

The Search for a Queen (Part 1)

Esther 2: 1-9

As we studied chapter one, we discovered a detailed picture of what life was like within the Persian Empire. King Ahasuerus was a man of great wealth and power. He sought to expand the kingdom, and nothing was off limits in his pursuit to do so, not even the integrity and dignity of his wife. After refusing to submit to the king's ridiculous command, Vashti was removed from the throne as queen over the vast empire.

Our text today reveals the search for a new queen to replace Vashti. While many think these verses deal primarily with historical and social information regarding the Persian Empire, we must not miss the sovereign hand of God in the lives of His people during this time. They had been carried away captive due to their rebellion and rejection of the Lord, but they were not forsaken.

We are not faced with physical captivity, but we all deal with adversity and struggles in life. We must remember however, even in our darkest moments, we are never forsaken or abandoned by the Lord. While it may appear at times that our lives are spiraling out of control, the Lord remains sovereign over our lives. Let's examine the [facets](#) of this search for Vashti's replacement as we consider: [The Search for a Queen](#).

I. The Scrutiny in the Search (1-4) – Here we discover the details of the endeavor to find a new queen. Consider:

A. The Perspective (1) – [After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.](#) The text simply says: after these things. We don't know exactly what things are referred to, but we do have a general idea of how much time has passed. The party that preceded Vashti's removal was held during the third year of the reign of Ahasuerus. We know that Esther was crowned queen in the seventh year of his reign. There was a period of preparation that lasted 12 months, prior to her acceptance as queen. It appears there was a period of nearly three years between the removal of Vashti and the crowning of Esther. Many historians believe Ahasuerus was consumed with invading Greece and expanding the empire during this time.

- While three years is not an unreasonable timeframe to secure a replacement for the queen, I am also reminded of our impatience. We live in a fast-paced world and are accustomed to getting results quickly. We must remember that God does not work according to our schedule. He works according to His divine will, properly preparing us for what He is calling us to perform.

B. The Perimeters (2-3) – These verses reveal that the king’s servants approached him with a plan to find Vashti’s replacement. Enough time had expired for the king to have settled down and apparently they felt as if it was time to find Vashti’s successor. These advisors proposed that fair, young virgins be sought throughout all the provinces as a replacement for Vashti. These would be brought to the palace for a time of purification and preparation. When that time was ended, Ahasuerus would choose one of the young virgins to succeed Vashti as queen. This plan pleased the king and the search began to find a new queen.

- Considering the details of [V.1](#), some assume Ahasuerus may have been having second thoughts about removing Vashti. This seems possible; and if that were the case, these advisors sought to devise a plan that would move Ahasuerus away from considering restoring Vashti. (As we will discover, God was already at work behind the scenes. He was using the servants of Ahasuerus to secure His sovereign will.)

C. The Pleasure (4) – [And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.](#) According to the servants’ plan, Ahasuerus would select the virgin that pleased him to succeed Vashti as queen. The king was pleased with their proposal and the search for a new queen began.

- It appears this search was based solely on outward appearance. We will see God’s sovereign hand at work in the process, but the servants were only looking for those who met certain physical criteria. There is no mention of any examination of moral character or requirements regarding integrity. Sadly our world operates much the same way today. Fleshly desire and pleasures dictate many decisions and often have devastating effects.

II. The Sovereignty in the Search (5-7) – The king’s servants were completely unaware of the sovereign plan God had for the new queen in Persia. He was working behind the scenes to orchestrate His choice to succeed Vashti. Consider:

A. The Providence (5) – [Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite.](#) The Jews had been carried away into captivity many years earlier, and yet God had made preparations for this time in their history. He had strategically placed Mordecai, Esther’s cousin and adoptive father, within the palace at Shushan. Prior to the need for a queen, God had placed Mordecai in a position of influence within the palace. God would use Mordecai to elevate Esther as queen.

- Many times we fail to see or recognize it, but the providential hand of God is always at work around us. Our lives are not dictated by luck or mere circumstance. We serve a sovereign God who orchestrates our lives according to His divine will.

