

Esther 1:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

Counsel sought: **'Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times'**. Ahasuerus consulted advisors who 'knew the times' (yod'ei ha'ittim)—possibly astrologers, legal experts, or counselors skilled in precedent and custom. **'For so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment'**. The king relied on advisors for legal decisions, showing Persian administrative structure. This consultation about Vashti's punishment would have far-reaching consequences, creating vacancy that Esther would fill. God's providence works through bureaucratic procedures and human counsel to orchestrate His redemptive plan.

Historical Context

Persian administrative system included councils of advisors specializing in different areas. The phrase 'knew the times' might indicate astrologers (timing decisions by stars) or legal experts (knowing historical precedents). Ancient Near Eastern kings typically consulted councils before major decisions, combining autocratic power with advisory wisdom. This consultation about appropriate punishment for Vashti's disobedience created the legal precedent and circumstances leading to her permanent removal, though initially the king might have merely wanted validation of his anger rather than permanent divorce.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of pagan advisors and astrological counsel demonstrate His sovereignty over all human systems?
2. What does this teach about God accomplishing His purposes even through worldly wisdom and secular counsel?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	הִנֵּה לָךְ	לְחֻכְּמֵי יָם	יְדֵעַ י	הַעֲתָ יָם	כִּי
said	for so was the king's	to the wise men	all that knew	the times	
H559	H4428	H2450	H3045	H6256	H3588
כֵּן	דְּבַר ר	הִנֵּה לָךְ	לִפְנֵי י	כָּל	יְדֵעַ י
H3651	manner	for so was the king's	toward	H3605	all that knew
	H1697	H4428	H6440		law
				H3045	H1881
וְדִין:					
and judgment					
H1779					

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 12:32 (Word): And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

Jeremiah 10:7 (Kingdom): Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee.

Daniel 2:2 (Kingdom): Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

Matthew 16:3 (Parallel theme): And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

Daniel 2:12 (Kingdom): For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel 5:7 (Kingdom): The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.