

240124W – Sermon Notes

## “A Beauty Contest Extraordinaire” Esther 2:1-23

### Prel Rmks

Text ~ Title

### INTRO

#### **Review:**

In chapter 1, we saw that God worked through a number of means to direct the King to carry out His will. **He used:**

1. World Events –
  - first 2 year putting down pockets of rebellion in Egypt and other places.
  - Conflict with Greece ... Ahasuerus' father, Darius ... milit
2. Sinful Debauchery – it was a drunken feast
3. A defiant, strong-willed wife
4. Self-serving advisor – Memucan
5. Bad advice: to roll out an unnecessary kingdom-wide law because of an isolated incident – a law that was irrevocable. 8:8 & Daniel 6:8

Tonight – more of the same.

#### **God used:**

### **I. The Delay Caused by a War 1**

**(1)**

**After these things,**

481-479 = 2 years of war with Greece: famous battle of Thermopylae ~ lost 300 war ships

It took Ahasuerus part of a year to recover

when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, **he remembered affectionately Vashti**, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her.

If there had not been a delay for these years of war, Esther may have been too young to be selected or included in the beauty contest

Or other circumstances may have been different that would have prevented her selection.

**God used the mad lust of a king for greater power and a larger domain, and his desire for revenge against a faraway nation to establish the timing for Esther's selection in the beauty contest.**

## II. The Wicked Plans of the King's Advisors 2-4

(2)

Then **the king's servants who attended him** **likely magi and astrologers** 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 Susa** the **citadel palace in the capital**,

**into the women's quarters**, **under the custody of Hegai** the king's eunuch, custodian of the women.

And let **beauty preparations cosmetics – incense burners or cosmetic burners** 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.

This entire plan and scheme is very wicked! ...

**But God used it!**

## III. Mordecai and Esther Living in Exile 5-7a

(5) **Introduction of Mordecai to the Story**

In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name *was* **Mordecai Babylonian god Marduk** son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.

(6) **The History of How Mordecai Came to Live in Persia**

**Kish Mordecai's great grandfather** been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured **with Jeconiah king of Judah**, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of had Babylon had carried away.  
**2 Kings 24:14-15**

(7a) **The Relationship Between Mordecai and Esther**

And **Mordecai** had brought up **Hadassah myrtle – sweet fragrance**, that is, **Esther Ishtar – the Babylonian goddess of love**, **his uncle's daughter Abihail v. 15 – so they were cousins**, for she had neither father nor mother **she was an orphan**.

## IV. Esther's Beauty (Both Her Inner Beauty and Outer Beauty) 7b-20

### (7b) Esther's Outer Beauty

The young woman *was lovely countenance* and *beautiful frame or figure*. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

Mordecai was about 15 years older than Esther 40/25 or 35/20

### (8) She Was Selected for the Beauty Contest

So it was, when the king's command and decree were heard, and **when many young women were gathered Josephus – 400** 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.**

### (9) She Gained Favor With Hegai and Was Given Favors By Him

Now the young woman **pleased him Hegai**, 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.

### (10) She Was Obedient to Her Adopted Father

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

What are we to think of this verse? Wise or lukewarm?

Probably a little of both! Compare Daniel 1 & 3

**Daniel 3:15-18** Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, *good!* But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my hands?" **(16)** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. **(17)** **If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. (18) But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."**

We don't see that same fervor in either Mordecai or Esther. Instead, there seems to be a spiritual apathy or lukewarmness to them ...

God uses the spiritual failures of individuals, and sometimes groups, or even nations of people to accomplish His intended plans.

**Ex:** The falling away of the Jews for the benefit of the Gentiles.

### **That's what God did here ...**

#### **(11) Even Mordecai Received Favor Because of Esther**

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.

#### **(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.

#### **(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**.

#### **(16)**

So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the **tenth month December/January**, which is the month of Tebeth, **in the seventh year of his reign 479-78**.

#### **(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.

**(18)**

Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed **a holiday tax 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.

**(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.**

## **V. Mordecai's Access to the Palace 21-23a**

**(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.

**(23a)**

And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows;

## **VI. The Detailed Records Kept by the Persians 23b**

and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

### **Conclusion**

The Delay Caused by a War ~ The Wicked Plans of the King's Advisors  
Two Cousins Living in Exile ~ A Woman's Beauty  
A Man In the Right Spot at the Right Time  
The Attention to Detailed Records by the Persians

Once again, God's invisible hand was at work coordinating big things, world-wide events, and little things – the thoughts and prejudices and decisions of people, the customs of the people, and even the sinful plans and actions of people. All to bring about His ultimate purposes:

1. The Protection and Preservation of His People
2. His Redemptive Purposes In Christ.