

Safe Harbor Baptist Church

11-9-2022 Wednesday night

Esther Sermon 2 “The God who works behind the scenes”

**“The Choosing of Esther”**

Esther 2

**Introduction:**

The Book of Esther is one of two books in the Bible named after a woman. The other of course being the book of Ruth.

Vs 1- *After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.*

Vs 1 will serve as a Review of our last message in Esther 1

In our last message we looked at Esther 1 concerning the feast that King Ahasuerus conducted that last some 187 days.

It was during this wicked feast where there was much eating and consumption of alcoholic beverages and because of the wine and the wickedness of the King’s heart he commanded that his wife, Queen Vashti come out and stand before his guests (which were all men) that they may behold her beauty.

This was a perverted thing to do because in reality he was asking her to come out and stand before these men unclothed.

The Queen refused to obey this wicked request. Once again I want to emphasize that I do not believe that Vashti was a saved woman or a Righteous woman, but she did have a little bit of character to reject this request that was made of her.

The King was now filled with anger and animosity against his wife so he consulted with some of his men and advisors and from this meeting they devised a law against Queen Vashti personally as Vs 1 indicates.

From Esther 1:22-Esther 2:1 some four years has passed.

The King has “sobered up” and he now realizes what he did in his drunken state and it seems as there is a little “regret” or at least he recognizes the mistake and the wrong that he did to his wife.

Point: This is a great lesson to us about not being too hasty to make major decisions, because many times those decisions can come back to haunt us later.

*Vs 2-4 Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king:*

*3 And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them:*

*4 And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.*

The King's servants notice the sadness and regret in the King. And they do not want him to get so lonely that he restores Queen Vashti back to her position because no doubt she would execute judgement on them.

Thus they devise a plan to find the king a new wife.

This was not a beauty contest where all the eligible young ladies would come before the King, and the one he chooses would be the next Queen.

This rather was a very wicked and sad process.

They would gather up all the young Virgin girls of the land, and each night the King would have a new partner and the next morning she would become one of the “concubines” which meant she would only come before the King when called upon.

She could not go home. She could not marry. She could not have any sort of life outside of waiting for the king to call for her.

**Point:** This is exactly what the devil desires to do to our young ladies and even our young men. He wants to use and abuse their lives in the world and keep them in bondage for the rest of their lives.

*Vs 5- Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;*

We are now introduced to another one of the important individuals in this great story, Mordecai. He is mentioned some 58 times in the book of Esther and he plays a great part in the deliverance of the Jew.

Vs 5 gives us his name and pedigree.

Mordecai- little man.

Jair- He will bring to light.

Shimei- the announced.

Kish- Snare or trap.

Mordecai lived up to his name!

God used a little man to bring to light the wicked plan of Hamman to destroy the Jews. He was a snare to Hamman and was announced as the king's right hand in Esther 10.

Vs 6- *Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.*

Mordecai's family had been taken away in the captivity of King Jeconiah.

*Three captivities took place in Judah's history.*

*The first captivity was in 605 BC. When Daniel was taken and the king was Jehoiakim.*

*The second captivity was in 597 BC. During the reign of Jeconiah's reign and it referred to here in Esther.*

*The third captivity was in 596 BC when Zedekiah ruled. (Rod Mattoon, Esther pg. 46)*

The Babylonians made life hard for the Jews while the Persians were a bit more lenient.

In fact, many of the Jews prospered in the Persian empire which is while many of them did not return to the homeland when the captivity released them

Mordecai actually held an official position in the Government and served the king.

Vs 7- *And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.*

After 30 verses in the book of Esther we finally get officially introduced to Esther!

Her Hebrew name was “Hadassah” which means a Myrtle.

Her Persian name was “Esther” which means a Star.

They tell us that the myrtle tree bears a flower that resembles a star!

As we will learn in this great book, during a dark time God allowed Esther to step out and shine for God in a dark and wicked day!

Matthew 5:14-16 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

*15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

*16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

We learn in Vs 7 that not only was Esther a beautiful woman, but she was also a virgin which speaks of her purity.

Even though she was living in wicked land she still remained pure!

Vs 8-9 *So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.*

*9 And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women.*

Esther has now been brought in to the Harem where there were 3 chambers, One for the Virgins, one for the Concubines and one for the Queen.

God allowed Esther to obtain favor and kindness with Hegai, the keeper of the women and God used this wicked man to help prepare Esther to be in a position where eventually she would save a nation!

**Application:** God often uses different things and unlikely things in our lives to prepare for other things down the road.

Moses was keeping sheep, before God called him to lead the children of Israel out of bondage.

