

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

עַל	לִא	פְּשָׁרִים	בְּמִן	לִפְנֵי	מִומֶךָ	וְאַמְרָה	אָמַר	לְאַמְרָה	מִומֶךָ	לִפְנֵי	בְּמִן	פְּשָׁרִים	לִא	עַל	
answered	And Memucan	before	of the king	and the princes									H3808	H5921	
H559	H4462	H6440	H4428	H8269											
כָּל	עַל	כִּי	הַמֶּלֶךְ	הַוְשָׁתִי										כָּל	
of the king	H905	hath not done wrong	Vashti	the queen									H3588	H5921	H3605
H4428		H5753	H2060	H4436											
בְּכָל	אֲשֶׁר	בְּעַמְּ יִם	בְּכָל	וְעַל	פְּשָׁרִים	and the princes	H5921	H3605	H834	H3605					
אַמְשִׁירֹושׁ:	בְּמִן	לְגַם	מִדִּין	וְתַ											
that are in all the provinces		of the king	Ahasuerus												
H4082		H4428	H325												