

ESTHER – For Such a Time as This | Full Book Explained in One Video

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[0:00] Esther, Esther for such a time as this. God's name is never mentioned in the book of Esther, 10 chapters.!

This is a true story of how one young woman's courage saved a whole nation from destruction. The book of Esther, it shows us unseen providence, wise decisions, courage in crisis, standing for what is right and influencing others for good, and about the cost of silence when truth is needed. It shows us how God uses the ordinary, ordinary people just like you, exactly where they are needed and at exactly the right moment for such a time as this, as Esther tells us.

And it starts there in chapter 1 where the king, Azerus, rules a mighty empire, 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia, and he throws a massive party to show off his power and his wealth.

[1:33] And at the final drunken feast, he commands Queen Vashti to display herself before his guests. She refuses.

Now a side note about Vashti, she refuses to be objectified. She stood up to the most powerful man in the empire, knowing that would cost her everything.

She lost her position, likely her freedom, possibly her life, but she kept her dignity. The king explodes in anger.

His advisors panic. If the queen can say no to the king, every wife in the empire will start ignoring her husband.

And so to save face, the king removes Vashti from her position and he banishes her. One proud, foolish decision.

[2:32] The most powerful man on earth loses his queen and it starts a chain of events that will eventually lead to threatening God's own people. Your choices matter far more than you realise.

Don't let your pride or anger control your decisions. A kingdom-wide search then begins for a new queen. Beautiful young women are taken to the palace and prepared to meet the king.

And among them is Esther, a Jewish orphan. She's raised by her cousin Mordecai. Tough start for life, being an orphan. Here she is, her Hebrew name Hadassah means myrtle, a fragrant, resilient plant.

A symbol of righteousness. And Mordecai tells Esther, keep your Jewish identity secret. Jews were foreigners in this land and being different could be dangerous.

Esther gains favour not by demanding attention, but by listening to wise advice. So in Esther 2 verse 7, it tells that she is described as fair and beautiful.

[3:41] And then Esther 2 verse 15, when her turn comes, she requires nothing from the servant who cared for the women and only does what he recommends of her.

She doesn't pile on extra jewels or demand special treatment. She wasn't a show-off. Humility was her ornament. And then we take it up in Esther 2 verse 17.

It reads, and the king loved Esther. He set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen. Esther, this one, the orphan, the exile, now queen of a superpower empire.

What a transformation. And now her new name, Esther, it likely means star. She was shining exactly where God put her, even while hiding who she really was.

And God can lift a nobody to the highest place when it serves his purpose. Esther 2 verse 17.

[5:14] God used her, though, to save a nation. And he can use you. Being overlooked now might mean you're being positioned for later.

And that's what happened with Esther, as we'll see. Meanwhile, Mordecai overhears a plot to kill the king. He tells Esther, and she warns the king, and the conspirators are captured and executed, and the event is written in the official records.

It looks like something small, a soon forgotten act of loyalty. But God never forgets a faithful act as it comes to light later. Years later, the king promotes a man called Haman to the highest position in the kingdom.

And the king orders everyone to bow down when Haman walks past. Everyone does. But Mordecai refuses to bow.

Why? As a Jew, he would only bow to God, not to a human being. Now, Haman is enraged. And when he finds out Mordecai is a Jew, his anger boils over.

[6:26] And he decides not just to kill Mordecai, as if that wasn't enough. He plots to kill and wipe out every single Jew in the 127 provinces, men, women, and children.

It's a shocking decree. And this was brought about because Haman twisted the truth to the king. And on a set date, all the Jews are to be destroyed.

You see, hatred of God's people is never really about the people. It's a hatred to God himself. And evil always aims for total destruction. What happens then?

Mordecai, he tears his clothes. He puts on rough sackcloth. And he grieves publicly. The Jews across the empire begin fasting and mourning.

And Mordecai tells Esther of the death decree. He urges, you must go to the king and plead for our people. Esther is terrified, though, because anyone who approaches the king without being summoned is put to death.

[7:32] And the king hasn't called for her in 30 days. Mordecai answers with words that still confront us today. And this is where really the central challenge of the book is here.

As Mordecai addresses Esther in Esther 4.13, in part it reads, Just unpacking that a little, we could see a number of things.

Mordecai urges Esther to leave the comfort zone. Here she is in the palace, a place of comfort. And yet he tells her, really being in the palace won't save you.

