

6 Events Pointing to the Providence of God.

Providence means that God carefully directs the events of history to fulfill His plans. Many good things happen in this world, and many bad things happen in this world, and amid the good and the bad, God is working out a plan that fulfills His purpose.

Esther 2 is a story about the dark ways of the world. It's a story about a prideful, selfish king who refused to admit when he was wrong. It's a story about women who were pampered at first and yet ended up being used and abused. It's a story about immoral activity, and it's a story that includes servants of the king attempting to commit treason. This is a story that includes the dark ways of this world in which we live, and yet, amid all the darkness, it's a story about the providential hand of God at work.

THE DARK WAYS OF THE WORLD CANNOT ESCAPE THE PROVIDENTIAL HAND OF GOD.

How does this chapter show us that? In this chapter, a sequence of six events reveals that the dark ways of the world cannot escape God's hand.

Event #1 - The king was lonely. 2:1-4

2 After these things, when the anger of King Ahasuerus had abated, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her. 2 Then the king's young men who attended him said, "Let beautiful young virgins be sought out for the king. 3 And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom to gather all the beautiful young virgins to the harem in Susa the citadel, under custody of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women. Let their cosmetics be given them. 4 And let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti." This pleased the king, and he did so.

These events occurred around 480 B.C., and King Ahasuerus is better known in the secular world as King Xerxes. These events did happen. The ways of our world can be dark, but as we'll see, they do not escape the providential hand of God. God was working His plan through these wild events.

Event #2 - The virgins were drafted. **2:5-11**

5 Now there was a Jew in Susa the citadel whose name was Mordecai... 7 He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was

lovely to look at, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter. ⁸ So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many young women were gathered in Susa the citadel in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai, who had charge of the women. ⁹ And the young woman pleased him and won his favor. And he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and her portion of food, and with seven chosen young women from the king's palace, and advanced her and her young women to the best place in the harem. ¹⁰ Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known. ¹¹ And every day Mordecai walked in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her.

Mordecai didn't choose where he was born. He didn't choose to whom he was born. It was God who decided that. The same was true for Esther. God ordained the days of her life. She was born at a certain time in a certain place. Her parents both passed away. That was out of her control, but it did not escape the hand of God.

God used Mordecai and Esther. He placed them both in the right place at the right time to be instruments in His hands to accomplish His purposes for His people and His glory. I

don't want us to read this story without realizing that the real hero of the story is God.

Event #3 - The women were used. **2:12-14**

¹² Now when the turn came for each young woman to go in to King Ahasuerus, after being twelve months under the regulations for the women, since this was the regular period of their beautifying, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and ointments for women—¹³ when the young woman went in to the king in this way, she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. ¹⁴ In the evening she would go in, and in the morning she would return to the second harem in custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch, who was in charge of the concubines. She would not go in to the king again, unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

This represents the darker side of the world. Yet, even in these bleak situations, we learn that God can still be at work. Sometimes, it's only after people cross the line that they finally realize the world's ways didn't satisfy, and that realization draws them to God.

Event #4 - The queen was selected. **2:15-18**

15 When the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his own daughter, to go in to the king, she asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who had charge of the women, advised. Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her. 16 And when Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign, 17 the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. 18 Then the king gave a great feast for all his officials and servants; it was Esther's feast. He also granted a remission of taxes to the provinces and gave gifts with royal generosity.

What was it about Esther that led to her victory? It was the sovereign God of the universe who shaped her into the person she was, placed her in her circumstances, and granted her grace and favor with others.

Event #5 - The plot was exposed. 2:19-22

19 Now when the virgins were gathered together the second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. 20 Esther had

not made known her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had commanded her, for Esther obeyed Mordecai just as when she was brought up by him. ²¹ In those days, as Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. ²² And this came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai.

How did Mordecai find out? By the providential hand of God.

Event #6 - The deed was recorded. 2:23

²³ When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows. And it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

3 commendable qualities of Mordecai

1. He cared for more than just himself. **2:7**
2. His concern was the welfare of the one entrusted to his care. **2:11**
3. He spoke up when he saw evil. **2:22**

5 commendable qualities of Esther

1. She was a quiet, humble, and obedient woman. **2:10**
2. She was wise and listened to advice. **2:15**
3. She was obedient to her authority figures. **2:20**
4. She was not changed by fame. **2:20**

5. She was willing to expose evil. **2:22**

I want to leave us with 4 thoughts of application.

1. Our decisions in life have consequences. Learn from King Ashuherus's bad example.
2. When things do go well for you, don't let it go to your head. There's a God who permitted it all to happen.
3. When things don't go well for you, remember that God is working together a bigger and better plan for His glory.
4. Even though none of us are perfect, God still watches over His own children (John 1:13).