

Esther 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus.

Analysis

Memucan's counsel begins: '**And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus**'. Memucan's response escalates the situation from personal affront to empire-wide crisis. He argues Vashti's disobedience threatens all male authority throughout the empire—if the queen can disobey the king with impunity, all wives might disobey husbands. This exaggeration demonstrates patriarchal anxiety about women's independence but also creates the political justification for removing Vashti permanently, opening the way for Esther.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern patriarchal structures maintained strict gender hierarchies, with male authority over women considered foundational to social order. Memucan's argument that Vashti's disobedience threatened this entire structure reveals both the fragility of systems maintained by coercion and the counselors' desire to secure their own domestic authority by making example of the queen. The rhetorical escalation from personal affront to empire-wide threat provided political cover for harsh punishment, though the actual motivation was wounded

male pride. God's providence uses even flawed human reasoning to accomplish His purposes.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does Memucan's escalation teach about how personal grievances become politicized to justify excessive responses?
2. How does this demonstrate God using even unjust reasoning and misogynistic attitudes to position Esther for saving Jews?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר answered H559	וַיֹּאמֶר And Memucan H4462	לִפְנֵי before H6440	הֶמֶלֶךְ of the king H4428	וְהַשָּׂרִים and the princes H8269	עַל H3808	לְאֵל H5921	
הֶמֶלֶךְ of the king H4428	לִבְדּוֹ H905	עָוֹתָהּ hath not done wrong H5753	וַשְׁתִּי Vashti H2060	הַמַּלְכָּה the queen H4436	כִּי H3588	עַל H5921	כָּל H3605
וְהַשָּׂרִים and the princes H8269	וְעַל H5921	כָּל H3605	וְהָעָם and to all the people H5971	אֶשְׂרָא H834	בְּכָל H3605		
מְדִינֹת that are in all the provinces H4082	הֶמֶלֶךְ of the king H4428	אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ Ahasuerus H325					