







Esther 1

This is what happened during the time of Xerxes, the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush: ² At that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa, ³ and in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. The military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces were present.

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⁴ For a full 180 days he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty. ⁵ When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king's palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest who were in the citadel of Susa.

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⁶ The garden had hangings of white and blue linen, fastened with cords of white linen and purple material to silver rings on marble pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and other costly stones. ⁷ Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant, in keeping with the king's liberality.

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⁸ By the king's command each guest was allowed to drink with no restrictions, for the king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished. ⁹ Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes. ¹⁰ On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who served him—

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Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Karkas— ¹¹ to bring before him Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at. ¹² But when the attendants delivered the king's command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.

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¹³ Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times ¹⁴ and were closest to the king—Karshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memukan, the seven nobles of Persia and Media who had special access to the king and were highest in the kingdom.

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¹⁵ “According to law, what must be done to Queen Vashti?” he asked. “She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes that the eunuchs have taken to her.”

¹⁶ Then Memukan replied in the presence of the king and the nobles, “Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king but also against all the nobles and the peoples of all the provinces of King Xerxes.

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¹⁷ For the queen’s conduct will become known to all the women, and so they will despise their husbands and say, ‘King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she would not come.’¹⁸ This very day the Persian and Median women of the nobility who have heard about the queen’s conduct will respond to all the king’s nobles in the same way. There will be no end of disrespect and discord.

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¹⁹ “Therefore, if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be repealed, that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Also let the king give her royal position to someone else who is better than she.”²⁰ Then when the king’s edict is proclaimed throughout all his vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest.”

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²¹ The king and his nobles were pleased with this advice, so the king did as Memukan proposed. ²² He sent dispatches to all parts of the kingdom, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language, proclaiming that every man should be ruler over his own household, using his native tongue.



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Later when King Xerxes' fury had subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what he had decreed about her. ² Then the king's personal attendants proposed, "Let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king. ³ Let the king appoint commissioners in every province of his realm to bring all these beautiful young

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women into the harem at the citadel of Susa. Let them be placed under the care of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let beauty treatments be given to them. ⁴ Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti." This advice appealed to the king, and he followed it.

ACT 2

God is present even when you can't see His presence

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⁵ Now there was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, ⁶ who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin king of Judah. ⁷ Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had

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neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died.

ACT 3

God positions people for His purpose

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After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. ² All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.








