

Esther - Lesson 01

Esther Chapter 1

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

Email: mail@KjvBibleStudies2.net

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

Memory verses for this week: *Nah 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.*

Introduction: We begin our study on the book of Esther this week as the king gives a great feast.

A KING GIVES A GREAT FEAST

Lesson Outline by E. L. Bynum

Only two books of the Bible are named after women. We have just completed the book of Ruth, and we will now study Esther. Even though the name of God is not mentioned, Divine providence is to be seen throughout this book.

The time of this book seems to have been between 486 B.C. and 465 B.C. King Ahasuerus was very likely Xerxes, the great Persian king who reigned during this period. There is some confusion over the names, since some of them seem to be titles, rather than actual names. Large numbers of the Jews were in captivity, and as we will see in this book, they were often under persecution and threats of extermination. (Persia is now known as Iran.)

Even though Queen Vashti is only mentioned in chapters 1 and 2, she is a shining example by her refusal take part in a drunken orgy. We see God working behind the scenes, in spite of the wickedness of man, to bring Esther to the throne that she might be instrumental in the saving of the Jews.

I. A Drunken Feast Called

***Est 1:1** Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)*

***Est 1:2** That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,*

***Est 1:3** In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him:*

***Est 1:4** When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.*

This was a king which had a vast reign. A look at a map of the Middle East that includes Ethiopia and India, will give you an idea of the vast extent of the kingdom. He calls for a feast in

his Shushan palace. The feast was for the elite rulers in his kingdom. All of his princes and servants, and nobles and princes in the provinces were invited. It was not a one night event, but the feast lasted for 180 days. During this time he showed off the wealth and the splendor of his reign.

Est 1:5 And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace;

Est 1:6 Where were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble.

Est 1:7 And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king.

A gigantic feast was set to climax the long celebration. The court of the garden of the king's palace was decorated to be the place of the huge feast. Colorful decorations and great wealth of gold, silver, and marble were displayed. Not only was it colorful and festive, but there was an abundance of wine served in golden vessels. This is a dangerous practice by powerful rulers.

God's people need to know what the Bible says about strong drink. Alcohol is looked upon today as not a big deal, but the devil always start small and destroys us in the end when it is no longer a 'little deal.'

Hab. 2:15, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!"

Prov. 23:31, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright."

Prov. 31:4, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink."

By making wine and getting drunk, Noah brought God's judgment on his son and grandson, and indeed upon the whole human race.

Est 1:8 And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.

Est 1:9 Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.

It says the drinking was done according to the law and none were compelled to take part. Queen Vashti gave a feast for the wives of these lords and rulers in a separate place. There is nothing that indicates that it turned into a drunken party. It was the custom for the number one wives of the King and rulers, to be separated from leaders.

II. A Wicked Demand Made

Est 1:10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,
Est 1:11 To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on.

This was a seven day drunken party, and it appears the king was undoubtedly very drunk. If he had been sober, he would have not made this demand. The best way to avoid drunkenness is not to drink at all. No one ever became a drunk who did not drink. It also follows that no one will become a drug addict who never takes drugs. Years ago I worked in my software business with Barbour Trucking in Iowa Park, TX. The business was started by the original John Barbour in the 1910-1920 year range, and I knew the son whose name was also John Barbour. We were talking about business and the economy one day, and I said "A person has to be careful in today's business world to not go bankrupt."

He smiled and said "David a business can't go bankrupt unless it borrows money." A simple concept, but one that had never occurred to me. All the years he ran the business, he would store back the surplus to CD's, and when business was slack, he'd redeem a few thousand to keep the trucking company in the black. Many prosperous years when the son ran the business. When the grandson took over, he quickly reverted to taking on thousands of dollars in debt, and eventually they did go bankrupt.

My point on this is don't borrow and you won't go bankrupt. Don't drink and you won't become an alcoholic. Don't take drugs and you won't become a junky. Simple concepts, but it takes discipline to live by high standards. Some think it is silly to live conservatively. Having lived both ways, I can say without a doubt that Satan is a liar and God is always true. Believe God and you will have success in all your ways.

Prov. 23:29-30, "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine."

Wicked rulers use strong drink to influence and to mislead others. The Russians plied Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill, and their advisers with Vodka at Yalta and Potsdown. This no doubt is one of the reasons for many of the bad decisions of the west in dealing with the Communists. Eastern Europe was handed to them for many years as a result.

The king sends for the queen who was famous for her beauty. This was because he wanted the envy and admiration of his guests, so that they would admire his beautiful wife. He reminds us of another wicked man named Nabal who had a beautiful wife.

I Sam. 25:3, "Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb."

We should remember what the Bible says.

