



VASHTI

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Who is Vashti?

Vashti was by birth a princess of Persia. She married and became the queen of Ahasuerus, the king of Persia (the son of Persian king Darius). She was a very beautiful and a lovely woman.

Bible Accounts:

Esther 1; 2:1-18;

Esther 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),² in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the citadel,³ that in the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his officials and servants—the powers of Persia and Media, 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 in all.

⁵And 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.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.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.

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

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,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.

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): 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?"

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 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 and wrath. 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."

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.

Esther 2:1-18:

After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her. ² Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king; ³ and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of Hegai the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them. ⁴ Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti."

This thing pleased the king, and he did so.

⁵In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. ⁶Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. ⁷And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

⁸So it was, when the king's command and decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered at Shushan the citadel, under the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king's palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women. ⁹Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best place in the house of the women.

¹⁰Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it. ¹¹And every day Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women's quarters, to learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her.

¹²Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women. ¹³Thus prepared, each young woman went to the king, and she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace. ¹⁴In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called for her by name.

*¹⁵Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her. ¹⁶So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. ¹⁷The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen *instead of Vashti*. ¹⁸Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king.*

Background:

In the third year of his reign, the King Ahasuerus invited all his people to show off his earthly kingdom riches as he reigned from India to Ethiopia for 180 days. He held a big feast (banquet) lasting for 7 days to all of them. Queen Vashti also held a big feast for women in the royal palace. On the 7th day of the feast, when the King was full of wine, he ordered his 7 eunuchs to bring Queen Vashti in front of his people and officials to show off her beauty before them. But, Queen Vashti refused to obey the command of the King. In wrath, the King asked his wise men who knew the law, the closest 7 princes of Media and Persia about what must be done with Queen Vashti for her disobedience?

Prince Memucan, one among the 7 princes, answered that Queen Vashti had not only wronged the King Ahasuerus but also the princes of Media and Persia as well as the people in the provinces. Moreover, the women of Persia and Media would follow the same with their men bringing in wrath and contempt. This behaviour of the Queen Vashti had brought reproach to every man and every man's wife would despise him. So Memucan asked the King Ahasuerus to send an unalterable decree within the province adding to the law of Media and Persia stating that the King would give the royal position of Queen Vashti to a better woman. He also added that when the decree got to all the provinces, all the men would master his own house and the women will honour their men, both great and small.

After these things, when the anger of the King subsided, he thought about Queen Vashti and the decree that had been passed out. At that time, his servants proposed a plan of selecting a virgin woman desired by the King Ahasuerus amongst the beautiful young virgin women brought from all over the provinces as a queen in the place of Queen Vashti. It pleased the king and the process started taking place immediately. So, under eunuch Hegai, the custodian of women in the palace, beautiful virgins for the king were chosen and were made ready for the King. One among them was Esther, the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai, a Benjamite (Esther 2:5,15). She was a Jewess and was brought up by Mordecai as his own daughter. She did not reveal her identity, the family background to anyone as per the instruction of Mordecai. It was 7th year of the reign of the King Ahasuerus and the tenth month of the year, Esther's turn came and her beauty was pleasing to the King Ahasuerus and he chose her as Queen in the place of Queen Vashti. The King Ahasuerus laid a grand feast in the name of Esther to celebrate the occasion of crowning Esther as his Queen.

Lessons from Vashti:



- Queen Vashti held her integrity amidst the court of drunken people. (The king was drunk and so would have been their guests.) Note: *Esther 1:8a* – *In accordance with the law, the drinking was not compulsory*; So, drinking was not compulsory as the verse says. It was individual's choice to get drunk in the feast.
- She chose deposition rather than dishonour or losing her self-respect. She didn't bother about the royal status being taken away as there are no verses of her pleading guilty to the King Ahasuerus. It shows her as a highly self esteemed woman holding herself up amidst the domination of men in the kingdom of Media and Persia.

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Gal220Ministries.org & XpressChrist@gmail.com