It's not going to shield you or the people you care about when crisis comes. Even if you may have comfort and privilege now, you still have responsibility. You may be tempted to think that you're safe.

This doesn't affect me while others are in danger. But you must step out and leave the comfort zone. The truth must be spoken.

[8:57] Trust God. Take action. She had all the comforts of the palace. The privilege of the status of queen. But Mordecai says, hey, time to leave the comfort zone and step up and speak out.

And then we see another point, take courage and you'll know victory. He's saying in this verse we've just read that God will win with or without you.

Question is, will you get to be part of the victory? Or watch from the sidelines while your blessing goes to someone else? Esther could have remained silent.

God would still have acted. God's plan doesn't depend on you. But you'll miss out on blessing if you don't obey. If there's an opportunity to speak up, to step out, to sacrifice, take courage and do it.

And you'll know victory. A third thing you could take from this passage is that your past has a purpose. We see Esther, she was a nobody.

[10:04] An orphan girl, possibly looked down on as an outsider, a foreigner. Every hardship may have prepared you for this moment.

You can think for yourself that all of your life experience to date, every closed door, every setback, every unfair treatment, every season that you felt put out.

None of it was random. The unseen hand was working behind the scenes, right through your life.

And your past has a purpose. All of that which you've been through.

God's been positioning you, preparing you. Who knows? Maybe you've been brought to your situation right now, your city, your time of life, your family, your influence, your struggle for such a time as this.

God's unseen hand has been working through the chapters of your life. Consider how has God already been positioning you, preparing you for this exact moment, for how you can be used of God in your now.

[11:12] And Esther's reply is courage in action. She knew this was dangerous. But she took action and she urged the people to fast for her.

We pick it up there, verse 16 of chapter 4. She tells the people, Esther had no control of her environment, but she had control of her attitude.

She calls her people to spiritual action. And she values faithfulness more than her safety. She could have done nothing. And she could have been comfortable. And what seemed to be safe.

But she took the step of courage. She took the action of courage. And brothers and sisters here tonight, courage is not the absence of fear.

She knew that this was dangerous. She knew there was a risk here. But she said, I'm going to obey God anyway. While I'm afraid, I'm going to obey God.

[12:32] And courage is fear that has said its prayers. And notice also, she didn't face this crisis on her own. She asked all God's people to fast with her.

There's power in united prayer. That's why we believe in prayer. To pray for one another where there's needs. To get behind each other when we're facing something big. Don't try to handle it by yourself.

Bring others to pray, to fast, to intercede, to enter in, in prayer for you. Ask others to pray and fast with you.

Three days of fasting. Three days of fasting and prayer, we could understand. Esther risks her life then and approaches the king. Again, this was dangerous.

This was right outside the comfort zone. And you could picture it as Esther walks that long corridor toward death or deliverance. This was something that meant sure death.

[13:34] If the king was displeased. And there he is, the king, seated on his throne. He lifts his eyes. And you could maybe hold your breath. As this was a moment that meant potential death.

And then the golden scepter flashes out like sunshine. Grace. There's a picture of reception. The scepter was his authority.

And it indicated reception. It indicated grace. You can enter in. You're safe. It's welcome. And God does that, doesn't he? As we enter the throne of grace, we can be received.

And so this is a picture here of Esther as she comes to the king. She doesn't rush though. She invites the king and Haman to a banquet. And then invites them to another banquet later the next day.

And we could wonder, we could ponder, why the delay? Why didn't you just tell him? Because God is setting up something perfect here. And you can see again the unseen hand.

[14:34] God is working, orchestrating things behind the scenes for your good and his glory, even when you can't see his hand. So we see this strategy, this tact, this wisdom to be patient and to take time.

Esther waited. Then she spoke. It was not too soon, as in recklessness. Sometimes we can speak too soon, we can act recklessly, maybe prayerlessly.

Or we can act too late. And then there will be regret. Oh, why didn't I say something when I should have? It wasn't reckless and it wasn't regret. It was boldness there.

And that night, after the first time, the king cannot sleep. And he commands the dusty royal chronicles to be read to him, to be brought and read aloud.

It was the middle of the night there. And the servant just happens, just happens to read the very book, the very story of Mordecai saving the king's life.

[15:39] What reward did we give him? Asked the king. Nothing, your majesty. We need to fix that. The next morning, Haman arrives early, ready to ask the king's permission to hang Mordecai.