Gideon was separating wheat before God used him to sift out an army.

David slew a bear and a lion before he slew Goliath.

James, John and Peter were fishermen, before Jesus made them “fishers of men”

God may be using unusual situations right now to prepare you for something that is down the road.

Vs 10- *Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it.*

Esther not showing her nationality was not a sign of being deceptive or dishonest but rather it was Mordecai showing wisdom in instructing her not to do so.

Had she revealed her nationality she would have never been able to save her people because most likely she would not have been chosen as the Queen and she would have died in Haman's plot.

Vs 11- *And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.*

Every day Mordecai would walk in front of the court of women where Esther was located for the simple purpose of check on her safety and well being.

Vs 12-14 *Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;)*

*13 Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.*

*14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.*

These women that would go before the king would go through a 12 month preparation time that included a specific diet, purifications, perfume and other methods of preparation.

Vs 14- After all this preparation took place the young lady would then go and spend the night with the king.

This is a very wicked and sinful scene and certainly not the way to choose a spouse.

But America today promotes this kind of wicked behavior with T.V. shows like “The Bachelor” and “The Bachelorette” where fornication and adultery is promoted on the T.V. screens before families.

This kind of behavior is fornication!

*Vs 15-16 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.*

*16 So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.*

Esther's time has now come to go before the king.

**We must stop and clarify somethings!**

The Bible records everything, both the good and the bad! Just because God's word records events that happened certainly does not mean that God approved of such wicked and lustful actions.

Esther also does not have a choice in this matter. It was either do what they said or die!

The lesson that I want us to note here is a twofold lesson:

**God will allow things to happen that he does not approve of!**

**“God’s allowance is not God’s approval!”**

God allows abortions, but does not approve of them.

God allows fornication and adultery, but does not approve of them.

Why does God “allow” these bad things to happen?

The answer to this question is because God has given man a freewill. Man is not a robot, but rather a free moral agent!

Does God use the actions of man to work out his will? Yes! That is what the book of Esther is all about. But this does not mean that God approves of wicked deeds.

**The second lesson** I want to emphasize is that sadly many times in life, bad things happen!

This is apart of life!

Joseph was forsaken and framed.

Daniel was conspired against.

Paul was imprisoned.

Vs 17- *And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.*

The king approved and loved Esther above all the other woman.

I believe that it was more than a sensual love, I truly believe that the king had a sincere love and care for Esther because of things we will see later in this book.

Here is this little Jewish captive girl, now being crowned as the next Queen!

Do you see God’s hand working behind the scenes?

Had it been any other girl than the Jews would have been in great danger, but we are serving a God who works behind the scenes!

*Vs 18- Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.*

To celebrate the fact that the King had found a new wife and replacement for the office of the Queen he once again throws a feast and celebration. (This is the 4<sup>th</sup> feast recorded in the book of Esther)

This celebration resembles the Jewish version of the “Year of Jubilee” which was a time when debts would be forgiven, servants and slaves would be set free and the ground would not be plowed to allow the land to rest.

Needless to say Queen Esther’s new position had already brought great joy to her new subjects as Queen.

*Vs 19-20- And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate.*

*20 Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.*

Cousin Mordecai throughout this entire book is always close by keeping watch on his young niece, who is now the Queen over the land. He has continued to give her council and advice even in her new position as Queen.

*Vs 21-23- In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus.*

*22 And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name.*

*23 And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.*

The scene seems to quickly change as we are reading the text to another event that seems to be out of place in the flow of our story.

These verses teach us about 2 individuals named Bigthan and Teresh. These 2 men were Eunuchs and according to our text became angry and filled with animosity against the King to the point that they planned his assassination.

We do not know the full story but somehow, Mordecai found out about this plan, and informed Esther of the plot and she was able to inform the authorities to handle the matter.

According to Vs 23 these men were convicted and executed, most likely by being impaled to a tree, this was a common practice of the Persians.

Conclusion:

Practical lessons from Esther 2.

1. God can work through bad situations. Vs 5-7

Mordecai had been taken captive, but now he is in a place of leadership, and no longer a captive.

He cannot see the full picture now, but God is using his difficult life to develop him to be used by God and for God in a great manner in future days.

2. Bad things happen in life. Vs 8-20

Esther was taken into a situation that was not pleasant nor desirable, but God can work through bad things!

3. There will be a payday, someday. Vs 21-23

Mordecai did the right thing by reporting the men who were planning to kill the king. But there was no appreciation given, not even any acknowledgement, but little did Mordecai know that this deed had been recorded and there would be a payday in the future!