

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, מִשְׁתֵּחֶת אֶסְתֵּר), honoring his new queen. The "release to the provinces" (hanachah, חֲנָכָה) 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

שָׁרֵי לְכָל גָּד וְלִמְשָׁתָה הַבָּלָרָה: עָשָׂה הַ
and he made Then the king feast a great unto all his princes
H6213 H4428 H4960 H1419 H3605 H8269

לְמִדְינּוֹת תִּפְגַּח הַאֲסֹת רְמִשָּׁתָה הַאֲתָה יְנַבֵּךְ יְ
and his servants feast even Esther's a release to the provinces
H5650 H853 H4960 H635 H2010 H4082

בָּלָרָה: כִּי דְ מִשְׁאָתָה עָשָׂה הַ
and he made and gave gifts according to the state Then the king
H6213 H5414 H4864 H3027 H4428