He'd already got the gallows prepared. Before he can speak, though, the king asks Haman, What should be done for the man the king delights to honour? Haman thinks, Oh, obviously.

Obviously that's me. Of course, I'm the one who deserves to be honoured. Obviously, he's talking about me. So he describes the most over-the-top royal treatment that you could imagine.

Royal robes. The king's own horse. A crown. Someone leading him through the streets of the city, shouting, This is what the king does for someone that he honours.

The king commands, Hurry! Do exactly that. For Mordecai, the Jew, Haman is forced to lead the man he hates through the city in honour.

[16:47] He's crushed with humiliation. What a shocking thing that the very enemy that he wanted to hang on the gallows, now he leads through the streets of the city, singing his praises.

He's crushed. What a humiliation for proud Haman. And at the second banquet, the king asks Esther again, What's your request?

And she says, Let my life be given to me at my petition, and my people at my request, for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish.

The king is shocked. Here's Esther, his beloved queen. And she's saying, There's danger here for me and my people. We're about to be destroyed, to be slain.

The king is shocked. Who is he? And where is he? Who would dare to do such a thing? And Esther points across the table, and she says, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman.

[18:01] Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. As Esther points him out as the very one, the adversary, the enemy, this wicked Haman.

You can imagine the scene at the banqueting table, and Haman is pointed out as the one who is this adversary, this vile Haman.

And in a final twist of justice, the king orders Haman to be hanged on the very gallows that he built for Mordecai. You can see the trap that he set was going to be his own downfall.

God opposes the proud, and he lifts up the humble every single time. Next we see Haman is dead, but Persian law says that a royal decree cannot be revoked, even by the king himself, but it can be rewritten.

The king gives Esther and Mordecai his authority to write a new decree, and the Jews may legally defend themselves against anyone who tries to attack them. On the appointed day then, instead of being wiped out, God's people stand up, fight, and are completely saved.

[19:21] The day of destruction became a day of deliverance. Grief turned to joy. Fear turned to feasting. And it tells them of this great rejoicing.

And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment, and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast, and a good day.

And many of the people of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them. So they established a holiday. It's called the Feast of Purim. Still remember today, how their situation was completely reversed.

And we see the truth here, that God turned planned evil into this lasting good. We can remember and praise God for his deliverance, for the good things he's done.

And people still celebrate that today, read the book of Esther, they give gifts to the poor, they remember that God rescues his people. Think about your situation, what God has done for you.

[20:30] Do you stop and give thanks, and remember the good things that he's done? As much as there have been hard things, you can remember the goodness of God, through it all.

And your rescue becomes someone else's hope. Your testimony can help others. Look at Esther, what it teaches us. It teaches us that God honours, humility, grace that was extended to her, the favour, we see her character.

It was the character of courage. She risked her life for others. She could have stayed in the comfort zone, but she acted with courage. She acted with humility.

She listened. She listened to advice, and did not boast. She acted with wisdom. She acted with patience and strategy.

She didn't act recklessly, but wisely. She acted with selflessness. She put her... She took the time to listen to others wiser than her, and acted on their words.

[21:38] You could think of Esther, what it teaches us, even today, that God works, even when we cannot see him. Think of the book of Esther. It has no miracles in the book, just providence.

That's providence. But providence is often greater than miracles, isn't it? Think of the providence of God. Think of the providence of God in your life. Notice the courage and risk here to do right. Often to do right involves risk. It's not going to be easy to do right, but it's the right thing. Look at the power of one, of one person. Esther, humble Esther, young Esther, one person, willing to act, can make a massive difference.

And think maybe your story in Esther's story. What about you? How can you be like Esther? Maybe it's faithfulness in the little things. They're preparing you for the big things.

Esther listened to advice. She didn't act recklessly. She received counsel. She listened to older people, wiser people. She listened to people.

[22:47] And she took their advice. Mordecai was loyal about a plot that he heard. And he acted also.

It was something small, but it was a big thing. It was a defining moment. Faithfulness in small things. You can think also for yourself of your story.

Your waiting season isn't wasted. There's times when you might feel like you're treading water, that you're just in a holding pattern. Esther spent a year preparing before meeting the king.

And then years more as queen before her moment came. And God was positioning her, shaping her the whole time. Don't be impatient.

If it feels like a waiting season. Also, consider the big moment comes. Use your influence. Be that testimony that God wants you to be.

