

# CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

## BIBLE STUDY

### Esther Chapter 1 — When Pride Meets Providence

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

#### Introduction

Esther Chapter 1 begins the story of a powerful Persian king, a magnificent kingdom, a beautiful queen, and a decision that will eventually change the course of an entire nation.

The name of God is not directly mentioned in the Book of Esther. Yet God's providence can be seen throughout the entire story. What appears to be a series of political decisions, personal conflicts, and royal circumstances is actually setting the stage for God's future deliverance of His people.

Esther 1 introduces us to **King Ahasuerus**, also known as Xerxes. He ruled a vast empire stretching from India to Ethiopia. He possessed enormous wealth, tremendous authority, and great political power.

But Esther 1 also reveals an important truth:

**A person can possess great power and still lack great wisdom.**

The king could command an empire, but he could not control his own anger. He could display enormous wealth, but he could not display equal wisdom. He could command others, but his pride eventually influenced his judgment.

Queen Vashti's refusal to appear before the king begins a chain of events that will eventually place Esther on the throne.

The great lesson of Esther 1 is this:

**God can use circumstances that appear ordinary, political, or even chaotic to accomplish His sovereign purposes.**

## I. A KING OVER A VAST EMPIRE

### Esther 1:1 — A King Who Ruled 127 Provinces

#### Verse 1

“This happened during the reign of King Ahasuerus, also known as Xerxes. He ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India all the way to Ethiopia.”

Esther begins by establishing the size and power of the Persian Empire.

Ahasuerus was not a minor ruler. He controlled an enormous territory.

His kingdom stretched from India in the east to Ethiopia in the west and south. His authority covered many different nations, cultures, languages, and peoples.

## **Cross References**

### **Daniel 6:1**

“It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps, or governors, over the kingdom, with three administrators over them. Daniel was one of those three administrators.”

This verse shows how the Persian Empire was organized into numerous provinces and governed through appointed officials.

### **Ezra 4:6**

“At the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus, the enemies of the Jews wrote an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem.”

The reign of Ahasuerus was also a time when opposition against God's people was taking place.

### **Esther 8:9**

“The king's secretaries were called together at that time, in the third month, the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day. They wrote everything Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews to the governors, officials, and leaders of the 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia. The letters were written in the language and writing of each province and in the language of the Jewish people.”

The same 127 provinces mentioned at the beginning of Esther appear again later in the story.

## **Crawford Commentary**

Esther begins by showing us the greatness of the empire before showing us the greatness of God's providence.

The king ruled 127 provinces, but God was not intimidated by 127 provinces.

The king had authority over nations, but God remained sovereign over the king.

## **Spiritual Principle**

**Human kingdoms may be powerful, but they are never more powerful than God.**

# **II. THE KING IN SUSAN**

## **Esther 1:2 — The Royal Throne at Susa**

### **Verse 2**

“At that time, King Ahasuerus was sitting on his royal throne in the fortress of Susa.”

Susa was one of the important royal centers of the Persian Empire.

The king was sitting on his throne, surrounded by wealth and authority.

The throne represented earthly power.

But Scripture repeatedly reminds us that there is a throne greater than every earthly throne.

## **Cross References**

### **Nehemiah 1:1**

“These are the words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. In the month of Kislev, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was in the fortress of Susa.”

Nehemiah also served in Susa during the Persian period.

### **Daniel 8:2**

“In my vision I saw myself in the fortress of Susa, in the province of Elam. I was standing beside the Ulai River.”

Susa appears again in Daniel's prophetic vision.

### **Esther 9:6**

“In the fortress of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men.”

The city that appears at the beginning of Esther becomes an important location later in the story.

## **Crawford Commentary**

The story begins in a palace, but God's purposes are not limited to palaces.

God works through kings, servants, queens, officials, and ordinary people.

## **Spiritual Principle**

**Never assume that God is absent simply because His name is not visible in the circumstances.**

# **III. THE KING'S GREAT FEAST**

## **Esther 1:3 — A Feast for His Officials**

### **Verse 3**

“In the third year of his reign, King Ahasuerus gave a great feast for all his officials and servants. The army of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the governors of the provinces were all there.”

This was not a small dinner.

The king invited the highest-ranking people in his empire.

He wanted them to see his wealth, power, authority, and glory.

## **Cross References**

### **Daniel 5:1**

“King Belshazzar gave a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he drank wine with them.”

The feast of Belshazzar demonstrates how royal celebrations could become occasions for excessive drinking and displays of wealth.

### **Genesis 40:20**

“Three days later was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He brought the chief cupbearer and chief baker before them.”

Royal feasts were often associated with important political and personal occasions.

### **Esther 2:18**

“Then the king gave a great banquet for all his officials and servants to celebrate Esther. He announced a holiday throughout the provinces and gave generous gifts to the people.”

Later, Esther herself becomes the reason for another great royal celebration.

## **Crawford Commentary**

The king was gathering the powerful people of the empire around himself.

