

Esther 1:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.

Analysis

Feared contagion: '**For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not**'. Memucan predicts Vashti's example will spread, causing widespread wifely disobedience. The fear that news of queen's successful resistance would inspire other women reveals insecurity about patriarchal control. This exaggerated concern provided political justification for severe punishment, though real motivation was protecting male authority. Ironically, this decision orchestrated by men fearful of losing control ultimately empowered Esther to save her people.

Historical Context

Ancient communication networks spread news throughout empires through merchants, official messengers, and travelers. The counselors' fear that Vashti's resistance would be widely known and imitated shows both the reality of ancient gossip networks and patriarchal anxiety. The logic—if the king's own wife can refuse with impunity, all wives will rebel—assumes obedience is maintained only through fear of punishment, not mutual respect or love. This reveals the coercive

foundation of ancient patriarchy and explains the counselors' determination to make severe example of Vashti.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does fear of losing control lead to excessive responses and unjust punishments?
2. What does this teach about the difference between authority maintained by coercion versus that earned through respect?

Interlinear Text

כִּי H3588	יָצֵא H3318	דָּבָר H1697	הַמֶּלֶכֶת H4436	עַל H5921	כָּל H3605	הַנָּשִׁים H802
	shall come abroad	For this deed	of the queen			unto all women
	לְהִבָּז H959	בְּעֵלֶיהָ H1167	בְּעֵינֶיהָ H5869	אָמַר H559		הַמֶּלֶךְ H4428
	so that they shall despise	their husbands	in their eyes	commanded		The king
אַחַשְׁוֵר H325	אָמַר H559	בָּאָהָּ H935	אֶת H853	וַשְׁתִּי H2060		הַמֶּלֶכֶת H4436
Ahasuerus	commanded	him but she came		Vashti		of the queen
לִפְנֵי H6440	וְלֹא H3808	בָּאָהָּ H935				
before		him but she came				