

GOD'S PROVISION: ESTHER

Esther 2.15-18: Esther... Presented, Received, and Celebrated!

Theme: The simple beauty of the gospel, when received by the sinner, results in a joy-filled blessing!

(Est 1.19) Remember that the king is looking for a wife that is “better than she” (better than Vashti).

- Well today, he finds her (or rather, today God places her in the king's life).
- Today is the day Hegai presents Esther to King Ahasuerus.
- And today is the day King Ahasuerus chooses Esther, the Jewess, over all the other fair maidens.
- That means today is a turning point in the life and reign of Ahasuerus. Everything changes in these verses, even though he may only understand a small portion of what's going on.

One of the first things we need to take note of (before anything else) is a name: *Abihail*.

- Esther is the daughter of Abihail, raised by Mordecai when Abihail died.
- The name *Abihail* means *father of might* and *father of valor*.
- And so we see at the beginning of this study that the provision for the man in need comes from the “Father of might and valor.”
 - ✓ King Ahasuerus's new wife is a provision from God (the Father of all might and perfect valor).
 - ✓ The new, regenerated spirit the lost man receives at the moment of salvation is also from the Father of might and valor (salvation is of the Lord).

So, let's take a look at God's provision in Esther: She is Presented... Received... and Celebrated...!

I. (v15) Esther Presented before the King: She is Simply Beautiful!

A. The Natural Beauty of God's Provision

1. When Esther goes into the king, “she required nothing” (nothing extra, nothing extravagant).
 - a) (Est 2.13) Every other maiden chose whatsoever she desired to “adorn” herself and “make herself up” so she looked as best she could for the king on her night.
 - b) Esther goes in with nothing extra. She goes in with only what Hegai gives her. No superficial adorning; no wearing of gold or putting on of expensive apparel.
 - c) Esther, God's providential provision for Ahasuerus, is naturally beautiful and naturally attractive (just how God made her).
2. God's providential provision for the lost man is just like that!
 - a) God's provision for the lost man is presented to him in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the gospel is naturally beautiful, naturally attractive.
 - (1) (1Cor 15.1-4) The gospel is simple, and simplicity is becoming of the gospel. It's not complicated! Christ suffered and died in our place so we could occupy his, and He rose from the dead as “proof of payment in full” (death could not hold him).
 - (2) (Rom 1.16-18) Tell me the gospel is not simple and simply beautiful! It's attractive!!
 - (a) Me and all my unrighteousness... given the righteousness of God! Wow!!
 - (b) (Col 2.13 cf. 2.10 & Eph 1.3) Tell me God's provision in the Gospel is not simple, beautiful, attractive!

- (3) (1Cor 2.1-5) And you know what? Esther doesn't need any superficial adorning! She doesn't need any make-up! She doesn't need any fancy dresses to make her look good!
- (a) God's provision for the lost man in the gospel of Jesus Christ doesn't need any "excellency of speech" (stories, professional homilies, or dramas).
 - (b) God's provision for the lost man in the gospel of Jesus Christ doesn't need any "enticing words" (arguments and evidence).
 - (c) Frankly God's provision for the lost man in the gospel doesn't need man's wisdom at all (your PhD, ThD, "original languages", and all that other junk is *not needed*).
 - (d) We don't have to "dress up" and "make up" the gospel for people to see it as attractive.
 - i) When the lost "feel" their need (like in v1), the solution to their need is attractive!
 - ii) The problem today is that no one is preaching against sin (preaching God's Law).
- (4) (1Cor 1.17-18, 21-22) We simply need to "present Esther to the king" (take her in just as she is; with the beauty given to her by her father of might and valor).
- (a) The gospel doesn't require that we "package it well." It's beautiful and attractive all by itself. It's best to *not* try to "package" it all. Just present it like it is, in all its natural beauty. That'll do just fine.
 - (b) Esther is beautiful and attractive; "she required nothing" *but* what Hegai appointed...

B. The "Adorning" Given the Provision by Hegai

1. Esther didn't ask for anything on her own when she went in to see the king. But, she did go in with what Hegai (the keeper of the women) gave her.
2. Remember, Hegai (the steward in charge of God's provision for the king) is a picture of us (the stewards in charge of God's provision for lost people).
 - a) For whatever reason, God has placed *us* between Himself and the lost man. He has appointed us as His ambassadors to represent Him and speak in His stead to this world.
 - b) And like it or not, we *will* adorn the gospel message we preach (for good, or for bad).
 - (1) If you live a life that doesn't compliment the gospel, you'll hear comments like, "Wow, if being a Christian is like being like you... no thanks!"
 - (2) What God wants is that we *adorn* the gospel with holy living—that we "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2.10).
 - (a) (Eph 4.1) We are to *walk worthy* of the vocation wherewith we are called (we are ambassadors, sent to speak the words God gave us to the world).
 - (b) (Php 1.27) Our conversation (behavior) ought to *become* (adorn) the gospel.
 - (c) (1Pet 2.12; 3.16) And when people speak ill of us, our lives ought to vindicate us.
3. Esther is presented to the king in her natural beauty and attraction... but also with what Hegai appointed her (just like the provision of God for the lost man comes through... *us*).