But while the king was planning his feast, God was preparing something much greater than a celebration.

## **Spiritual Principle**

**People may gather for their own purposes while God is quietly preparing His purposes.**

# **IV. DISPLAYING THE WEALTH OF THE KINGDOM**

## **Esther 1:4 — 180 Days of Royal Splendor**

### **Verse 4**

“For 180 days, he displayed the enormous wealth of his kingdom and the magnificent splendor of his greatness.”

The feast lasted for an astonishing six months.

The king wanted his guests to see his wealth.

Notice the emphasis:

- His kingdom.
- His wealth.
- His greatness.
- His splendor.

The focus was largely on the king himself.

## **Cross References**

### **1 Kings 10:23**

“King Solomon was greater in wealth and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.”

Solomon also possessed tremendous wealth and influence.

### **Ecclesiastes 2:9**

“So I became greater than anyone who had lived in Jerusalem before me. In all of this, my wisdom remained with me.”

Solomon experienced greatness and abundance but eventually recognized the emptiness of pursuing earthly greatness by itself.

### **Proverbs 27:24**

“Riches do not last forever, and a crown does not remain secure for every generation.”

Earthly wealth and political power are temporary.

## **Crawford Commentary**

The king could display his wealth for 180 days, but he could not make that wealth permanent.

Everything earthly eventually passes away.

## **Key Truth**

**What impresses people today may be forgotten tomorrow.**

# **V. A FEAST FOR EVERYONE**

## **Esther 1:5 — Seven Days of Celebration**

### **Verse 5**

“When those 180 days were finished, the king gave another seven-day feast in the courtyard of the palace garden for everyone in the fortress of Susa, from the greatest officials to the ordinary people.”

The king moved from a feast for officials to a feast for everyone in Susa.

The palace garden became the setting for a tremendous celebration.

## **Cross References**

### **Ecclesiastes 2:5**

“I made gardens and parks for myself, and I planted every kind of fruit tree in them.”

Gardens were associated with wealth, beauty, and royal luxury.

### **Esther 7:7**

“The king got up in anger, left his wine, and went into the palace garden. But Haman stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life because he realized that the king had decided to punish him.”

The palace garden becomes important again later in Esther.

### **Amos 6:6**

“You drink wine from bowls, use the finest perfumes, and lie on beds decorated with ivory, but you do not care about the destruction of Joseph's descendants.”

Amos warns against luxury combined with indifference toward suffering.

## **Crawford Commentary**

There is nothing inherently sinful about beauty, celebration, or wealth.

The danger comes when possessions become the center of life and when luxury makes a person insensitive to spiritual realities.

## **Spiritual Principle**

**Enjoy God's blessings without allowing His blessings to become your god.**

# **VI. THE SPLENDOR OF THE PALACE**

## **Esther 1:6 — A Palace Filled With Beauty**

### **Verse 6**

“The courtyard was decorated with white, green, and blue linen curtains, fastened with fine cords and purple ropes to silver rings attached to marble pillars. Gold and silver couches stood on a floor made of colorful marble and stone.”

The description emphasizes the incredible wealth of the Persian palace.

Everything was designed to communicate luxury.

## **Cross References**

### **Exodus 26:1**

“Make the Tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn. Decorate them with artistic designs of cherubim.”

God Himself instructed Israel to use beautiful materials in the construction of the Tabernacle.

### **Exodus 27:10**

“There are to be twenty posts and twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts.”

The furnishings of the Tabernacle also demonstrated craftsmanship and beauty.

### **1 Chronicles 29:2**

“With all my resources I have provided for the Temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver work, bronze for the bronze work, iron for the iron work, and wood for the wooden work, along with precious stones and various other valuable materials.”

Beauty and excellence are not automatically wrong.

## **Crawford Commentary**

The difference is not simply between something beautiful and something ugly.

The deeper issue is **what occupies the heart**.

Beauty can be used for God's glory, or beauty can become an object of pride.

# **VII. GOLDEN GOBLETS AND ABUNDANT WINE**

## **Esther 1:7 — Royal Generosity**

### **Verse 7**

“Drinks were served in golden goblets, and every goblet was different. The royal wine flowed freely because the king wanted to show his great generosity.”

The king spared no expense.

Even the drinking vessels were made of gold.

## **Cross References**

### **Daniel 5:2**

“While Belshazzar was drinking wine, he ordered his servants to bring the gold and silver cups that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem, so that the king, his nobles, his wives, and his concubines could drink from them.”

Belshazzar's feast shows how royal drinking could become connected with arrogance and disrespect toward God.

### **1 Kings 10:21**

“All of King Solomon's drinking cups were made of gold, and all the household items in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were made of pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered worthless in Solomon's days.”

Solomon's wealth was so great that silver was considered insignificant.

### **Ecclesiastes 2:3**

“I explored the pleasures of wine while still guiding myself with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do during their short lives.”

