

The Search for a Queen (Part 2)

Esther 2: 10-18

We have learned that due to her refusal to accommodate the king's ridiculous demands, Vashti had been removed from her position as queen. After some time had passed, the king's advisors developed a plan to locate and crown a new queen. The plan pleased King Ahasuerus and now the search is well underway.

In our previous study we discussed the beginning facets of the search:

I. The Scrutiny in the Search (1-4)

II. The Sovereignty in the Search (5-7)

III. The Separation in the Search (8-9)

Today I want to continue considering the [facets](#) of this search as we conclude our study of: [The Search for a Queen](#).

IV. The Secrecy in the Search (10-11) – Here we find details of the concealment of Esther's true identity. The text speaks of:

A. Her Lineage (10a) – [Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it.](#) Although Esther would be crowned queen, according to God's sovereign plan, we must not forget that she was a Jewish woman who descended from those in captivity. As we will discover, not everyone in Persia viewed the Jews favorably. God was working behind the scenes to ensure their preservation, but it would have been detrimental had they found out prior to her being crowned queen. Had the Persians known of her lineage, Esther would never have been considered for the crown.

- In Esther's defense, she was being obedient to the will of Mordecai. However, both of them were living a lifestyle unnoticed within society. Some may have known of their lineage, but they sought not to bring attention to themselves. I know that God had a sovereign plan for her to become queen, but we cannot ignore the fact that they were not living according to the law of God. Their spiritual lives were shrouded by the persona they sought to portray. In fact, many of the Jews in Persia had grown quite comfortable with life there.

- God never encourages or condones willful disobedience, and we cannot either. Regardless of what is viewed as acceptable within society, we must maintain our Christian witness. We have

no right to neglect our relationship with Christ just because the majority has abandoned Him. We must never adopt the ways of this world in order to receive gain in this life.

- God was at work in her life, and He would use her to accomplish His divine will. We don't like to admit it, but often there are flaws in the lives of our heroes of the faith. We all live in a body of flesh that is prone to sin and failure. God uses us for His glory in spite of our failures, not because of them.

B. Their Leisure (11) – *And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.* Mordecai served in a position within the king's court. His position granted him access to places within the palace grounds that others would have been restricted. He was able to keep up with Esther during the months of preparation. God had brought Mordecai to a position where he could care for Esther before she was ever considered to be Vashti's replacement.

- Circumstances and events in our lives never happen by chance. When the Lord determines to move in a particular way, choosing those whom He will use, He always has everything in order. We can't force doors of opportunity open, but when God is at work, He will open doors no man can close. He will place us in the right places, among the right people, in order to carry out the plan He has for our lives!

V. The Strategies in the Search (12-15) – These verses reveal how this elaborate plan was carried out to find and select Vashti's replacement. Notice:

A. The Preparation (12) – *Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;)* Each of the candidates were kept within the palace for a period of twelve months in preparation to stand before the king. None were exempt; each young woman had to go through this time of preparation.

- I never want to be guilty of "over-spiritualizing" a passage or forcing an application, but there is a common principle here we cannot miss. We will all stand before the sovereign King when this life is through. We are now living in a time of preparation. The only way to be acceptable to Christ the Lord is to know Him through salvation. Following salvation, our lives should be lived in such a way that they emit a sweet fragrance of worship for the Lord. Others should notice our preparation and realize that we have been preparing for a very special occasion.

B. The Accommodation (13-14) – Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. ^[14] In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name. After the year of preparation had ended, the selection process began. Each woman was offered whatever she desired to take with her as she appeared before the king. This was her first and only chance to impress the king. After a night of meeting the king's wishes, she was returned to the harem of other women.

- It is uncomfortable to consider, but this night was for a sexual encounter. That was the priority for Ahasuerus. These women had spent a year in preparation to satisfy the physical desires of the king. Sadly our culture has succumbed to such standards as well. Many relationships and marriages focus solely on physical attributes and pleasures. Our depraved society has only added to this tragedy. Marriage is no longer sacred, but viewed as a tool for personal satisfaction. If the satisfaction diminishes, many choose to seek someone else.

C. The Disposition (15) – Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. As Esther prepared to meet the king, she chose to take only those things that were required. She used nothing as a prop, only her natural beauty. Of all those who had appeared before the king, we find that Esther obtained favor by all who saw her.

- As sinful and immoral as this selection process was, we must keep God's sovereignty in mind. He was in no way pleased with the way this was carried out, but His divine plan will never be thwarted by the will of men or their sinful ways. He is able to work when it appears impossible. He sees beyond all the props and looks upon the heart. He knows our desires and intentions, whether they are good or bad.

VI. The Selection in the Search (16-18) – Here we read of the selection of Esther as queen over Persia. Consider:

A. Her Approval (16-17a) – So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. ^[17] And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins. Esther gained the favor and approval of Ahasuerus. Of all the women who appeared before him, Esther was chosen.

- While this selection process is contrary to our Christian faith, there is a principle that remains. Esther was approved based solely on who she was. She was selected because of her beauty alone. Many today are depending upon other means to gain favor with the Lord: their works, good deeds, church attendance, etc...Our favor is not earned or merited. It is given by grace alone for those who receive Christ by faith.

B. Her Ascension (17b) – *And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.* Esther was crowned queen of Persia. The search had ended and a new queen ascended to the position of queen. When you understand the context of this book, and the unlikelihood of her ascension, one must see the sovereign hand of God at work. He had determined to place Esther in this position in order to preserve His people.

- When life is difficult, and defeat seems certain, we have one who remains in control. Our lives are not on an undetermined path. We are not left to chance and the dictates of our environment. We serve the risen Lord. He purchased our redemption on the cross. We belong to Him and He will see us through. Our future is secure in Christ!

C. The Announcement (18) – *Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.* Upon Esther's selection as queen, Ahasuerus made a great feast to present her, announcing to all in Persia that a queen had been crowned. Many scholars agree that he declared a holiday, offered a reprieve in taxation, and freed some prisoners. It was a time of great celebration for the entire kingdom.

- As I thought of the release of Ahasuerus, I was reminded of the release by Pilate. A man named Barabbas was guilty of crimes and worthy of death. He was released to appease the Jews, while Jesus was condemned to crucifixion. While for many that may have appeared to be a situation where God lacked control, but just as here in Esther, He was sovereign then as well. Christ willingly took the place of Barabbas and all of humanity on the cross. He died so we might live. He will come again in power and great glory, as every knee bows and confesses Him King!

Conclusion: We must keep the providence of God in mind as we move through this book. Few realized it then, but God was orchestrating these events according to His divine will. He continues to do so today. He remains in control of this world, global events, and even our lives. Those who belong to Christ are secure in Him. If there are needs in your life, particularly spiritual needs, bring them to the sovereign Lord. He already has a plan. Seek Him for the needs you have!