

# Studies in Esther

Topic: The Removal of Vashti as Queen

Scripture: Esther 1

Memory Verse: Proverbs 11:22

Lesson 1

Esther 1

**INTRODUCTION:** The book of Esther opens on a high note as we see Ahasuerus, the king of the Medes and Persians, hosting an extravagant banquet for all his nobles and officials. There was a definite purpose behind this banquet. In 490 B.C., Ahasuerus' father, Darius I, had invaded Greece and had been shamefully defeated. While preparing to return to Greece for a second battle, Darius had died (486 B.C.), and now his son felt compelled to avenge his father by again attacking Greece. However, Ahasuerus needed the support of his princes to stage such a massive attack. He also wanted his princes to know he could pay for such a war. Thus, he displayed the wealth of his kingdom by giving this great pagan feast. It was at this feast that events happened which caused Ahasuerus to replace his queen with a new queen. This chapter records for us **THE REMOVAL OF VASHTI AS QUEEN**.

## I THE REVELRY OF AHASUERUS v 1-9

- A. King Ahasuerus hosts a lavish feast for all his princes v 1-4  
AHASUERUS (v 1) - "*venerable king*" - the title of the king of the Medes and Persians - His Persian title was "*Khshayarshan*" which in Hebrew becomes *Ahasuerus* and in the Greek language *Xerxes*.  
SHUSHAN (v 2) - "*lily*" - the location of the winter palace of the king of Persia located about 150 miles north of the Persian gulf.  
(Nehemiah 1:1)  
This banquet lasted for six months during which time Ahasuerus was trying to show the princes, which ruled his 127 provinces, his power and wealth as king. (Proverbs 23:1-3; 11:28; I Timothy 6:17)
- B. King Ahasuerus capped off the six months of feasting with an enormous seven-day banquet v 5-9  
VASHTI (v 9) - (Persian) - "*sweetest*" - the Persian Queen of Ahasuerus  
This banquet would have cost several millions of dollars. Even though this was a pagan banquet hosted by a pagan ruler who had absolute authority over everyone present, no man was forced to drink alcohol unless they wanted it. (Proverbs 20:1; 23:20-21) King Ahasuerus was selling a war to his princes, so the women were entertained by Queen Vashti at another banquet.

## II THE REFUSAL OF QUEEN VASHTI v 10-12

- A. King Ahasuerus commanded his servants to bring Queen Vashti into the men's banquet hall v 10-11  
The king had already displayed his riches, and proved to his princes that he was able to finance the war against Greece. Now he would display his beautiful Queen before this group of drunken men. He, no doubt, would have never done this had he not been drunk, but now he wants to show off his treasure - his crowning jewel - his Queen!  
(Proverbs 23:29-35)
- B. Queen Vashti refused to come display herself in front of the men at the banquet v 12  
Her refusal made Ahasuerus extremely angry. His pride got the best of him; for if he could not command his own wife, how could he ever command the armies of Persia. Since Vashti had embarrassed the king in front of his princes, the king had to do something to save his ego and his reputation. (Ecclesiastes 10:4; Proverbs 14:17)

## III THE REMOVAL OF THE QUEEN v 13-22

King Ahasuerus called together a meeting of his advisers to decide what to do with Queen Vashti v 13-22  
The king's wise men led by Memucan advise the king to dethrone Vashti for her disobedience and replace her with another queen. They promised the king that such an act would put fear into the hearts of all women in the empire, and cause them to have more respect for their husbands. The king agreed to their advice, and Vashti was queen no more. A royal decree went out from the king that every wife was commanded to obey her husband, and every husband was to rule his house. (Ephesians 5:21-33)

NOTE: King Ahasuerus did not immediately replace Vashti. History records that he led his army to invade Greece. He came with a huge fleet of 300 ships to Salamis where a storm sank most of his ships. In a fit of madness, Ahasuerus went down to the sea and beat the waves with a belt for destroying his fleet. About three years would go by before the king would get around to looking for a new queen to replace Vashti.  
(Esther 2:1-4)

**TEACHERS' TIP:** The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything - but they make the best of what they have.

**NEXT MEMORY VERSE:** I Peter 3:4

# Esther Lesson 1 Study Guide

*Define the following:*

Ahasuerus - \_\_\_\_\_

Shushan - \_\_\_\_\_

Vashti - \_\_\_\_\_

*Identify the following by a brief statement of who they were:*

Darius - \_\_\_\_\_

Ahasuerus - \_\_\_\_\_

Vashti - \_\_\_\_\_

*Fill in the blanks:*

1. King Ahasuerus was planning to attack the country of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. To prove to his \_\_\_\_\_ he could pay for this war, he hosted a huge feast.
3. The king wanted to show off his “*crowning jewel*”, so he ordered \_\_\_\_\_ to come to the men’s feast.
4. Because she refused the king’s command, the queen was \_\_\_\_\_.
5. A royal decree was sent out that every \_\_\_\_\_ was commanded to obey her husband.