Prov. 31:30, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised."

Matthew Henry said this in his commentary about the king calling Queen Vashti.

I. It was certainly the king's weakness to send for Vashti into his presence when he was drunk, and in company with abundance of gentlemen, many of whom, it is likely, were in the same condition. *When his heart was merry with wine* nothing would serve him but Vashti must come, well dressed as she was, with *the crown on her head*, that the princes and people might see what a handsome woman she was, Est 1:10, Est 1:11. Hereby, 1. He dishonoured himself as a husband, who ought to protect, but by no means expose, the modesty of his wife, who ought to be to her *a covering of the eyes* (Gen 20:16), not to uncover them.

2. He diminished himself as a king, in commanding that from his wife which she might refuse, much to the honour of her virtue. It was against the custom of the Persians for the women to appear in public, and he put a great hardship upon her when he did not court, but command her to do so uncouth a thing, and make her a show. If he had not been put out of the possession of himself by drinking to excess, he would not have done such a thing, but would have been angry at any one that should have mentioned it. When the wine is in the wit is out, and men's reason departs from them.

III. The Disobedience of the Queen

Est 1:12 But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.

Queen Vashti may not have known God, but she certainly had principles that should prevail in the lives of true believers.

Prov. 11:22, "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."

She must have known what this might cost her. Saying "No" is sometimes very unpopular, but many bad things can be avoided with that simple two letter word. Finding out Queen Vashti would not come, the king went into a rage, where all sane reasoning left him. We would do well to remember what the Bible says about anger. There are many verses warning us to not be hasty and short tempered.

Prov. 14:17, "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated."

Prov. 14:29, "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly."

Prov. 16:32, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Eccl. 7:9, "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools."

James 1:19-20, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

IV. The Dethroning of the Queen

Est 1:13 Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment:

Est 1:14 And the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom;)

Est 1:15 What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?

The king is upset and consults the wise men "which knew the times." These were likely astrologers, and they would likely give the wrong advice. He next consults his yes men who always sought to curry favor with the king. There is wisdom in counselors, but you must remember that they were probably all drunk as was the king. Having a clear mind is crucial in making good decisions which is another reason to not look on the wine when it has turned red in the glass.

Est 1:16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus.

Est 1:17 For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.

Est 1:18 Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath.

Memucan recites the possible damage to the king, and all of the men of the kingdom. He may have been thinking about the results that would come in his own marriage. What a stretch of exaggeration this was. One woman refusing the king was not going to destroy all the men of the day. There was no such thing as equality of men and women among the Persians. The rights of women were gained under Christianity in modern times. Those rights are being abused by feminists who know nothing of the Bible.

Est 1:19 If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

Est 1:20 And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.

He uses great flowing words when he addresses the king. "If it please the king, let there go a

royal commandment... " The queen was to be humiliated and removed. She was perhaps fortunate that she was not beheaded, but she gave up her throne, her luxuries, and her life of ease. She was willing to do it out of principle, and did not choose the easy way. Contrast the biblical way that Christian wives are to be treated as Paul directed the church in Ephesus.

Eph. 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

Memucan advises a decree in order to keep the women under control. It is possible that he had trouble with his own wife. He seemed to be concerned that women should give honor unto their husbands. He says nothing about the husbands honoring their wives.

Est 1:21 And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan:

Est 1:22 For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

Bad advice given sometimes lead to bad laws being written. We have many laws in the books today due to ungodly advice to our leaders. The decree is made by the king. The thing that he decreed was likely already practice throughout the kingdom. In the providence of God, the dethroning of Vashti made way for the enthroning of Esther who would be used to preserve the Jews.

Rom. 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Adam Clarke in his commentary said this about the king's decree.

That every man should bear rule in his own house - Both God's law and common sense taught this from the foundation of the world. And is it possible that this did not obtain in the Persian empire, previously to this edict? The twentieth verse has another clause, That all wives shall give to their husbands honor, both to great and small. This also was universally understood. This law did nothing. I suppose the parade of enactment was only made to deprive honest Vashti of her crown.

The Targum adds, "That each woman should speak the language of her husband." If she were even a foreigner, she should be obliged to learn and speak the language of the king. Perhaps there might be some common sense in this, as it would oblige the foreigner to devote much time to study and improvement; and, consequently, to make her a better woman, and a better wife. But there is no proof that this was a part of the decree.

KJV Bible Studies are prepared and distributed free of charge. The lessons may not be sold without consent. If you have questions or wish to discuss the lessons, or possibly need help in finding Jesus Christ as your Personal Lord and Savior, contact us at the email below.

Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

Email: mail@KjvBibleStudies2.net

Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.