



Pastor Andy
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Single Focus

Pursuing Persian Promotions

Act 1: The King pursues a new Queen (2:1-4)

Scene 1:

The King Reflects (2:1)

- Xerxes remembered...
 - ◆ Vashti (v. 1a)
 - ◆ What Vashti had done (v. 1b)
 - ◆ What had been decreed against her (v. 1c)
 - Vashti was kicked out...permanently.
- Did he love her? Probably not.
 - ◆ Her replacement was meant to satisfy his sexual desires.
 - ◆ His request for Vashti at the party showed what he really valued about her.

Scene 2:

Xerxes' Change of Focus: Getting a Better Queen! (2:2-4)

- ◆ These young men feared retaliation of Xerxes or possibly Vashti.
- ◆ They initiated this alternative: “Let beautiful young virgins be sought out for the king” (v. 2).
- ◆ “What a liability to be beautiful!”—Baldwin



Act 2: Jews Pursuing Persian Positions

Scene 1:

Introductions of these Jews (2:5-7)

- ◆ Mordecai
 - Similar to the Babylonian name Mardukaya
 - It means warrior.
 - His father was captured by Babylon.
- ◆ Esther
 - Hebrew name- Hadassah- myrtle
 - “Esther” means star
 - This name comes from the pagan goddess “Ishtar,” who was the goddess of love and war.
 - She was lovely to look at (2:7; see also 1:11)
- ◆ This is a disappointing introduction:
 - ◆ Why are these Jews still in Susa?
 - ◆ Why do they keep using their Pagan names?
 - ◆ Why are they pursuing Persian promotions?

Scene 2:

Esther’s Entrance into the Contest (2:8-11)

Moral Dilemma: Was Esther taken, or did she volunteer?

- ◆ Esther was _____ (2:8b)
- ◆ Same word as when _____ *took* her (2:7).
- 2 words which display both Esther’s sin and God’s sovereignty:
 - ◆ Pleased
 - ◆ Favor
- Esther was given...
 - ◆ Cosmetics



- ◆ Food
- ◆ 7 young women
- ◆ Best place in the harem

Mordecai's advice: Don't tell them that you are a Jew!

Why did Mordecai advise her this way? Here are 3 possibilities:

- ◆ Anti-Israel sentiments
- ◆ Restrictions on who the King could marry
- ◆ Political advancement

How Esther advanced:

- ◆ She won favor.
- ◆ She used her pagan name.
- ◆ She ate the pagan food.
- ◆ She concealed her nationality.

Contest Regulations:

- ◆ Preparation for 12 months
 - 6 months of myrrh (v. 12a)
 - 6 months of spices and ointments (v. 12b)
- ◆ Process
 - She could bring whatever she wanted with her from the harem (v. 13)
 - She would have one night with the king.
 - After that night, she would go to the second harem.

Contest Results: Esther won!

- ◆ The King responded immediately.
- ◆ She received the royal crown.



Scene 3:
Mordecai Kills the Murder Plot (2:19-23)

- ◆ Mordecai received this knowledge of the murder plot at the king's gate (v. 21)
- ◆ He told Esther, who told King Xerxes “in the name of Mordecai” (v. 22).

God placed Mordecai in the right place at the right time.

God's Sovereignty in the Shadows

- ◆ Esther's Persian name- goddess of love and war
- ◆ Esther's name
- ◆ The words pleased and favor
- ◆ A perfect replacement for Vashti
- ◆ Hiding her nationality (even if it was wrong to do)
- ◆ Mordecai sitting in the king's gate at the right time

Practical Applications

- ◆ Do you blend in with the world, or do you stand out for God? (Matt. 5:14-16, Rom. 12:1-2, 1 John 2:15-17)
- ◆ Are you willing to make compromises in order to get what you want?
- ◆ Do you see people as people or as objects? No person can ever fulfill all of your needs like Jesus can!
- ◆ God still works in our lives despite our sin.