C. The Favor Obtained from All

1. As Esther makes her way into the king (simple, simply adorned, but naturally beautiful and attractive), she obtains the favor of everyone that looks upon her.
2. DON'T BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL!!
 - a) Just put it on display for all to see... put it on display in its simple, natural beauty.
 - b) (Rom 10.9-17) Preach the gospel (present Esther to the king!) and all those that hear will see it's beauty. Whether they want to recognize it or not, they will see it's beauty.

D. [v15] Esther is presented before the king... and she is simply beautiful (beautiful in her simplicity)!

II. (v16-17) Esther Received by the King: She is Quickly Chosen!

A. Historical Application: A Better Wife & Queen

1. Esther is chosen as queen in the seventh year of Ahasuerus's reign, in the 10th month of their calendar, the month called Tebeth (roughly equivalent to our December).
2. And just like we saw in the previous verse, Esther gains the immediate favor of all who see her, including he king! And his response is immediate: Ahasuerus receives Esther!
 - a) And so, not only do we see God's providence in Esther (her preparation and presentation).
 - b) (Prov 21.1) We also see God's providence in Ahasuerus. God has plans for this man, plans to protect and provide for His people. So God providentially guides circumstances to that end.

B. Doctrinal Application: The Restoration of Israel

1. We've spent a lot of time lately on our personal pictures and types (Ahasuerus being a picture of the lost man, specifically his soul; Esther is a picture of the new regenerated spirit, etc.). But, let's not lose sight of the doctrinal pictures and types in this story...
 - a) Ahasuerus is a picture of God (the sovereign king over all the provinces of this world).
 - b) Vashti was our picture of the rebellious, self-centered Gentile bride, the Church.
 - c) And Esther is a picture of Israel.
2. (Jer 3.6-8) Remember that God (the Father) entered into a covenant relationship with Israel at Mount Sinai, a relationship He likens unto marriage. And because of Israel's infidelity (apostasy and idolatry; spiritual adultery), God divorced her.
3. But there is coming a day, after the Rapture of the Church, when God and Israel will be reconciled.
 - a) (Rom 11.25-26) After the times of the Gentiles has come to its conclusion, God will remove us just like Ahasuerus removed his Gentile wife (Rapture), and then Israel will be saved.
 - b) (Rom 11.11-12, 15) Israel will be fully restored in a covenant relationship with the Father, but this time it will be an unconditional covenant: The New Covenant.
4. In Esther 2.16-17, with the marriage of the king to the Jewess, we see a doctrinal/prophetic picture of the reconciliation and restoration of Israel as God's wife.
 - a) It happens after the rapture of the Gentile bride in judgment for her selfish rebellion (Est 1).
 - b) And it happens before the revelation of the man of sin who will persecute the Jews unto their death (Haman, in Esther chapter 3—a picture of the Great Tribulation).

C. Personal Application: The Salvation of a Lost Man

1. In the marriage of Ahasuerus and Esther we can see a great picture of the conversion of a lost man.
2. First: Understand that King Ahasuerus has no right whatsoever to marry Esther.
 - a) (Deut 7.1-3) God prohibited the marriage of Jews to Gentiles. They were not to mingle. But, in the case of Ahasuerus, God made an exception... just like he did with us.
 - b) You and I, as Gentiles, have no claim to the promises God gave Israel. God gave us His provision in the gospel because Israel rejected Him. We are as undeserving as Ahasuerus.
3. Second: Ahasuerus had to choose and receive Esther, God's provision.
 - a) Was God working in his life and heart? Sure! Does God work in our lives and hearts? Sure!
 - b) Does God choose for us? No. That concept is totally foreign to Scripture.
 - (1) Rather we are told to “*Choose you this day who you will serve...*”
 - (2) We are commanded to repent... We are commanded to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (3) If we did not have the capacity to choose, we could not be held accountable for our choices (or else God is wicked and unjust... because He chose for us).