B. The Preservation (6) – [Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.](#) Mordecai's family had been enslaved to the Babylonians years earlier. They were conquered by the Persians, and the Jews remained in captivity to the Persians. Through all those years of bondage, while some may have felt as if God had abandoned them, He had preserved them. In fact, even in the midst of captivity, God had allowed His people to prosper. He was working to establish a Jew as queen over the kingdom. They may have endured captivity, but they were not consumed by their captors.

- This brings to mind the security every believer has in Christ. Our lives may face unimaginable difficulty, but we are secure in the Lord. Those who are saved by His grace are destined for eternal life with Him in heaven. While men may be able to bring emotional and physical harm to us, they can never separate us from the hand of Christ our Lord.

C. The Preparation (7) – [And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.](#) When Mordecai learned of the search for a queen, he brought Esther to the palace to be examined by Hegai, the keeper of the women. Her father and mother had died, and Mordecai had raised her as his own daughter. This was no coincidence or mere stroke of luck. God had sovereignly placed Esther within the home of Mordecai to prepare her for such a time as this. No doubt his position within the palace was ordained of God to bring Esther to the throne of Persia. God had prepared them for the work He had for them.

- I can assure you, we have no way of knowing where the will of God may lead us, but we can rest in His divine preparation. As God chooses a path for our lives, He begins to prepare us for the task ahead. He will guide us to the right places and surround us with the right people. He has never called anyone to service without providing all they need to accomplish His will.

III. The Separation in the Search (8-9) – Those who were selected as possible candidates to succeed Vashti were placed in seclusion within the palace. Notice:

A. The Arrival (8) – *So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.* Along with the other prospects, Esther was brought to the palace where she would undergo a time of preparation to appear before the king. The candidates were separated from the general population and cared for within the palace.

- As I considered the sovereignty of God in all of this, I was reminded of His ability to bring us to the exact place we need to be at the right moment in our lives. He brings us to the place of conviction and dependence on Him for salvation. He brings us to the place of submission as we grow in grace and respond to His will for our lives. He always brings us to the right place at the right time if we will only respond to His leading through the Spirit.

B. The Appropriation (9b) – *And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house.* Upon arriving at the palace, Esther immediately received everything she would need to make a successful campaign for queen of Persia. This was not limited to Esther, but we do discover that she was provided with abundance at the palace. Little did the others know, but this search was over before it began. God had already appointed Esther to serve as queen and He would see to it that she obtained the position.

- While we are not promised a life of ease, we are promised the provision of God in our lives. He knows our needs and He is more than able to provide. Again, when God calls someone to an area of service, He provides all that is necessary to accomplish His plan. He does not expect us to serve within our own ability. He equips us for service and places us in an environment to carry out His divine will.

C. The Approval (9) – *And the maiden pleased him...and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women.* Esther quickly gained the favor and approval of Hegai. He placed her and the maidens who served her in the best place within the palace. God gave Esther favor in the sight of men and put her in a position to accomplish His will for her life. She maybe didn't know it yet, but she was already chosen as the new queen for Persia. God had made the decision and He would see to it that she was chosen as queen.

- I rejoice for the gracious, providential hand of God in our lives. We can't see it, but God already knows how our lives will unfold. He is behind the scenes orchestrating our lives according to His divine plan. He has chosen us for Himself, according to His purposes, and He will see to it that His plans are fulfilled.

- I couldn't help but think of the approval we have of the Father through our relationship with the Son. We have the favor of Christ, based on our trusting Him in salvation. Our access to the Lord affords great benefit in this life and the life to come. We enjoy His abundant provisions now, and we will inherit all that heaven offers when this life is through. You may not enjoy the approval of society, but the approval of Christ exceeds any the world could give.

Conclusion: This passage, and the entire book of Esther, serve as a reminder of the sovereignty of God in the lives of men. He would use those who did not know nor serve Him to bring Esther to the place He had planned for her. The world may deny it, but God is in control of our lives and those around us. I am thankful I belong to Him. I am glad He made the way of salvation through the sacrifice of His Son. We can rest in the providential plan of God for our lives.

Are you resting in the Lord or struggling to work life out on your own? Do you know Christ as your Savior? He loves you. He died for your sin so that you might be forgiven and reconciled to God. He wants you to experience salvation in Him. Why not seek the Lord for the needs in your life. If He was able to establish Esther as queen over Persia, He has the ability to meet your need.