

Parable Study Book of Esther Chapter 1

It is said that the king granted Ezra all his request, which shows, 1. That this decree was solicited by this eminent man of God. 2. That its grant of power was in his estimation so ample that he could ask for nothing further. This decree sanctions all the work that had been accomplished under the decrees of Cyrus and Darius and greatly enlarges the grant of power made by them to the Jews. It is the last decree made by the kings of Persia for the restoration of Jerusalem. The providence of God appears in as signal a manner perhaps in this concluding decree, as in that of Cyrus which began the work. For this Artaxerxes was the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther. The Septuagint which is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, made about two centuries after the reign of Ahasuerus, calls him Artaxerxes. This translation was made by learned Hebrews in Egypt who could hardly have been mistaken as to the identity of this king. According to Josephus the Ahasuerus of Esther is the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7. Antiquities of the Jews, book 11, chap. 7. Such is the view maintained in Dr. Hale's Analysis of Chronology, and the Sacred Chronology of S. Bliss. Dean Prideaux has entered largely into the proof of this point. Such also is the view of Scott the commentator, and of Dr. A. Clarke, and of a host of eminent Biblical scholars. {1865 JNA, CRBJ 45.2}

The marriage of Esther with Artaxerxes, which was one of the most remarkable events of providence (see Esther 1; 2;) took place in the tenth Jewish month, Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. Esther 2:16. But it is to be observed that the years of Artaxerxes reign begin between the fifth and nine months of the Jewish year, and consist therefore of a part of two of those years, the last part of one and the first part of another. Compare Ezra 7:7-9; Neh. 1:1; 2:1. So that Esther being married to Artaxerxes in the tenth Jewish month in the seventh year of his reign, it was some two months before the time when he gave to Ezra that decree which caused him in the first Jewish month of that year to set out for Jerusalem with a considerable body of his own people. The king, in honor of his marriage with Esther, signaled that year of his reign, which was the seventh, by making a release to the provinces and giving gifts according to his royal state. Esther 2:16, 18. This auspicious moment seems to have been seized by Esther to bring Ezra and his people to the favorable notice of Artaxerxes; and under this potent influence, for the hand of God was in it, the king and his seven counselors (compare Ezra 7:14; Esther 1:14) made great and costly offerings to the house of God, and granted to Ezra, whose great piety and worth were probably known to them, all the power that he could ask or use for the restoration of Jerusalem. This decree of Artaxerxes embraces the following important matters: {1865 JNA, CRBJ 46.1}

Esther

Chapter 1

1:1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this [is] Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, [over] an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)

1:2 [That] in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which [was] in Shushan the palace,

1:3 In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, [being] before him:

1:4 When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, [even] and hundred and fourscore days.

1:5 And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace;

1:6 [Where were] white, green, and blue, [hangings], fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds [were of] gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble.

1:7 And they gave [them] drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king.

1:8 And the drinking [was] according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.

1:9 Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women [in] the royal house which [belonged] to king Ahasuerus.

1:10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,

1:11 To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to show the people and the princes her beauty: for she [was] fair to look on.

1:12 But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by [his] chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.

1:13 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:

1:14 And the next unto him [was] Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, [and] Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, [and] which sat the first in the kingdom;)

1:15 What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?

1:16 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.

1:17 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.

1:18 [Likewise] shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus [shall there arise] too much contempt and wrath.

1:19 If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be

written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

1:20 And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.

1:21 And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan:

1:22 For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that [it] should be published according to the language of every people.