

### Note from Kathy

*In 1 Chronicles 29:10-13, King David expresses his praise to the Lord in such a beautiful way. No wonder he was considered a man after God's heart. Keep these verses in mind as you study this chapter.*

*1 Chronicles 29:10-13*

*"David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, 'Praise be to you, LORD, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. <sup>11</sup>Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. <sup>12</sup>Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. <sup>13</sup>Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.'"*

### Observation

1. Esther 2 opens with what appeared to be a bit of regret. Time has passed, and King Xerxes had probably had a few nights sleeping alone and waking up alone. What had changed for the king?
2. Those closest to the king spoke up. These men would have been accustomed to reading the king's mood and doing something, anything to help. Who were these men, and what was their position?
3. What action was proposed as a possible solution?
4. What did the king think of their plan?
5. There is a man mentioned who would prove to be a main character throughout the book of Esther. What is his name, and what do you learn about him in verses 5-9?
6. Many responded to the order given by King Xerxes. Who was specifically mentioned as one of the candidates in verse 8?
7. Where was she taken, and whose care was she put under?
8. A citadel is a fortress or castle. According to the text, the citadel of King Xerxes was located in \_\_\_\_\_? The nation of Israel has been in captivity for many years, first under the Babylonians for 70 years, and now under Persian rule. A generation had passed. Many of the Jews would return to the land of their ancestors, but this would take place over a span of

many, many years. Nehemiah was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, the son of King Xerxes, and his successor. Nehemiah's journey from Susa to Jerusalem was over 700 miles—we can see on the map, this would be no small journey.



### Esther 1:3

*"...<sup>3</sup>and in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. The military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces were present."*

### Esther 2:12-13

*"Before a girl'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. <sup>13</sup>And this is how she would go to the king..."*

### Esther 2:16

*"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."*

9. How did her caretaker feel about Esther, and what did he do for her?
10. What had Mordecai instructed her to keep silent about?
11. What was the process each of these candidates for queen experienced in preparation?
12. What decision do we see Esther make in verses 14-17? Why was this a very wise choice?
13. Read Esther 1:3, 2:12-13, and 2:16, and then draw out a brief timeline of the events. How long was the search for a new queen?
14. Verses 21-23 tell the story of a very important event. What was the event?

# Application

1. Kings and those in positions of great authority are often unaccustomed to consequences. What do you think King Xerxes was thinking about Queen Vashti once he had sobered up and his anger had subsided? What emotions do you believe he experienced? Have you ever let your anger get away from you and later regretted the outcome?
2. In an effort to help the king return to good spirits, his personal attendants made a suggestion. Are there people you know well enough to read their moods? Do you find yourself making suggestions and trying to solve their problems?
3. We are introduced to Mordecai in verse 5. We have already listed some facts we read about him earlier in our study. Fill in the chart below with the character qualities, traits, or facts you see concerning the **Key People of Esther**. You will not see each one in every chapter. Over the next few weeks simply add any character qualities, traits, or facts you see for each of the people below.


Key Person	Character Qualities
Xerxes	
Vashti	
Mordecai	
Esther	
Haman	

4. Verse 8 reads: "*Esther also was taken to the king's palace.*" Does this sound like a voluntary decision, or do you picture the king's men simply traveling throughout the kingdom and choosing young women who might be good candidates and taking them to the palace? How do you respond when being chosen for an assignment you may or may not want to do?

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## More on the “Favor of God”

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 **Favor** – to regard with kindness; to afford advantages for success, to esteem

### Proverbs 3:1-4

*“My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”*

### Genesis 39:4-5

*“Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. <sup>5</sup>From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had.”*

### Luke 2:52

*“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”*

5. This gathering of women would have resembled the beauty pageants of today. There is always a great deal of time spent in preparation for a contest like this. Notice Esther pleased Hegai, the man in charge of the harem. Other than her physical beauty, which all of these women would have possessed, what do you think might have drawn Hegai's attention?
6. Esther was instructed to keep silent about being a Jew. Sometimes it is better to live our faith than talk about it. What distinctive character qualities should others be able to see in us as Christians, even if they are unaware of our chosen beliefs?
7. I heard someone ask the question one time, “If you were on trial for being a Christian would there be enough witnesses and evidence to convict you?” Could others see the truth about your faith even if you not were allowed to speak of it?
8. The king hosted a great banquet to officially introduce Esther as his new queen. She had still not revealed her nationality. Who was behind her silence? \_\_\_\_\_

She would have been a grown woman, able to make decisions for herself. Why do you believe she followed the instructions given to her by Mordecai?

Continuing to seek counsel from those who care about you is an important and wise quality. Do you consider yourself too old to listen to advice from your parents? In my teens and early 20's, I thought I had life figured out. In my late 20's and early 30's, I began to see things differently, and in my 40's I realized many of the things my parents had tried to tell me were actually true.

Where are you at on a scale of 1-5, 1 being “I am the captain of my own ship,” and 5 being “I am teachable?” This does not mean that others are always correct and you must follow their advice but do you listen and consider it?

9. This chapter ends with Mordecai overhearing a plot to kill the king. He shares this news with Queen Esther; it is investigated and found to be true. The king's life was spared and the men behind this plot received the death penalty. In Esther chapter 2, how does the king or the kingdom thank Mordecai for this act of bravery?

Do you think Mordecai went away mad?

How do you respond to overlooked expressions of gratitude?

Often people sulk if they are not properly rewarded or thanked. They might even get angry about it. Suppose for a moment you found a wallet on the street full of money. You take your time to drive across town and go to the address on the driver's license. The man's wife opens the door and says, "Yes that is my husband's wallet." She takes the wallet and closes the door. What would your response be?

What should our response be as a follower of Christ?

10. What lesson or thoughts did you come away with after studying Esther chapter 2?

