

ESTHER IN THE ROYAL HAREM

- No indication that Esther or any girls were kidnapped or held against their will
- A beauty pageant with the winner to be crowned as Queen of Persia
- Social status and ethnicity not a factor in selection
- Esther told not to speak of her people or her Jewish heritage





- Mordechai went to harem courtyard every day to check on Esther
- Why was he allowed to do this?
- The “interview” process for the harem virgins
- Sometime after the 12 months of preparation, each girl went in to be with the king
- When she returned, she was now a concubine (*pilegesh*) and lived in a different part of the harem house
- This is NOT the way Queens were normally selected !

THE SAD SIDE TO HAREM LIFE

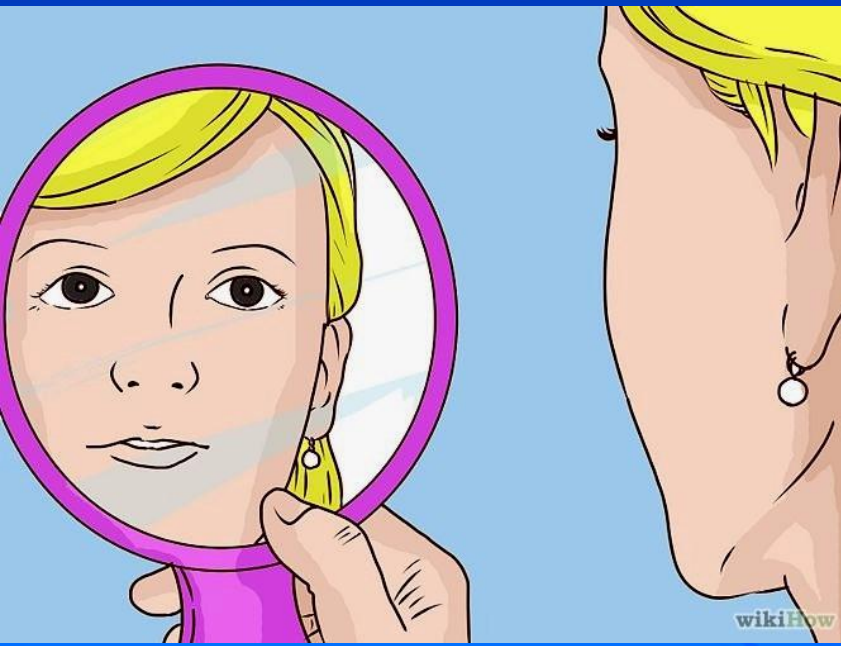


- Once the girl was a concubine, she'd only see the king if asked for by name
- The cruelty of polygamy
- If a girl was able to leave a harem, getting a husband was impossible
- Concubines had a lesser status than the king's wives

