

Esther 1:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The demand: **'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'**. Ahasuerus, drunk after seven days of feasting, commands his seven eunuchs to bring Queen Vashti wearing her crown to display her beauty before male guests. The phrase 'with the crown royal' possibly means 'wearing only the crown,' suggesting degrading demand to appear essentially nude before drunken men. Whether literal nudity or simply being paraded as trophy wife, the demand violated Vashti's dignity and Persian propriety. This sets up crisis revealing how God works through even pagan rulers' follies to accomplish His purposes.

Historical Context

Persian court etiquette typically maintained strict separation between male and female spheres. Royal women, particularly the queen, maintained dignity and privacy. Ahasuerus's drunken demand violated these customs, creating scandal. Greek historian Herodotus notes that Persian men didn't permit wives at men's drinking parties, confirming that this demand was culturally inappropriate. Archaeological evidence from Persepolis shows elaborate women's quarters separate from men's areas. The king's demand, motivated by drunken pride wanting to display his beautiful queen as possession, created the crisis that would ultimately position Esther for Mordecai's and the Jews' salvation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the king's drunken demand illustrate the dangers of alcohol impairing judgment and leading to sinful demands?
2. What does this passage teach about how God's providence works even through human folly and sin?

Interlinear Text

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|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| בְּכֹתֶר | הֶמֶלֶךְ | לִפְנֵי | הַמֶּלֶכֶה | וַשְׁתִּי | אֶת | לְהָבִיא |
| with the crown | the king | before | the queen | Vashti | | To bring |
| H3804 | H4428 | H6440 | H4436 | H2060 | H853 | H935 |
| כִּי | יָפִיָּהּ | אֶת | וְהַשָּׂרִים | הָעָם | יָם | לְהָרָא |
| | her beauty | | and the princes | the people | | to shew |
| H3588 | H3308 | H853 | H8269 | H5971 | | H7200 |
| | | | | | מֶלֶךְ | וְ |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | טוֹבָה | הִיא: |
| | | | | | for she was fair | to look on |
| | | | | | H2896 | H4758 |
| | | | | | | H1931 |

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 31:30 (Parallel theme): Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

Proverbs 16:9 (Parallel theme): A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

1 Samuel 25:3 (Parallel theme): 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.

2 Samuel 14:25 (Parallel theme): But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

Esther 6:8 (Kingdom): Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:

Esther 2:17 (Kingdom): And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.