**Esther 2:1-23 April 18, 2021**

**Esther Becomes Queen**

Xerxes Looks for a New Queen Esther 1:1-4

* Vashti had been deposed as queen for failure to appear at the **king’s command**
  + No one, not even the queen, was permitted to disobey an order from the king
  + It would have set a bad precedent across the kingdom for all the subjects that the king’s commands can be ignored
* A search was to be done across all of Persia
  + The most beautiful virgin women across the Empire were to be added to the king’s harem
  + These women would be given cosmetics and ointments for one year
  + The king would spend time with each young woman and select one of them to be the new queen
* Xerxes agrees to this proposal
  + The decree went out across Persia and the young women were brought to Susa, where the king was living at the time

Esther is Added to the King’s Harem Esther 2:5-11

* Mordecai’s family and Hadassah’s (Esther’s) family were Israelites (Jews) and taken captive by the Babylonians
  + Their families apparently did not return to Israel when Cyrus allowed it
  + They remained in Persia under Xerses’ rule
* Esther’s parent had died (unknown cause)
  + Mordecai, **Esther’s cousin**, took her in to care for her during her young years
  + He treated Esther as if she were his own daughter
  + Esther was physically beautiful
* She was able gain favor with the eunuch in charge of the harem
  + This gave her the best of everything to be prepared for the king, when her time would come
* Mordecai kept a close watch on his cousin
  + He was not permitted into the harem, but he apparently was able to communicate regularly with Esther

Esther Becomes Queen Esther 2:12-18

* Esther **was wise**, consulting the man who knew Xerxes’ desires best and conducted herself accordingly
  + Esther’s actions demonstrate her winsome nature
  + “Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her” (Esther 2:15b)
* Esther spent her night with Xerxes and he was delighted with her
  + She found “kindness” with the king
  + The author is giving us a subtle clue about this kindness
* Xerxes elevated Esther to be his queen
  + The royal banquet announced to the kingdom that they had a new queen

Xerxes’ Life is Spared Esther 2:19-23

* Mordecai kept himself close to Esther
  + Because of his proximity to her, he was able to learn of an **assassination plot**
  + God had placed him at the right place at the right time to intervene for the king

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