

# **Born With A Purpose**

By  
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## **Introduction**

Recently in my life, I've been struggling with a question that has been posed by mankind since Adam, "Lord, why am I here? What is my purpose?". I have officially reached middle age. I've seen children born and grow up to become young adults. I've seen the passing of "older folks" I thought would be here forever. So given a sense of my mortality and the shortness of life, I've been focusing on my purpose in this world.

God does have a purpose for each one of us. There is a certain time and place when His purpose for us will be fulfilled. The story of Esther is a story of purpose fulfilled. God put her in a certain position, at a certain time to fulfill a mighty purpose... saving of the Jewish race from genocide. Reviewing how God worked in her life can give guidance as to how He is working in our lives and will provide a clearer vision of His purpose for us.

## **Background**

This story begins during the reign of King Xerxes, who ruled the kingdom of Babylon from 486 to 465 BC. To put this in historical perspective, Xerxes' father was named Darius, and his grandfather was Nebuchadnezzar. God had allowed the Jewish people to be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and exiled to Babylon for 70 years (Remember Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abendnego? They lived during Nebuchadnezzar's reign.)

King Xerxes' wife, Vashti, had embarrassed him in front of all his governors and had angered him greatly. So, he began the search for another queen.

## **Scriptures for This Lesson**

Esther 2

Esther 3

Esther 4

Esther 5 - 6

Esther 7 - 8

## **Esther 2 "Setting the Stage"**

In Esther 2, we see that Xerxes' search for a new queen involved his commissioners, in every province of his kingdom, bringing back the "beautiful girls into the harem".

Now Xerxes' kingdom was extensive. Undoubtedly there were dozens if not hundreds of girls brought back into the harem. So the chance of Esther becoming queen was remote. She had a lot of competition. Only the *one*

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who pleased the king would become his queen. Also, she had no choice in becoming part of the harem; young women were not asked to go but commanded to go. And this is where we begin to see the hand of God. He can make the unlikely (or impossible) come to pass.

*Has God ever done anything for you that seemed impossible? What did you think happened? How did you react? Did your view of God change? If so, how?*

*Has God ever allowed something to happen in your life that you thought was bad or not what you wanted, but later you were glad things turned out the way it did?*

**Key Point:** Most of the time God doesn't give us *all* the details to His plans in our lives. That's why it's important that we learn to trust Him.

The Bible says in verse 9, "The girl pleased him (King Xerxes), and won his favor. Immediately he provided her with her beauty treatments and special food."

Esther won in spite of the competition. Not only did she please him, but she "won his favor". Winning someone's favor not only means that they like you, but that they may give you the "benefit of the doubt", give you special consideration, show you favoritism, be on your side. This favoritism God provided her is very important and played a major role in her fulfilling His purpose for her life. It's repeated in verse 9 as well as 17. God had "set the stage".

Another important step in "setting the stage" was Mordecai, Esther's cousin, overhearing a plot to kill the king (Esther 2: 19 – 23). He informed Esther, who was queen by this time, and she told the king. He investigated the claim, found it to be true, and executed the two conspirators. The key verse is v. 23. This event was "recorded in the annals"; it became part of the official record of the king's reign. This documentation of Mordecai's good deed also played a key role in fulfilling Esther's purpose.

Another key step was Esther's obedience to Mordecai's wish to keep her true race hidden. She would eventually reveal that she was Jewish, but the *timing* of this revelation would play a key role in fulfilling her purpose.

**Key Point:** Timing is critical in God fulfilling His purpose in our lives.

**Key Point:** In fulfilling His purpose for our lives, God works in many areas, some we see and some we don't see. He works with different kinds of people, the godless as well as godly people.

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*If God can work in godless as well as godly people, what does this say about His realm or area of influence?*

### Esther 3 The Un-regenerated Mind

Chapter 3 begins with the introduction of Haman. We are not told why he was promoted or honored by the king, but his elevated position was made clear. Also, Mordecai's refusal to bow to him was made equally clear, as well as Haman's anger with Mordecai.

Verses 5 – 6 tell of how Haman not only wanted to kill Mordecai, but *all* Jews throughout the entire kingdom. This really shows how "low" some people can go, i.e., how corrupt their thinking can get. Haman was essentially saying, "Because you, Mordecai, will not bow down to me, I'll kill every Jew I can."

