

Lesson 5

The Purification of the Maidens and the Selection of Esther (Esther 2)

Questions

1. What did the king's servants suggest to him concerning the replacement of Vashti (2:1-4)?
2. How are Mordecai and Esther introduced for the first time in this story (2:5-7)?
3. How was Esther treated differently from the other maidens (2:8-11)?
4. What was the routine for the maidens who took turns visiting the king (2:12-14)?
5. What happened when it came time for Esther to take her turn (2:15)?
6. When was Esther taken to the king and how did he feel about her (2:16-18)?
7. What did Mordecai find out while sitting in the king's gate that he revealed to Esther (2:19-23)?

Digging Deeper

1. Who are Jair, Shimei, and Kish? Are they close relatives of Mordecai (father, grandfather, and great-grandfather), or are they distant relatives (2:5)?
2. Who is being carried away captive from Jerusalem (which person mentioned in verse 5)? What is the approximate date for the deportation of Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar? Where in the books of Kings and Chronicles is this particular deportation recorded (2:6)?

3. What is the approximate amount of time that has transpired between chapters 1 and 2 of the book of Esther (2:16; see 1:3)?

Applications for Today

1. Make the best of your situation in life even though it may not always be good (2:5-7; Prov. 16:3).
2. Take care of others when you can (2:7, 15; Zech. 7:10; Lk. 14:13; Jas. 1:27).
3. Have respect for those who take care of you and do what they say (2:10, 20; Eph. 6:1).
4. A good wife not only brings favor from man, but favor from the Lord (2:15, 17; Prov. 8:35; 18:22).
5. When you see something (wrong), say something (2:21-23; Prov. 3:27; 16:13).
6. God's providence is seen in how he caused Esther to "move to the front of the line" in the selection process (2:8-15) and how he caused Mordecai to be honored (2:21-23; Prov. 16:1, 4, 9, 33; 21:1; 19:21; 20:24).