

Esther 2:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. The phrase "it came to pass" (vayehi, וַיְהִי) marks the narrative's advancement to implementation. The king's "commandment" (davar, דְּבָר) and "decree" (dat, דָּת) became operational reality, with "many maidens" being "gathered together" (qibbetz, קִבְּצָה)—emphasizing the large-scale, involuntary nature of this collection. The passive voice "Esther was brought" (tillaqach Ester, תִּלְקַח אֶسְתֵּר) indicates she had no choice in the matter. God's providence often positions His people through circumstances beyond their control. Esther didn't volunteer for this role; she was conscripted, yet precisely where God intended her to be.

Historical Context

The implementation of the royal decree required months of organization. Officials throughout the empire identified candidates, arranged transportation to Shushan, and managed logistics for potentially hundreds of young women. The reference to Hegai's custody emphasizes the organizational structure—each maiden came

under official authority from the moment of arrival. The large number of candidates created intense competition, yet also anonymity in which Esther could conceal her Jewish identity. Persian harems were self-contained communities with their own hierarchies, rules, and daily routines. Archaeological evidence from palace complexes shows separate women's quarters with facilities for housing, bathing, dining, and entertainment.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Esther's involuntary conscription illustrate that God's providence often works through circumstances we don't choose and wouldn't seek?
2. What does this teach about trusting God's sovereignty when life circumstances seem to remove our agency and control?

Interlinear Text

בְּרֹאשָׁם עִזָּה וְ	דָּבָר	בְּרֹאשָׁם עִזָּה וְ	בְּרֹאשָׁם עִזָּה וְ
H1961 was heard	H8085 commandment	H1697	H4428 So it came to pass when the king's
			H4428
וַיְדַבֵּר	וְיֻדְּתָה	וְיֻדְּתָה	וְיֻדְּתָה
and his decree	were gathered together	maidens	and when many
H1881	H6908	H5291	H7227
אֶל	כְּבָתִים	נְעָרִים	וְתִלְקָדְשָׁה
אֶל	בְּבִיאָה	בְּבִיאָה	אֶל
unto Shushan	the palace	H413 to the custody	H1896 of Hegai
H7800	H1002	H3027	H1896 was brought
			H635 that Esther
הַגְּנָזְרָה	בְּיַתְּרָה	בְּיַתְּרָה	הַגְּנָזְרָה
H413 house	H4428 So it came to pass when the king's	H413 to the custody	H1896 of Hegai
H1004	H4428	H3027	H1896
רְשָׁמָם:	הַבְּשִׁירָה:		
keeper	of the women		
H8104	H802		

Additional Cross-References

Esther 2:3 (Kingdom): And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them: