

I. An Atmosphere of Watchful Secrecy (10-11)

A. Mordecai employed faith on Esther's behalf (10) - “Esther had not made known her people or kindred, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known.”

B. Mordecai tracked the facts on Esther's behalf (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.”

II. A System of Sexualized Power (12-15a)

A. The women were groomed to please the king (12-13) - “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.”

B. The king was sexually serviced by the women (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.” **One young woman would become the queen, the rest would be unmarried concubines for life**

C. Esther had her purity taken (15a) - “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...”

III. Esther Was Protected & Promoted by God (15b-18)

A. An unseen hand held Esther (15b) - “Now Esther was winning favor in the eyes of all who saw her.”

B. An sovereign hand turned the heart of the king (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, 17a the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins...”

C. A gracious hand promoted Esther (17b-18) - “...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.”