In verses 8 – 11, Haman convinces the king to write and sign a decree giving Haman permission to carry out his plot. Under Persian customs, once a king issued a decree, it could not be revoked. Noticed though, Haman did not tell the king the whole story. He did not tell the king specifically what law was broken or who was the perpetrator of the "crime", or his true motive. Haman only told half of the truth in order to convince the king to give him permission to carry out his evil deed.

Now Haman hated Mordecai so much that he was willing to "put his money where his mouth was" and gave 10,000 talents of silver to carry out the killing of all Jews. Now a talent weighs about 75 pounds. So, Haman was willing to donate 750,000 pounds of silver to kill all Jews because of Mordecai. At today's prices that's about \$60,000,000. Again, we can see how corrupt his thinking was.

**Key Point:** Don't be surprised by what an unsaved, un-regenerated mind can conceive.

*Can you give an example of how this "un-regenerated" thinking has influenced our society? Individual people? The church?*

### Esther 4 Purpose Revealed

Chapter 4 is really the turning point of the story. Mordecai sends a eunuch to Esther to explain all that was about to happen. He begs her to go before the king and plead to him for the lives of the Jews. To do this would mean that she could face death. No one was allowed to approach the king without being summoned by him first. When she tells Mordecai of her dilemma, Mordecai responds by saying that deliverance from the Jews will come, but she and her family will perish anyway if she remains silent. But verse 14 is key; Mordecai also says the following:

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"...And who knows but that you have come to a royal position for such a time as this?" (NIV)

This was her purpose. God had placed her in this position at this time for this specific purpose. Sometimes the purpose God has for us involves risk. In Esther's case, she risked her life. But if God called you to a purpose, He will provide all that you need to fulfill it. The key is trusting Him. **Trusting God is not an emotion, it is a decision...a decision based on the character of God, not the circumstances.**

Esther made the decision to trust God and approach the king. Notice how she instructed Mordecai to have all the Jews in Susa to fast for three days. Routinely when there was a crisis, God's people fasted, prayed, and sought Him for guidance. That's exactly what Esther did.

**Key Point:** In the midst of a major decision, seek God first. Consider a fast with the purpose of hearing from the Lord.

**Key Point:** When you've heard from the Lord, leave the consequences up to Him.

#### Purpose in Action Esther 5 - 7

Esther's prayer and fasting resulted in a plan, a particular way to saving her people. Instead of approaching the king and immediately begging for mercy for her people, she depended on the favor she had with him (Esther 2: 9, 17) and invited him and Haman to a banquet. This was done twice before she informed Xerxes of the real problem.

Another key element that was put into action was Mordecai being honored. In Chapter 6, it "just so happened" that the King could not sleep on night before the banquet and he had the annals read to him, i.e., the official historical record of his reign. And it "just so happened" that the section was read that talked about how Mordecai revealed a plot against the king's life and was never rewarded. And it "just so happened" that Haman, ended up suggesting to the king "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor". Haman mistakenly thought that the king wanted to honor him. Haman had actually come to see the king to get permission to hang Mordecai. And it "just so happened" that Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai. Also, it "just so happened" that all ten of Haman's sons were killed. So ended the man who wanted to kill all Jews.

*Can you think of times in your life where several circumstances "just so happened" to work out in your favor, in the right sequence, at the right time, involving the right people?*

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**Key Point:** There are no true “accidents” in life; all things are under the sovereign power of God.

#### Bringing Things to a Close

At the proper time, Esther revealed her true heritage and the plot against her people. Haman was hanged on the gallows he had made for Mordecai, and the king issued another decree that saved the Jews from their enemies.

#### Summary

Esther, like all of us, was made with a purpose in mind. All the events of her life were directed by God to fulfill His purpose. The fact that she was raised by Mordecai, Xerxes got angry with Vashti and started looking for another queen, Esther won favor with Xerxes, her keeping her race a secret until the proper time, the way she ultimately saved her people, were all ordained and directed by God. Even though God’s name was never mentioned in the book, we can see how He directed the lives and events of all the key people of this story.

And that’s how He works in our lives. As we yield ourselves to Him and devote ourselves to knowing Him better, we will begin to see His purpose for our lives more clearly. There are no accidents with God. You are not an accident. You are a precious child of the creator of the universe. If you’re not His child yet, what are you waiting on? There’s a great purpose for your life ahead of you.

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