

Esther 2:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. This verse describes the permanent consequence of that single night with the king. Each maiden "went in the evening" and "on the morrow"—the next morning—"returned into the second house," permanently reassigned to Shaashgaz's custody as a concubine. The phrase "she came in unto the king no more" emphasizes finality: one night determined her entire future. Unless the king specifically "delighted in her" and "called by name," she would spend the rest of her life in virtual widowhood—technically the king's wife but never seeing him again. This demonstrates the exploitative nature of the system: hundreds of young women conscripted, used once, then permanently sequestered. God's providence operated within and despite this unjust system.

Historical Context

The "second house of the women" distinguished concubines (who had been with the king once) from virgins (awaiting their turn). Shaashgaz managed the

concubines' quarters—a separate administrative structure from Hegai's virgin quarters. Archaeological evidence confirms Persian palaces had multiple women's facilities accommodating different categories and statuses. Being called "by name" signified personal recognition and favor. Most concubines would never be summoned again, living in comfortable but restricted circumstances—provided for materially but denied freedom, future marriage, or meaningful purpose. The system benefited the king's pleasure while discarding hundreds of lives. This background makes Esther's selection as queen even more significant—she escaped permanent concubinage.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How should believers respond when God's providence operates within deeply unjust systems—neither endorsing the injustice nor denying God's sovereignty?
2. What does this passage teach about the permanent consequences of single moments and the importance of wisdom in critical opportunities?

Interlinear Text

אֶל	שָׁבַת	הָיָה	בְּעֵבֶד	רַבָּה	בְּבַקֵּר	וְתַבְאַזֵּב	וְתַבְאַזֵּב	וְתַבְאַזֵּב	וְתַבְאַזֵּב
In the evening	H1931	she came in	H935	and on the morrow	H1242		H1931	she returned	H413
H6153								H7725	
בְּבַתְּשִׁים	שְׁנִי	בְּבַתְּשִׁים	אֶל	בְּבַתְּשִׁים	בְּבַתְּשִׁים	בְּבַתְּשִׁים	בְּבַתְּשִׁים	שְׁנִי	בְּבַתְּשִׁים
house	of the women	into the second	H413	to the custody	H3027	of Shaashgaz	H8190		
H1004	H802	H8145							
סָרִיס	בְּפַתַּח	בְּפַתַּח	שְׁמָר	לֹא	בְּפַטְלָגֶשׁ	יָמִים			
chamberlain	no more except the king	which kept	H8104	the concubines	H3808				
H5631	H4428		H6370						
עִזִּים	אֶל	עִזִּים	בְּפַתַּח	בְּפַתַּח	בְּפַתַּח	אֶם	אֶם	בְּבַתְּשִׁים	בְּבַתְּשִׁים
she came in	H5750	H413	no more except the king	H4428	H3588	H518	delighted	H2654	H0
H935									
בְּשָׁם	לֹא	בְּשָׁם	בְּשָׁם	בְּשָׁם	בְּשָׁם	בְּשָׁם	בְּשָׁם	בְּשָׁם	בְּשָׁם
no more except the king	in her and that she were called	by name	H4428	H7121	H8034				

Additional Cross-References

Esther 4:11 (Kingdom): All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.