



[Leader Note: show a compilation video of perfectly timed photos. Something like: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B409Yw8DBW8>]

Introduction

SLIDE 02 – Luck Chance

Do you believe in luck or chance?

Have you ever have those moments where you weren't sure how you got what you got, and it seemed like it was just luck?

Do you believe in random chance? Chance is when you think that something can happen without you trying and without regard to what you have done. They are just random happenings.

Here's an example of something just random that happened in my life recently.

[Leader Note: for this example, I shared something weird and out of place that happened in my life. Don't get spiritual here, just be funny and random.]

Today, we are going to talk about something that was also random. In fact, it might have been so random that it could be considered "lucky."

Before we dig deep into the Scripture, let me set the greater context for you so you know what is going on first.

Context Summary

The passage we are going to read is described in the Book of Esther. Esther was a young Jewish woman who lived during the reign of King Xerxes, ruler of Persia. Xerxes is the god-king depicted in the movie, "300," just so you know what I am talking about here. Esther was a part of the first round of Jews who returned to Jerusalem and the Promised Land to resettle after being sent away in exile as slaves. Previously, the Jews had been enslaved and shipped out of their home country for several hundred years. It was a big deal that they were allowed to return to Jerusalem, but it

was still a very difficult time for the Jews, since they were occupied by the Persian Empire.

In the Book of Esther, we will learn the story of an unlikely hero and the winner of a beauty pageant in which she did not wish to compete. Her Jewish name was Hadassah, and she was renamed as Esther, which means “star.”

What is so interesting and odd is that in this book of the Bible, the name, “God,” is never mentioned. Even though God never speaks in the Book of Esther, it is clear that God was at work behind the scenes of the events that are described in this story.

Let’s jump into this story.

God’s Movement in the Background

Esther 2:7-8 (ESV) – 7 He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter. 8 So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered in Susa the citadel in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women.

Hadassah was a Jewish young lady, and she became the hero of this “lucky” story. God was at work behind the scenes, and we will figure out why it was important that Hadassah, now named Esther, became one of the king’s wives. Esther did not have a lot going for her, since she was orphaned and was being raised by her uncle, Mordecai.

It was a cultural habit for the ruling king to take a wife from each of the people he conquered. As Xerxes continued to reign over the Jews, he chose wives from the Jews, and Esther was the one he chose. You may see Esther being chosen as a wife for the king as an unfortunate, random event, but God was at work behind the scenes.

God’s work continued as Esther won favor with the king.

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