- c) (John 12.32 cf. 16.8-11) God will work in your life.
- d) (John 1.12-13) But, God will not choose for you. Each person has to choose to receive God's provision in the gospel for himself... just like Ahasuerus.

4. Third: Salvation is immediate.

- a) Ahasuerus's decision to receive Esther is immediate: The lost man's decision to obey the gospel and receive Christ as his Lord and Savior should also be immediate!
 - (1) Today is the day of salvation (when you hear the gospel) because you are not guaranteed tomorrow.
 - (2) And you're a fool to think you'll "get right with God later" after you've lived your life.
 - (3) Ahasuerus doesn't waste any time. He sees Esther in all her beauty and he knows she is to be his wife—she is the solution to his problem. Now! Today!
 - (4) That ought to be the testimony of every lost person in here: "*I heard the gospel and saw the simplicity of God's provision for me... and I want Jesus now—today!*"
- b) And so he wastes no time: Ahasuerus is married immediately.
 - (1) And God will waste no time! When the lost man repents and believes on Christ as Lord and Savior, he is born again (in that same instant)!
 - (2) Salvation is immediate. For those who convert to Christ, they receive a new, regenerated spirit (the Spirit of God comes to live with their spirit and make them a new creature)!

D. [v16-17] Ahasuerus's search is over! Esther is presented before the king and he receives her quickly!

- And now we see the results of his decision to receive Esther (and the results of salvation)...

III. (v18) Esther Celebrated by the King: She is a Joyful Blessing!

A. Receiving God's Provision Results in Joy: Esther's Feast

1. Here is the fourth feast we see in the Book of Esther, and it is a celebration of the king's joy.
2. His need has been met, and it has been met by God's providential provision: Esther.
3. When the lost man's greatest need is met and he is saved, born again by the Spirit of God, there will be joy and celebration. He may still have a painful and difficult life, but he has joy.
 - a) He knows he has God's provision in Jesus Christ: He now has life... eternal... and abundant.
 - b) He knows that all of his sins have been forgiven because Christ paid for every last one.
 - c) He knows that his life in Christ is secure because Christ did it all (he just received it).
4. And so Ahasuerus shares that joy with others in "Esther's feast," and we should do the same (we should share the joy of salvation with all those around us).

B. Receiving God's Provision Results in Liberty: A Release in the Kingdom

1. Ahasuerus "made a release to the provinces": He cut taxes! He lightened their burden!
2. Christ did the same for us: He took our sin burden when we turned to him in repentance and faith.
 - a) In every area of our lives (just like in every province of Ahasuerus's kingdom), Christ has lifted our burden of sin (we are no longer slaves to sin; we no longer carry the weight of its debt).
 - b) There is a release in our kingdom: We have liberty in Christ (we have been made free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness)!

C. Receiving God's Provision Results in Riches: Stately Gifts from the King

1. In addition to lightening the tax load on the provinces, Ahasuerus also gave gifts according to the state of the king (stately gifts—a gift from a king to his subjects).
 - The kingdom received gifts and treasure when the king received Esther.

2. When we were born again (when we received that new, regenerated spirit from God), we were also made rich—our lives received the riches of stately gifts from the King.
 - a) (Rom 11.11-12) The gospel given to the Gentiles is the riches of the Gentiles.
 - b) (Eph 3.8) In Christ we are given unsearchable riches.
 - c) (Col 1.27) In Christ we have received (in every area of our lives) the riches of God's glory.

Conclusion:

Ahasuerus has just received God's provision: Esther!

- We saw her presented (in all her natural beauty), received (by the king's choice), and celebrated (in joy).
- The king has just begun a new life... a life with God's provision, Esther.

(2Cor 5.17) And the sinner who repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ will also begin a new life.

- It begins with a tremendous amount of God's blessing lavished on the forgiven sinner, and that brings great joy and celebration (as it should).
- But, it also brings with it a new life... in a wicked world. There are still enemies out there...

And that's what we'll begin to look at next week: (v21-23).

- Ahasuerus has enemies (and just wait until Haman comes on the scene in chapter 3!).
- But, he also has someone in life to protect him and provide for him.
 - ✓ You see... Esther has a close relative that works behind the scenes to take care of her.
 - ✓ And now that she is married to Ahasuerus... Ahasuerus is “part of the family,” and so Mordecai works silently to protect the king and provide for him (just as the Holy Spirit does for us).

Where are you at this morning with “Esther”?

- *Are you lost?* If so, you need to choose this day whom you will serve (sin and self? or God your Maker).
- *Are you saved?* If so, we need to choose this day whom we will serve (sin and self? or God... by adorning the gospel message we have been commanded to preach to every creature... and the preaching it!).