

## Esther 2 – Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017

1 After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her.

- The chapter begins with the familiar introduction of, “after these things,” which is an indication that a period of time has passed.
- It’s believed it’s been about four years between chapter one and two, in which the king suffered defeat at the hands of Greece.
- Some suggest that because of this King Ahasuerus is now having second thoughts and regretting what he had done to Vashti.

2 Then the king’s servants who attended him said: “Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king; 3 and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women’s quarters, under the custody of Hegai the king’s eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them. 4 Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” This thing pleased the king, and he did so.

- We’re told of this plan to bring what historians believe would have been about 400 women to the king for him to select a queen.
- While some commentators liken this to a beauty contest, this was really more like a plan to abduct women to add to his harem.
- This because, those women not selected would be taken as such and never be able to marry another man and have a family.

5 In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. 6 Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

- Here we’re introduced to Mordecai and his lineage, which tells us that he would be Esther’s cousin who becomes her father.
- To say that God uses Mordecai mightily in His providential sovereignty would be an understatement, as we will see very soon.
- Also, this would probably be as good of a time as any to mention that we are in store for some amazing typology in this book.

7 And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

- Couples of thoughts here on verse seven as we’re now introduced to Esther, the first of which is that Hadassah was her name.
- Hadassah means “myrtle tree” and it was changed to Esther, which again means “morning star,” and both are very significant.
- It’s interesting to note the delineation in the narrative concerning Esther being both lovely and beautiful on the inside and out.

8 So it was, when the king’s command and decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered at Shushan the citadel, under the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king’s palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women.

- You’ll forgive my referencing historians like Josephus, but they do fill in many blank spaces for us and such is the case in v. 8.
- Specifically as it relates to Mordecai attempting to hide his lovely and beautiful cousin so she would not be taken to the king.
- The reason I mention this interesting detail is because it speaks to how God rules over all and over rules all the plans of man.

9 Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king’s palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best place in the house of the women.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is how Esther’s beauty inwardly must have really stood out.
- So much so, that she finds such favor in the custodian’s sight that he provides her with exceptional and additional treatment.
- To me, verse eight speaks to the paramount importance of our having an inward godliness and character in the sight of man.

Proverbs 3:3–4 (NKJV) — 3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart, 4 And so find favor and high esteem In the sight of God and man.

10 Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it.

- At first read, one might come away with the impression that what Mordecai had Esther do her was in some way being dishonest.
- However, upon closer examination, it becomes abundantly clear this is wisdom and prudence, by virtue of God’s providence.
- The reason being is the timing was not right in the sense that God will present the perfect opportunity and in the perfect time.

11 And every day Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women’s quarters, to learn of Esther’s welfare and what was happening to her.

- In order to better understand what Mordecai does here, it’s important to note that Esther is actually in a dangerous situation.
- Naturally, he wants to keep himself apprised of how she’s doing, and him doing so will prove to be very valuable yet future.
- Again, this is the hand of God working providentially in and through Mordecai as He orchestrates and choreographs each step.

12 Each young woman’s turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months’ preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women.

- There’s a very interesting detail here in verse twelve and it has to do with completing the preparation process in twelve months’.
- The thought is that a year of preparation would be enough time to insure that none of the women had become pregnant prior.
- The reasoning behind this was to insure that the king would never have a son or daughter that had not been fathered by him.

13 Thus prepared, each young woman went to the king, and she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace. 14 In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called for her by name. 15 Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her.

- I can't help but notice how much Esther must have been so different than all the other women who themselves were beautiful.
- It's obvious that Esther's wisdom was such that it wouldn't escape the notice of all who would have seen her or talked with her.
- I would suggest that all who saw her had never seen anyone like her, especially when she only took what Hegai told her to.

Proverbs 31:30 (NKJV) — 30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

16 So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 17 The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

- Often times when we read God's Word we have the tendency to only see what happened at the expense of who it happened to.
- Let me explain, here is a young Jewish woman born into captivity, whose parents died, and now she's exalted to being queen.
- The reason I point this out is because, like Joseph before her, God, as only He can has brought her from the pit to the pinnacle.

Psalms 75:6-7 (NKJV) — 6 For exaltation comes neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south. 7 But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another.

18 Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king. 19 When virgins were gathered together a second time, Mordecai sat within the king's gate.

- There's a very interesting detail here that could go unnoticed as it relates to Mordecai's position sitting within the king's gate.
- The reason being is that in order for him to do so, he would have an association with and be part of men who were influential.
- Here again, we see God's providence in positioning Mordecai, for such a time as this, just as He is in positioning Esther as well.

20 Now Esther had not revealed her family and her people, just as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai as when she was brought up by him. 21 In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. 22 So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. 23 And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

- The chapter ends with Mordecai, who was perfectly positioned by God within the king's gate, saving the king's life as a result.
- In other words, had he not been in that position, he would have never learned of it, and thus, the king would be assassinated.
- What's interesting about this is that Mordecai is neither acknowledged nor rewarded for saving the king's life, at least not yet.

- As we'll see, and as we already know, he will be rewarded in a very dramatic way and it comes by way of his life being saved.
- The take away from this is that God's providence and God's timing are always perfect! God is never late, but He's never early.
- Truth be known, we don't want Him to be early, lest doing so comes prematurely and in so doing, thwarts God's greater plan.