

VICTORY--Esther 1-2 By Pastor Robby Bradford

(Esther 1:1-4) **These events happened** in the days of **King Xerxes**, who reigned over 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia. At that time Xerxes ruled his empire from his royal throne at the fortress of Susa. In the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. He invited all the military officers of Persia and Media as well as the princes and nobles of the provinces. The celebration lasted **180 days**—a tremendous display of the opulent wealth of his empire and the pomp and splendor of his majesty.

(Esther 1:7-8) Drinks were served in **gold goblets** of many designs, and there was an abundance of royal wine, reflecting the king's generosity. By edict of the king, **no limits** were placed on the drinking, for the king had instructed all his palace officials to serve each man as much as he wanted.

(Esther 1:10-12) On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was **in high spirits from wine**, he commanded [those] who served him...to bring before him Queen Vashti, **wearing her royal crown**, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at. But when the attendants delivered the king's command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.

✓**Esther is a story about being caught up in ugly and uncontrollable evil forces.**

(Esther 2:1-3) Later when King Xerxes' fury 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. 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."

✓**No matter what happens, never stop believing that God is in control.**

(Esther 2:7) 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.

✓**Your past has never determined your future. God does.**

(Esther 2:10) **Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background**, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so.

(Esther 2:20) 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.

✓God never gives up on us.

(Esther 2:21-23) 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. But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. 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.

SOME FINAL TAKEAWAYS

✓You can't always see the end from the middle.

✓God is never surprised by our circumstances, no matter how bad it looks.

✓Jesus is a better King.

BOTTOM LINE: Trust in the good plan of our good God with the deepest disappointments and wounds of life.