

January 17, 2024

“Turning the King’s Heart” Esther 1:1-22

Prel Rmks

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, *Like* the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

The events of Esther portray the omniscient work of God to protect and preserve His people Israel in the same way He is protecting them today even though, as a whole, they care nothing for Him

Begin seeing this right from the start here in Chapter 1 of Esther.

INTRO

God’s name is never mentioned.

When you know the rest of the story of Esther, you can see how God was sovereignly and actively involved in almost every detail.

People – their sinfulness

Circumstance

Events – other events in the world that seem to have no relation

God not named – but every detail speaks of Him at work behind the scene.

Psalms 121:4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

I. The Persian King’s Kingdom 1-2

(1) Now it came to pass in the days of **Ahasuerus** (this *was* the Ahasuerus who reigned **over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces**, from India to Ethiopia),

Ahasuerus Greek = Xerxes Persian = Khshayarsha 485 – 465

127 Provinces from Ethiopia to Punjab in Pakistan – MAP

(2) in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which *was* in **Shushan [Hebrew] Susa-Gk** the **citadel place of the palace = capital**,

Ezra 4:6 In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

Daniel 11:2 And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than *them* all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.

II. The Drinking Feasts He Called 3-12

The First Feast Was for the Powerful People 3-4

(3) that in the third year of his reign **483** he made **a feast a drinking feast** for all his officials and servants—the **powers of Persia and Media the armies, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces** *being* before him— (4) when he **showed the riches** of his glorious kingdom and the **splendor** of his excellent majesty for many days, **one hundred and eighty days 6 months** *in all*.

The Second Feast Was for Everyone in the Palace 5

(5) And when these days were completed, the king made **a feast lasting seven days for all the people who were present in Shushan the citadel**, from great to small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.

It Was A Continuing Display of Wealth and Splendor 6

(6) There were white and blue linen *curtains* fastened with cords of fine linen and purple on silver rods and marble pillars; *and the couches were* of gold and silver on a *mosaic* pavement of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black marble.

It Was A Continuing Display of Wine Consumption and Drunkenness 7-8

(7) And they served drinks in golden vessels, each vessel being different from the other, with **royal wine in abundance**, according to the generosity of the king. (8) **In accordance with the law**, the drinking was not compulsory; for so the king had ordered all the officers of his household, that they should do according to each man's pleasure.

Herodotus the Greek Historian (5th C. BC) – [the Persians] “are very fond of wine and drink it in large quantities ... it is also their general practice to deliberate upon affairs of weight when they are drunk.”

The Queen Had Her Own Banquet Going On (with less wine drinking going on 9

(9) **Queen Vashti also made a feast** for the women *in* the royal palace which *belonged* to King Ahasuerus.

The King's Request and the Queen's Response 10-11

(10) On 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,

(11) to 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. (12) But 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.

III. The King's Consultation With His Closest Advisors 13-20

(13) Then 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**, (14) those 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**):

The Question He Asked Them 15

(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?"

The Man Who Answered and His Assessment 16-20

(16) And **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. (17) For **the queen's behavior will become known to all women**, so that they will **despise disrespect** their husbands in their eyes, when they report, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.'

(18) This 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 lack of respect (by wives following the example of the Queen)** and **wrath rage and indignation (by men – just like the King)**.

Memucan's Recommendation

(19) If 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**.

(20) When 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**."

IV. The Decision of the King 21-22

(21) And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and **the king did according to the word of Memucan.**

(22) Then 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.

Today – The Existence of Israel seems very fragile

Around the world

Here in America – our University system

Prager U video ...

