Through the wilderness experience to humble them and teach them His principles.

Point: Whenever the Lord anoints us for burial, whenever He brings into the “Season of Myrrh”, He brings us through times of testing and breaking for our molding. The purpose of the difficult times is always in order that He may do good for us in the end.

Q: According to these verses, what would happen if God didn’t do it this way?

A: “Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand’...But you shall remember...He who is giving you power to make wealth that He may confirm His covenant...”

Q: Why did He give this blessing? Was it to have a good life in a fallen world?

A: No, it’s to confirm the covenant – His Word.

Point: He brought them through a wilderness, which by definition is a place of death. The second generation of Jews – not the first – entered the Promised Land because only the new creation can go to Heaven. That’s the overall typology. God has a blessing for you, but that blessing will always be preceded by a breaking, by a death to self, by anointing for burial. There is no **victory** without the cross, no **power** with the cross, no **Jesus** without the cross.

[Read 2 Corinthians 11:28-33 & Galatians 6:17]

Q: Scripture documents that Paul performed mighty miracles: people were healed in his shadow, he raised someone from the dead who fell out of a window. Yet what did Paul boast about?

A: Paul did not boast about signs and miracles but that he bore the marks of Christ on his body, that he was crucified with Christ.

Q: So what was Paul’s proof that he’d been anointed for ministry?

A: It wasn’t the power but that he daily picked up his cross and lived a crucified life. **THAT** was the proof of his apostleship, of his power, and of God’s calling on his life.

Point: Paul was anointed for great things in the kingdom because he was anointed for burial., the same as Jesus. Otherwise God would have used someone else.

Q: Paul was a Pharisee, someone with both a tremendous background and ability. But what happened before God could use that ability?

A: Paul was taken into the wilderness for 3 years. (Galatians 1:18). He had to be anointed for burial.

Application: When people get saved they often say, “I was a musician in the world and now I’m going to be a musician for Jesus”. Or, “I was a doctor in the world, so now I’m going to be a physician for Jesus”. Or, “I was a successful businessman in the world, so now I’m going to be a philanthropist for Jesus”. Why does it not exactly work this way? It **ALL** has to go to the cross. Before God can use your ability as a musician, doctor, or businessman, He has to crucify you

³And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. ⁸And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

¹⁸For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; ¹⁹in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, ²⁰who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

³⁷“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

to bring those things under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The “Season of Myrrh” always comes before the “Season of Spice”.

[Read Matthew 13:3-8]

Q: How might this apply to the “Season of Myrrh”?

A: Most people who initially backslide and fall away from Jesus fall down in the “Season of Myrrh”. The thorns choke the new creation.

Point: *Young believers get into trouble in the “Season of Myrrh” when they see that it’s not all “sugar and spice”, that there’s a cross to be carried, that there’s trials.*

Q: After God brought the Jews through the wilderness, He brought them into the Promised Land where things got good. Why might the “Season of Spice” be most difficult for mature believers?

A: To get through the wilderness one must constantly turn to and rely upon God. When things get good, however, we tend to forget that the “Season of Spice” is just as important as the “Season of Myrrh” and begin to take things for granted.

Q: How did things change for Esther during the “Season of Spice”?

A: She could have anything she wanted. Anything she desired was given to her to take from the harem to the king’s palace.

Q: What is the danger of having so much to choose from?

A: Making the wrong choice. Not everything is needed, much less beneficial.

Q: How did Esther successfully overcome this problem?

A: She asked for nothing except what Hegai told her.

Point: *Hegai as a type of the Holy Spirit provides the example that we should seek nothing except as directed by the Holy Spirit, the One who knows how to please the King.*

[Read 1 Peter 3:18-22 & Matthew 24:37-39]

Q: How would you characterize Peter’s use of Noah in teach about the Last Days? What is the basic point of view?

A: Peter speaks from the point of view of unsaved people. Just as Noah was warning people to repent and built an ark, we should be warning unsaved people that Jesus is coming and to build an ark – that is, the church – to save their families and themselves.

Q: How is this contrasted to the point of view Jesus presents in His use of Noah?

A: Christ is instead speaking to Christians, warning not be caught up in temporal things.

Point: *There’s nothing wrong in these things in and of themselves, but when they become an obsession – the focus of our life and more important than the kingdom of God – we’re not going to be ready for Jesus to come. When you get into trouble in the “Season of Spice” you’re going to miss God’s calling, purpose, and blessing **NOT** when things are bad, but when things are good.*

Overall Application

Q: *But who knew how to please the king?*

A: Heggai. The Holy Spirit knows how to please the Father.

Point: *God's will is to make it happen for us provided we submit to the Spirit.*

Q: *What will happen if we don't do the good works He planned for us to do from the foundation of the world?*

A: As exemplified in Esther 4, He will get someone else to do it.

- *Are you going to do it, or is God going to have to get somebody else?*
- *If you're going to do it, how well do you recognize you're going to have to do it the way Esther did it through the "Season of Myrrh" and the "Season of Spice"?*
- *If this is the way it happened for Jesus and Paul as well, why won't it be the way it happens for you?*

[PLEASE NOTE: This study is drawn from Jacob Prasch's sermon on "Esther". It is highly recommended that you obtain a copy ([click here for info](#)) for the teaching in its entirety.]