

Esther 2:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. Ahasuerus celebrated Esther's coronation with another feast, called "Esther's feast" (mishteh Ester, מִשְׁתֵּה אֶסְתֵּר), honoring his new queen. The "release to the provinces" (hanachah, הַנַּחָה) likely means tax remission or amnesty—a common practice when Eastern monarchs celebrated joyous occasions. The phrase "gave gifts, according to the state of the king" emphasizes royal generosity befitting imperial majesty. This celebration publicly legitimized Esther's position and created goodwill throughout the empire. Ironically, the king who issued an empire-wide decree about male household authority (1:22) now exalts a woman to the empire's highest female position. God's providence works through such ironies and contradictions.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern monarchs celebrated significant events with public festivals, tax relief, and gift distribution. These practices served political purposes: building popular support, demonstrating wealth and power, and creating obligations through royal generosity. Tax remission particularly endeared kings to subjects, as it provided tangible benefit to common people throughout the empire. The gifts probably went to nobility and officials rather than common people, maintaining patronage networks crucial to political stability. That this feast is specifically

named "Esther's feast" indicates it was remembered and perhaps annually commemorated, at least initially. Archaeological evidence from Persian sources confirms such royal celebrations and their propagandistic purposes.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does the king's public celebration of Esther teach about how God positions His servants not secretly but with public recognition and legitimacy?
2. How does the irony of the king exalting Esther after decreeing male household supremacy demonstrate God's sovereignty over human inconsistency?

Interlinear Text

עָשָׂה הַ	הַמֶּלֶךְ:	מִשְׁתֵּה הַ	גָּד וּלְ	לְכָל	שָׂרָיו
and he made	Then the king	feast	a great	H3605	unto all his princes
H6213	H4428	H4960	H1419		H8269
וְעַבְדֵּי יוֹ	אֵת	מִשְׁתֵּה הַ	אֶסְתֵּר רַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	לְמַדִּינֹת
and his servants	H853	feast	even Esther's	a release	to the provinces
H5650		H4960	H635	H2010	H4082
עָשָׂה הַ	וָתַּת	מִשְׁאֵת	כִּד	הַמֶּלֶךְ:	
and he made	and gave	gifts	according to the state	Then the king	
H6213	H5414	H4864	H3027	H4428	