[23:49] Shine like Esther, a star, the real star. Not like a... As Mordecai represents that steady voice of wisdom, as you can be in someone else's life to guide them, to be a wise voice, to be a discerning voice that you'll help shape the next generation.

How would we love us older ones to pass the baton, to pass the baton to the younger ones, to pass on stories of God's faithfulness. And your stories can become someone else's courage.

And think too, how coincidences are God's fingerprints. Sometimes we overlook what we might think, oh, that just happened to me. It just happened. It's a coincidence. But God is always working in your life.

We're at it just the right moment, the perfect moment. None of this was random. God was directing everything. And brother, sister, God is steering the ship.

He's steering the ship. We may not always realise it, but God is at the control. His steady hand, His purpose, His direction, He's guiding it all. And God puts His people exactly where they need to be.

[24:58] May we be like Esther, humble, brave, ready, willing to put ourselves into danger even, to take a risk by faith.

Who knows whether you have come to this moment, to this position, for such a time as this. You might feel insignificant. Esther, an orphan. You know, that's a pretty rough start to life, isn't it?

To be an orphan. And you might feel powerless. Esther was this woman in a culture where women had few rights. You might feel scared. Esther was terrified.

But God used her anyway. Who knows whether you have come to your moment, for such a time as this. Maybe your family, your job situation, your neighbourhood, your circle of influence, your generation.

For such a time as this. God's got you where you are for His purpose to be realised in your life. And then, do the Esther thing.

[26:03] The costly thing. Have the conversation that you've been afraid. Who cares? God matters more than others' opinions. Choose what's right over what's easy.

And then we see, really, the Lord Jesus is the greater Esther. Esther approached an earthly throne and she said, if I perish, I perish. But the Lord Jesus, He approached the cross accepting death, saying, not my will, but thine be done.

And because He died and rose again, now we have opened to us the throne of grace, the very throne of God's grace, of His loving kindness that we can enter in at any moment with confidence, forever secure in His mercy that have trusted Him to find help in time of need, the privilege of prayer of that throne of grace.

It always avails. And you've been placed in your life with your story, your struggles, your sphere of influence, your challenges for such a time as this.

And the hidden God, the God who's hidden through the pages tonight of the challenge we can have to trust God even with the ordinary things, with the little things of life.

[27:21] Trust God moment by moment for such a time, all the time, as these times, where you are, here, right now, for such a time.

And don't waste your such a time as this. The moment you've been prepared for is probably happening right now. Don't miss it, those opportunities to shine like Esther.

Let us pray. Father, give us grace, we pray, as Esther shows us her grace of her courage. May we have such a stand when our moment comes, to be like Mordecai when many others who claimed to know you did not stand.

Mordecai stood. Lord, help us to be faithful, to learn as Esther that courage that takes a risk, the courage of faith when our moment comes.

Help us to be faithful, to be brave. give us, Lord, that wisdom we need. Help us, Lord, not to be reckless. Help us, like Esther, to listen to others, to listen to others that chances are are older and wiser than us.

[28:36] At least we can reflect on their advice and find your mind. Lord, to read your word and find your heart. we pray if there's any present yet to trust you, that you're sheltering us, you're holding the steering wheel as the pilot, as the one steering our life.

Lord, help us not to miss it when you're guiding us and we go our own merry way. Lord, rather help us to be led by your Holy Spirit, to be led by your sure word.

Lord, to be led by the pages of your word which are true from cover to cover. Lord, and we can take heart in the salvation gospel that it's thanks to your grace.

It's thanks to that throne where the king is seated in glory and we can enter in. And like Esther was received, as we enter in, to that throne of grace, you will welcome us, Lord, unworthy as we are, unfit.

And you can know, Lord, our unworthiness right through, yet you still love us. Lord, you extend grace as we see at the cross where you paid for our very sin.

[30:09] And access is now for us. Acceptance were accepted in the beloved. There's welcome at the throne of grace for every sinner who comes to know you, to trust you.

Every sinner who believes can know that gift, that forgiveness of our sin because you've done everything to deliver us from it.

Help us, Lord. We pray we would be like Esther, we'd be like Mordecai. Lead us by your spirit, Lord. Help us to be that people for such a moment, for such a time, as this very time, in our very lives, that we won't miss those moments when you're calling us to shine.

Lord, be glorified, we pray, that our lives would shine brighter and brighter for your glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.