ESTHER'S INNER BEAUTY SHINES

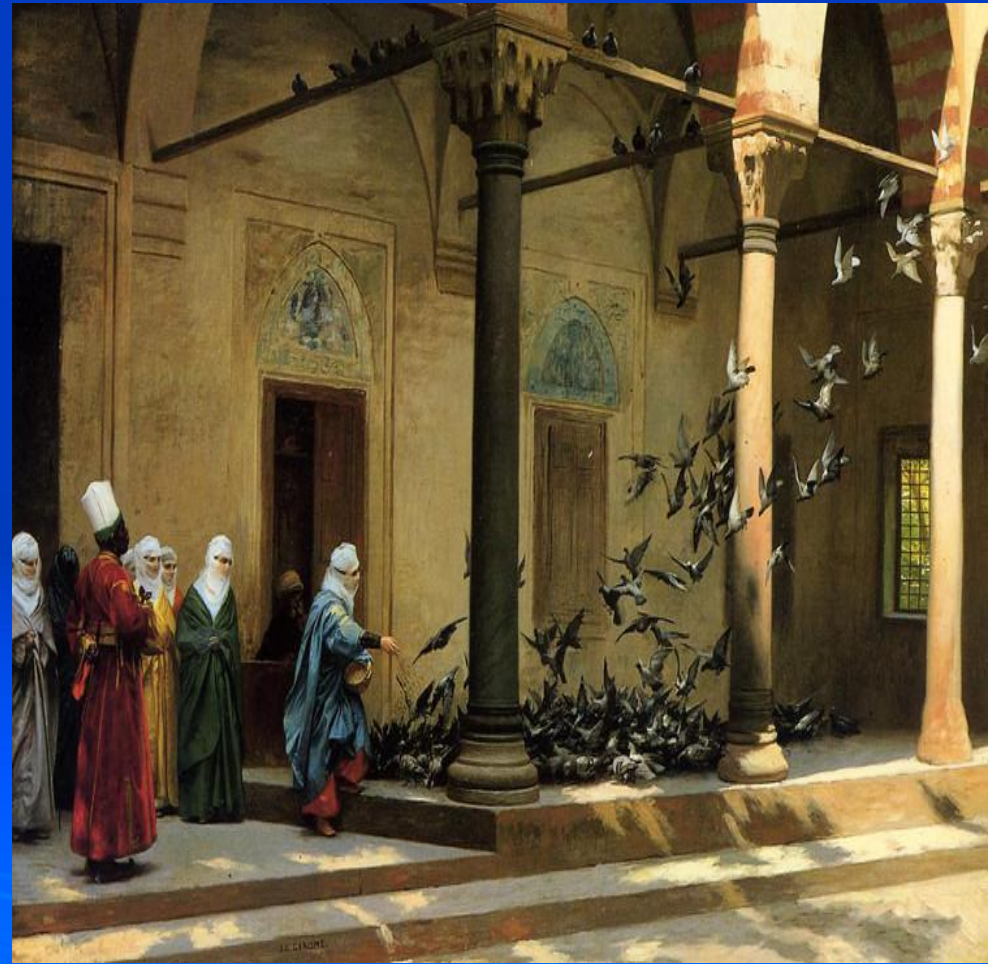


- Esther followed Hegai's advice and didn't ask for a gift
- Esther's bearing won over everyone, even her competition!
- Esther brought to the king on the 10th month of his 7th year
- Number 7 reminds us that the Lord is guiding events
- Septuagint says it was the 12th month (not the 10th)



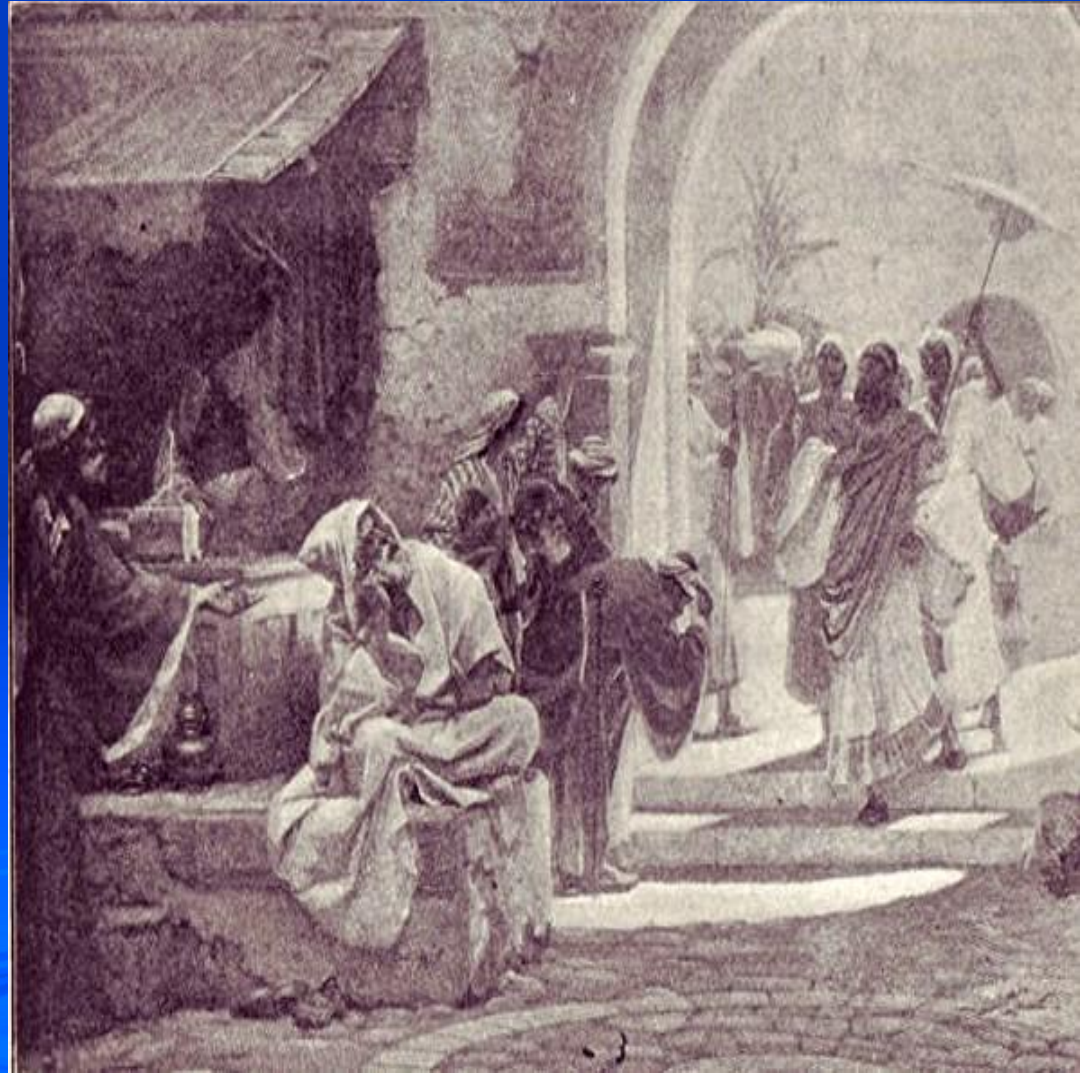
MORDECHAI CAME TO THE GATE WHEN THE HAREM WENT OUTDOORS

