

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, דָּבָר) 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 אֶסְתֵּר) 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

וַיְהִי י	בְּהִשָּׁמַע ע	דְּבַר	הָמָּ לָךְ			
H1961	was heard	commandment	So it came to pass when the king's			
	H8085	H1697	H4428			
וְדָת וְ	וּבְהִקָּבֵץ	נָעָר וְ	רַב וְ	אֶל		
and his decree	were gathered together	maidens	and when many	H413		
H1881	H6908	H5291	H7227			
שׁוּשַׁן	אֶל הַבַּיִת	לְ	יְד	הֵגָי	וְתִלְקָן	אֶסְתֵּר
unto Shushan	the palace	H413	to the custody	of Hegai	was brought	that Esther
H7800	H1002		H3027	H1896	H3947	H635
אֶל	בֵּית	הָמָּ לָךְ	אֶל	יְד	הֵגָי	
H413	house	So it came to pass when the king's	H413	to the custody	of Hegai	
	H1004	H4428		H3027	H1896	
ר	הַנָּשִׁים:	שֹׁמֵר				
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: