

Now, It Just So Happens...

“Later when the anger of King Xerxes had subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what he had decreed about her. Then the king’s personal attendants proposed, “Let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king. ³ Let the king appoint commissioners in every province of his realm to bring all these beautiful young women into the harem at the citadel of Susa. Let them be placed under the care of Hegai, the king’s eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let beauty treatments be given to them. ⁴ Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” This advice appealed to the king, and he followed it.”
- Esther 2:1-4

NOTE:

- Much time has passed as chapter 2 begins (“Later...”)
- Much time passed in chapter 2 (*In fact, more than a year*)

⁵ Now there was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, ⁶ who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin king of Judah.

²¹ During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. ²² But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. ²³ And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were impaled on poles. All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.”
- Esther 2:5-7, 21-23

MORDECAI

- He is the hero of the story and a favourite of the Jewish people.
- Mordecai’s name means “*belonging to Marduk*”
- His name is used 51 times in the book. (*More than any other name!*)
- He was from the line of King Saul.
“Now there was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish...”
- Esther 2:5
- Mordecai learned of a plot to assassinate the king and reported it but received no reward (yet).

Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died. ⁸ When the king’s order and edict had been proclaimed, many young women were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Hegai. Esther also was taken to the king’s palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. ⁹ She pleased him and won his favour. Immediately he provided her with her beauty treatments and special food. He assigned to her seven female attendants selected from the king’s palace and moved her and her attendants into the best place in the harem. ¹⁰ Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so. ¹¹ Every day he walked back and forth near the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her. ¹² Before a young woman’s turn came to go in to King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments prescribed for the women, six months with oil of myrrh and six with perfumes and cosmetics. ¹³ And this is how she would go to the king: Anything she wanted was given her to take with her from the harem to the

king’s palace. ¹⁴ In the evening she would go there and in the morning return to another part of the harem to the care of Shaashgaz, the king’s eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would not return to the king unless he was pleased with her and summoned her by name.

¹⁵ When the turn came for Esther (the young woman Mordecai had adopted, the daughter of his uncle Abihail) to go to the king, she asked for nothing other than what Hegai, the king’s eunuch who was in charge of the harem, suggested. And Esther won the favour of everyone who saw her.

¹⁶ She was taken to King Xerxes in the royal residence in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. ¹⁷ Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favour and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. ¹⁸ And the king gave a great banquet, Esther’s banquet, for all his nobles and officials. He proclaimed a holiday throughout the provinces and distributed gifts with royal liberality. ¹⁹ When the virgins were assembled a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king’s gate. ²⁰ But Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai’s instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up.”
- Esther 2:7-20

ESTHER

- Her Jewish name was Hadassah but her Persian name became Esther. *Several meanings:*
- She and all the women were given one year of beauty treatments.
- Esther was the favourite of the eunuch in charge of the women and, in fact, became everyone’s favourite.
- Esther was also the king’s favourite and he made her the queen.
- In all of this, Esther kept her nationality a secret.

NOW IT JUST SO HAPPENS...

1. That Persia needed a new queen at this time.
2. That a “contest” would be held to find a new queen.
3. That Esther, a Jewish girl, was beautiful; was found; was favoured by everyone including the king; and was chosen.
4. That Mordecai was sitting at the gate at just the right time to hear of an assassination plot and was able to report it.

HOW DO WE “PROCESS” GOD’S PROVIDENCE IN OUR LIVES?

1. We don’t worry about it, nor should we try to understand it all.
2. We make the most of every opportunity because we believe that God can use us at any time and at any place.
3. We live obediently, knowing that God can only use us if we are where He wants us to be... and we trust Him.

OUR KEY THOUGHT

- Only God puts me in the right place at the right time!

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