

Book Study on Esther

Preparation Process

Esther 2:12-14

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Introduction

- Review books of the Bible: Gen – Esther
- Mordecai
- Introduction to Hadassah aka Esther.
- Esther introduced to the Palace

Let's pick up here in chapter 2 and verse 12

Bible

Est 2:12 Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;)

Est 2:13 Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.

Est 2:14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.

Lets look a little deeper into these verses:

Est 2:12 Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;)

- "After she had been (in the palace), according to the law prescribed to the women, twelve months." A year's purification was considered necessary before any maiden could approach the king"¹
- Manner.—Translate, law or ordinance, as in Esther 1:8; Esther 1:15.²
- "The reason of this purification seems not to be apprehended by any writer I have seen. The most beautiful of all the young virgins of all the provinces of Babylon were to be selected; and these were taken out of all classes of the people, indiscriminately; consequently there must have been many who were brought up in low life. Now we know that those who feed on coarse strong food, which is not easily digested, have generally a copious perspiration, which is strongly odorous; and in many, though in every respect amiable, and even beautiful, this odour is far from being pleasant. Pure, wholesome, easily digested, and nourishing aliment, with the frequent use of the hot bath, continued for twelve months, the body frequently rubbed with olive oil, will in almost every case remove all that is disagreeable of this kind. This treatment will give a healthy action to all the subcutaneous vessels, and in every respect promote health and comfort."³
- "who were kept so long, partly, for their better purification, as it here follows; partly, out of state, as that which became so great a king; and partly, that being so long in safe custody, the king might be sure that the child begotten upon any of them was his own."⁴
- "It is observed by Pliny, lib. 13, cap. 1, that ointments were first invented by the Persians. Oil of myrrh was used, not only on account of its fragranc, but to make the skin soft and smooth, and to clear it from all manner of scurf; and the sweet odours were necessary, in those hot countries, to take away all ill scents, and, as some think, to

¹ The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010 by BibleSoft, inc., Used by permission Bible Hub

² Illicott's Commentary for English Readers Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. Used by Permission. Bible Hub

³ Clarke, Adam. "Commentary on Esther 2:12". "The Adam Clarke Commentary". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/acc/esther-2.html>. 1832.

⁴ Poole, Matthew, "Commentary on Esther 2:12". Matthew Poole's English Annotations on the Holy Bible. <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mpc/esther-2.html>. 1685.

enliven and invigorate the constitution.”⁵

- Myrrh - The Balsamodendron myrrha, which produces the myrrh of commerce, has a wood and bark which emit a strong odor; the gum which exudes from the bark is at first oily, but becomes hard by exposure to the air. (This myrrh is in small yellowish or white globules or tears. The tree is small, with a stunted trunk, covered with light-gray bark, It is found in Arabia Felix.
 - The myrrh of Ge 37:25 was probably ladalzum, a highly-fragrant resin and volatile oil used as a cosmetic, and stimulative as a medicine. It is yielded by the cistus, known in Europe as the rock rose, a shrub with rose-colored flowers, growing in Israel and along the shores of the Mediterranean. --ED.) For wine mingled with myrrh see GALL.
 - purification of women; in Ps 45:8, Pr 7:17 and in several passages in Canticles, as a perfume.
 - gifts brought by the wise men to the infant Jesus and in Mr 15:23
 - "wine mingled with myrrh" was offered to but refused by, our Lord on the cross.
 - Myrrh was also used for embalming. See John 19;39⁶

Est 2:13 Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.

- Then thus came every maiden unto the king; - “The midrash relates that Esther hid from Ahasuerus’s agents who sought women for the king. She succeeded in remaining concealed for four years, but was eventually found and brought to the royal palace. Unlike the other women, who wanted to be chosen, Esther tried to evade the king, but she was the one picked to be queen. This shows that her selection was part of the divine plan; Esther was meant to rule in order to bring deliverance to all Israel (Seder Olam Rabbah 29; Midrash Panim Aherim, version B, para. 20).”⁷
- Whatsoever she desired — In the way of jewels, ornaments, or dress. “No doubt,” says Rawlinson, “the virgins generally took the opportunity — one that would occur but once in their lives — to load themselves with precious ornaments of various kinds, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, anklets, and the like.”⁸

Est 2:14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.

- Shaashgaz - "servant of the beautiful"⁹ (Sha-ash-gaz – (sha = shepherd) (gaz like in gas)
- And it should be observed, that every one whom the king took to his bed was his wife of a lower rank,¹⁰
- 'Gynaecium, the women's apartment, was, in the Susa palace at any rate, building distinct from the general edifice, separated from "the king's house" by a court. It was itself composed of at least three sets of apartments, namely, apartments for the virgins, who had not yet gone into the king, apartments for the concubines, and apartments for the queen-consort and the other wives. These different portions were under the supervision of different persons. Two eunuchs of distinction had the charge respectively of the "first" and of "the second house of the women." The queen-consort was, at any rate nominally, paramount in the third, her authority extending over all its inmates, male and female' (Rawlinson's 'Ancient Monarchies,' 4:, p. 174).¹¹
- After the king had once taken them to his bed, they were made recluses ever after, except the king pleased at any time to send for them (v. 14); they were looked upon as secondary wives, were maintained by the king accordingly, and might not marry. We may see, by this instance, to what absurd practices those came who were destitute of divine revelation, and who, as a punishment for their idolatry, were given up to vile affections. ¹²

“How could such a marginalized person in a hostile world ever make a difference for God?”¹³

⁵ Benson, Joseph. "Commentary on Esther 2:12". Joseph Benson's Commentary. <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/rbc/esther-2.html>. 1857.

⁶ Smith, William, Dr "Meaning and Definition for 'myrrh' in Smiths Bible Dictionary". Bible-history.com - Smith's; 1901.

⁷ <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/esther-midrash-and-agadah>

⁸ Whedon, Daniel. "Commentary on Esther 2:13". "Whedon's Commentary on the Bible".

<https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/whe/esther-2.html>. 1874-1909.

⁹ Strong's Concordance of the Bible Definitions

¹⁰ Benson Commentary on the Old and New Testaments Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. Used by Permission. Bible Hub

¹¹ Jamieson, Robert, D.D.; Fausset, A. R.; Brown, David. "Commentary on Esther 2:13". "Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible - Unabridged". <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/jfu/esther-2.html>. 1871-8.

¹² Matthew Henry :: Commentary on Esther 2

¹³ <http://www.thywordistruth.com/Ezra/Ezra-Esther-Lesson-15.html#.XsLy9GhKhPY>