

Introduction: "Approximately four years have passed between 1:22 and 2:1. In this period Xerxes attacked Greece with large land and naval forces. He won victories at Thermopylae, Athens, and the Acropolis. At Salamis it was very different story. Xerxes personally witnessed the naval battle off the island of Salamis. There in a throne that was brought to the island he sat helplessly by as his fleet sustained heavy losses and then he watched as Greeks annihilated Persian troops that held a small island. In grief, Xerxes rent his robes until he returned to Susa. He executed the Phoenician admirals. A bridge was constructed over the Hellespont and was damaged by a storm. In a rage his engineers were beheaded, the sea was scourged with a whip and the waves were ordered chained. He was losing his mind." (*Treasures from Esther*, p. 44).

1. A Plan Devised (2:2-4)

- a. Ahasuerus remembers Vashti (1)
 - i. The word "remember" has the idea of remembering with fondness.
 - ii. After Xerxes defeat, his attentions turned to his deposed wife.
- b. The counselors plan (2-3)
 - i. His counselors, who had counseled the king to remove Vashti, had to make sure that the king followed through with their plan. If Vashti managed to regain her position as queen, she would certainly have them killed.
 - ii. They convinced the king to search for a new queen.
- c. The King's Hedonism (4)
 - i. "Whoever pleases the king"
 - ii. "And the thing pleased the king"
 - iii. "And he did so."
- d. Application: Ahasuerus was a man who worshipped himself. His life was completely empty. He had it all and yet had nothing. Do not ever buy the lie that the world has something to offer. It is but an illusion. True contentment can only be found in the Lord.

2. A Preserver Determined (2:5-7)

- a. The Man Mordecai
 - i. Mordecai was not a relative of King Saul (5). Many Jewish names were used over and over throughout the centuries even to the present day. The numbers don't work out for Mordecai to be related to King Saul.
 - ii. Mordecai was a descendant of deported Jews (6).
 1. 605 – Daniel taken captive into Babylon while Jeconiah was King of Jerusalem
 2. 597 – Also during the reign of Jeconiah, Kish, Mordecai's great grandfather, was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar
 - iii. Mordecai was Esther's elder cousin and guardian (7).
 1. "Esther" was her Persian name – "star".
 2. "Hadassah" was her Jewish name – "myrtle".
 3. Esther was an orphan.
 4. Esther was very beautiful.
- b. Application: God prepared Mordecai who prepared Esther. Your place in God's plan may not be highly visible, but your place is no less important. Mordecai was every bit as important to God's plan as Esther. Don't diminish your usefulness in the hand of God!

3. A Princess Developed (2:8-14)

- a. Preferential Treatment (8-9)
 - i. Esther was discovered and brought to the palace along with 350-400 other virgins (8).
 - ii. Hegai, the keeper of the king's harem, showed kindness to Esther (9).

1. Things for her purification (a 12 month process)
 2. Food – “things belonging to her”
 3. Seven maids
 4. The best place in the house
- b. A Stark Contrast (10-11)
- i. Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were taken captive into Babylon 2 generations prior. Daniel and his three friends purposed in their hearts that they would not defile themselves with the portion of the kings meat nor the wine which he drank. They chose to honor God, and God exalted them.
 - ii. In stark contrast, Mordecai commanded Esther to hide her identity as a Jewess. We are not told his reasoning, but Esther complied.
- c. Application: Sometimes we find ourselves in adverse situations, sometimes because of bad choices, other times because of situations beyond our control. The beauty of this story is that it’s never too late to be used of God. God’s grace is available to you! Romans 3:20 says, “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” It seems to us that Mordecai and Esther may have made some poor decisions, but when they later cast themselves upon God’s mercy, He used them to bring about a mighty deliverance of His people!
4. A Providential Dawning (2:15-23)
- a. God providentially establishes Esther as queen (15-18).
 - i. Esther obtained favor without manipulation of her own (15).
 1. “She required nothing” (15)
 2. “Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her” (15)
 - ii. Esther obtained favor in the eyes of the king (16-18).
 - iii. Esther continued to honor the counsel of Mordecai (19-20).
 1. Mordecai was likely part of the judicial system (19).
 2. She honored his wishes as she did when she was under his care (20).
 - b. God providentially uses Mordecai to thwart an assassination attempt on the King’s life (21-23).
 - i. Mordecai sat in the king’s gate, likely as a judge in legal matters, where he overheard a plot against the life of King Ahasuerus (21). Mordecai was probably very well acquainted with these co-conspirators, because of his place of influence in the judicial system.
 - ii. Mordecai informed Esther of their plot to kill the King, and Esther sent word to the King in Mordecai’s name (22).
 - iii. The criminals were hung on a gallows, and the details were recorded in the King’s chronicles, which was an official record (23).
 - c. Application: The theme of the book of Esther is that God is faithful to keep His promises to His people, even when His people are unfaithful to Him. Mordecai and Esther did not maintain the same testimony as Daniel and his 3 friends, but God still chose to use them as part of a great deliverance of His people.

Conclusion:

1. God is able to overcome the sinful choices of others through His divine sovereignty and power.
2. When life seems to be out of your control, you can rest in the control of God.
3. Don’t diminish the place that you have in the plan of God. God wants to deliver you and use you as an instrument of deliverance in the lives of others.