- Esther and other girls had been in the harem for nearly 4 years
- What happened to the rest of the girls when Esther was chosen?
- A banquet for Esther, and a holiday plus “release” for the common citizens
- Release is mostly referring to indebtedness to the king
- Septuagint version says that Mordechai was serving in the palace



THE KING'S GATE

- “Sat at the Gate” means to establish Mordechai’s official position, not so much his location
- This comes after Esther is Queen, so it seems like he had gained importance
- Esther did not reveal her Jewishness in these past 4 years
- But she doesn’t seem to know why she is to be quiet about it
- Because she is married she no longer has to obey Mordechai, but does so out of allegiance to him



MORDECHAI DISCOVERS PLOT TO ASSASSINATE KING XERXES



- At the King's Gate Mordechai overhears Bigtan and Teresh conspire to kill the king
- They were gate guards
- Mordechai advises Esther who tells the king
- The matter is proved true and the two are executed and then impaled on stakes

ESTHER CHAPTER 3



- Essentially we have a beauty contest for Miss Persia
- For Esther and the other girls it is more of a Cinderella story to this point
- Mordechai is of royal Benjamite descent
- He attains some kind of official Persian government position
- No display of bigotry or intolerance for Jews as yet
- Esther doesn't seem to know why she can't discuss her Jewishness

GOD'S HAND IS GUIDING THE EVENTS

- The growing series of 7's tells us that the Lord is in full control
- Chapter 3 is full of hidden complexities
- The main villain Haman is introduced
- Hebrew Bible: "Haman the son of Hamdata the Agagite"
- Septuagint: "Haman the son of Amadates the Bugaeon"
- Also: "Haman the son of Amadates the Macedonian"





HAMAN THE AGAGITE

- Agagite = Amalekite
- 1Samuel 15:5 – 11
- Exodus 17:8 – 16
- Amalek will be God's and Israel's archenemy forever
- Israel was to wipe out Amalek, but didn't
- The tribe of Benjamin especially has enmity towards Agagites and vice-versa

MORDECHAI WILL NOT BOW TO HAMAN

- King Xerxes makes Haman the top official of his royal court
- At the King's Gate Mordechai will not show the respect of bowing before Haman
- Mordechai says he won't bow because he's a Jew
- What about being a Jew prevents Haman from showing deference to Haman?

