

10On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus, 11to bring Queen Vashti before the king, *wearing* her royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she *was* beautiful to behold. 12But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command *brought by his eunuchs*; therefore the king was furious, and his anger burned within him. 13Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times (for this *was* the king's manner toward all who knew law and justice, 14those closest to him *being* Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who had access to the king's presence, *and who ranked highest in the kingdom*): 15"*What shall we do to Queen Vashti, according to law, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus brought to her by the eunuchs?*" 16And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: "Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the princes, and all the people who *are* in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. 17For the queen's behavior will become known to all women, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes, when they report, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.' 18This very day the *noble* ladies of Persia and Media will say to all the king's officials that they have heard of the behavior of the queen. Thus *there will be* excessive contempt and wrath. 19If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. 20When the king's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout all his empire (for it is great), all wives will honor their husbands, both great and small." 21And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan. 22Then he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be master in his own house, and speak in the language of his own people.

1. An unusual book

- a. More criticism has been written about Esther than any other book in the Bible
 - a1. The name of God is not mentioned in the book
 - a2. Prayer or the law is not mentioned in the book
 - a3. Questions about moral issues in the book
 - a4. Historical documents list only Amestris as the queen of Xerxes (Ahasuerus)
 - a5. The author & date are unknown, though the text shows that a Jew in Persia must have written the book
- b. The Jews accepted Esther as historic & inspired
 - a1. The Feast of Purim is a Jewish feast
 - a2. The Jews place the book in with Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, & Lamentations as the Megilla (The Scrolls)
- c. The book describes events of Xerxes's reign (485-465 BC), in Persia before Nehemiah
 - a1. The book covers events from 483 BC (1:3) to 473 BC (2:16)
 - a2. The Bible alone records these events

d. Unique features of the book:

- a1. One of 2 books to not mention God (Song of Solomon is the other)
- a2. One of 2 non-Levitical feasts: Purim & Hanukkah
- a3. One of 2 books centered on persecution of the Jews (Exodus)
- a4. Takes place between Ezra 6 & 7
- a5. One of 2 books named for a woman (Ruth)
- a6. The only book where all events are in Persia

2. The banquet

- a. Xerxes holds a 6 month banquet (extravagant)
 - a1. This is just before his invasion of Greece
 - a2. His father had been defeated at Marathon
 - a3. He ruled from India to Ethiopia (127 provinces)
 - a4. He will be slowed at Thermopylae & defeated at the naval battle of Salamis
- b. Xerxes was a man of passion, anger, pride, & impulse
- c. At the end of the banquet for his nobles he holds a 7 day banquet for everyone
- d. During his banquet, Queen Vashti is holding a banquet for the noble women of the kingdom
 - a1. While inebriated the king sends a eunuch to bring Vashti in her royal robes to show off her beauty
 - a2. Vashti refuses to come (we are given no reason for her defiance, but she may have not wanted to be put on display before drunken men)
 - a3. If Vashti is the historical Amestris, she may have been pregnant with Artaxerxes, born in 483 BC (she does disappear from history & reappears during her son's reign)

3. Dealing with defiance

- a. Xerxes is furious & asks advice of his Council of Seven
- b. Memucan points out that if Vashti gets away with defying & disrespecting the king, then her example will encourage all wives in the kingdom to defy their husbands
 - a1. He advises that Vashti be put away
 - a2. A new queen was to be selected (God's providence at work – the rise of Esther)
- c. The king then sent out a letter to all the provinces declaring that wives are to honor & obey their husbands, who are to be the masters of their own houses
- d. God uses historical events to further his plans |