

ESTHER 2

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN OF PERSIA

In this chapter, we are told how the Lord exalted Esther from her humble origins, as Hannah and the Virgin Mary both described in their songs of praise to Jehovah (1 Sam. 2:4-8; Luke 1:52). The opening verses detail the extravagant course that was taken to please the king with another wife in the place of Vashti. In order to make the king forget his rightful wife whom they had encouraged him to divorce, his servants suggested that he should be entertained with a great number of women, and then select the most agreeable of them all for a wife. According to this proposal, all the provinces of the kingdom were searched for beautiful maidens. A house was prepared for them; and a person was appointed to have the charge of them, to see that they were well-provided for. Twelve months transpired before they were brought to the king – after which, they were destined to a life of seclusion, unless the king was pleased at any time to send for them. Here we see a glimpse of the absurd practices that were done by those who broke through the Lord's law of marriage, which ordained one man and one woman to be married for life. And we see the need of the Gospel of Christ to purify sinners from the lusts of the flesh.

But in spite of these things, the overruling Providence of God worked therein to bring Esther to be the Queen of Persia. She was born into captivity, for she was a Jewess; and worse still, she was an orphan. But when the Lord called her parents home, then He Himself cared for her (Ps. 27:10); for He moved Mordecai, her cousin, to become her guardian and raise her as his own daughter. Esther possessed the gift of great beauty, although her wisdom and virtue were her greatest attraction. But who would have thought that a Jewess, a captive, and an orphan was born to be a queen? Yet so it came to pass! The Lord's Providence sometimes raises up the poor out of the dust, and sets them among princes (1 Sam. 2:8). But an even more marvelous instance of Almighty power is seen when a poor and friendless sinner is taken from the prison and the tyranny of Satan, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, engaged in marriage to Jesus, and made a child of God by adoption and by grace!

All who looked upon Esther admired her, and concluded that she was the lady who would win the crown; and by the Lord's grace, she did! The king himself fell in love with her. She was not concerned, as the rest of the maidens were, to distinguish herself by artificial beauty; and yet she was found to be the most attractive to the king. Ahasuerus quickly determined to set the royal crown upon her head, and make her queen. And this was done in the seventh year of his reign, which was 515 BC – the very same year that the rebuilding of the Temple was finished in Jerusalem!

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *The advancement of Esther to the position of Queen of Persia – verses 1-20*
- ❖ *Mordecai reveals a plot against the life of the king – verses 21-23*

King Ahasuerus graced the solemnity of Esther's coronation with a royal feast. He also granted a "release to the provinces" – which may mean a remittance of taxes; or possibly an act of grace toward criminals, similar to Pilate releasing a prisoner at the feast of Passover. This was to add to the joy. Even in all of this, however, Esther continued to pay respect to the humble man who had raised her. She still obeyed the commandment of Mordecai, as she had done when she was brought up with him. Mordecai sat in the king's gate; he was one of the porters or doorkeepers of the court. Whether he had this place before, or whether Esther obtained it for him, we are not told; but there he sat contentedly, and aimed no higher. Yet Esther, who was advanced to the throne, was still mindful of him. It is a great ornament in those who are advanced to high positions to remember their benefactors, to retain the impressions of their good education, and to be thankful for it.

The Scriptures do record that Mordecai did a good service to the government by exposing a plot against the life of the king. This event is noted here because the mention of it later turned out to be for Mordecai's advantage. No step had yet been taken toward Haman's intention for the Jews' destruction, but several steps were already being taken toward God's intention of their deliverance – and this was one of them. The Lord gave Mordecai an opportunity of doing the king a good turn, so that the king might have a fairer opportunity later of doing the Jews a good turn. It is sometimes by small things that the Lord carries on the secret purposes of His holy will. A plot was laid against Ahasuerus by two of his own servants, who intended to take away his life. But Mordecai got notice of their treason; and through Esther, he revealed it to the king – thereby confirming her in the king's favor. The traitors were executed, as they deserved to be; and the whole matter was recorded in the king's journals, with a particular remark that Mordecai was the man who exposed the treason. He was not rewarded immediately, but the written remembrance turned out to be for his benefit later. Similarly, in respect to those who serve Christ, their recompense may be adjourned until the resurrection of the just; yet an account is kept of their works of faith and labors of love, which God is not unrighteous to forget! (Heb. 6:10)

Lord, we ask for wisdom to observe and ponder Your works of Providence, so that we may understand and appreciate Your loving-kindness toward us! Amen.