Ecclesiastes explores the temporary pleasures of earthly life.

### **Crawford Commentary**

The problem is not the material of the cup.

The deeper issue is the human heart.

A golden cup cannot give a person a godly heart.

### **Spiritual Principle**

**Possessions can fill your hands without ever filling your heart.**

## **VIII. NO ONE WAS FORCED TO DRINK**

### **Esther 1:8 — Everyone Could Choose**

#### **Verse 8**

“Drinking was allowed according to the king's command, but no one was forced to drink. The king had instructed the officials of his household to let every person do what he wanted.”

The king established a rule concerning the feast.

No one was forced to drink.

### **Cross References**

**Proverbs 23:20**



“Do not join those who drink too much wine or those who eat too much meat.”

Scripture warns against uncontrolled excess.

#### **1 Peter 4:3**

“In the past you spent enough time living like unbelievers—following sinful desires, drunkenness, wild parties, drinking parties, and disgusting idolatry.”

Peter reminds believers that their former way of life should not control them after coming to Christ.

#### **Ephesians 5:18**

“Do not get drunk with wine, because drunkenness leads to reckless living. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”

The Christian life is not supposed to be controlled by alcohol or worldly excess.

#### **Crawford Commentary**

The verse describes a historical royal practice; it should not be interpreted as a command for Christians to participate in drunkenness.

The New Testament clearly teaches believers to exercise self-control.

#### **Spiritual Principle**

**Christian freedom should never become an excuse for sinful excess.**

## **IX. QUEEN VASHTI'S FEAST**

### **Esther 1:9 — Vashti Gives Her Own Feast**

#### **Verse 9**

“Queen Vashti also gave a feast for the women in the royal palace of King Ahasuerus.”

While the king was hosting the men, Vashti hosted the women.

This establishes that she was also a woman of position and influence.

#### **Cross References**

##### **1 Timothy 5:14**

“So I want younger widows to marry, have children, manage their households, and give the enemy no opportunity to accuse them.”

The New Testament recognizes important responsibilities within the household.

##### **Titus 2:5**

“They should teach younger women to love their husbands and children, to live wisely and purely, to manage their homes well, and to be kind and submissive to their husbands, so that no one will speak against God's Word.”

God's Word speaks about godly character and responsibility within marriage.

#### **Proverbs 31:15**

“She gets up while it is still night and prepares food for her household and portions for her female servants.”

The virtuous woman is active, responsible, and diligent.

#### **Crawford Commentary**

Vashti was not powerless.

She was the queen and had her own royal gathering.

Yet the conflict that follows shows how quickly pride, authority, and anger can collide.

## **X. WHEN THE KING'S PRIDE TAKES CONTROL**

### **Esther 1:10 — The King Was Feeling Good From the Wine**

#### **Verse 10**

“On the seventh day, when the king was feeling good from the wine, he commanded seven eunuchs who served him—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas—to come before him.”

The seventh day became the turning point.

The king had been drinking.

His judgment was about to be influenced by his condition.

#### **Cross References**

##### **Genesis 9:21**

“He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and lay uncovered inside his tent.”

Noah's experience demonstrates that drunkenness can lead to shameful behavior.

##### **Proverbs 20:1**

“Wine makes people mock and beer causes fights. Whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”

Alcohol can affect judgment and behavior.

### **Daniel 1:3**

“Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief official, to bring some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility.”

Daniel also describes the structure of royal service in Babylon.

### **Crawford Commentary**

The king's condition matters.

A decision made under the influence of anger, pride, or intoxication can produce consequences that last far longer than the moment.

### **Spiritual Principle**

**Never allow temporary emotions to make permanent decisions.**

## **XI. VASHTI'S BEAUTY**

### **Esther 1:11 — The Queen on Display**

#### **Verse 11**

“He ordered them to bring Queen Vashti before him wearing her royal crown so he could show the officials and the people her beauty. She was very beautiful.”

The king wanted to display his queen as another possession demonstrating his greatness.

He had already displayed his wealth.

Now he wanted to display his wife.

### **Cross References**

#### **2 Samuel 11:2**

“One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful.”

David's story demonstrates how physical beauty can become connected to temptation when the heart is not governed by righteousness.

#### **Genesis 12:14**

“When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was very beautiful.”

Sarah's physical beauty was also noticed by others.

#### **Proverbs 31:30**

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.”

This gives us the proper perspective.

Physical beauty is temporary.

Godly character has lasting value.

### **Crawford Commentary**

The king saw Vashti primarily as something to display.

Scripture reminds us that people are more than appearances.

### **Key Truth**

**God is more concerned with the condition of the heart than the appearance of the body.**

## **XII. VASHTI REFUSES**

### **Esther 1:12 — The Queen Says No**

#### **Verse 12**

“But Queen Vashti refused to come when the king's servants delivered his command. The king became extremely angry, and his anger burned inside him.”

This is the crisis of Esther Chapter 1.

Vashti refused the command.

The text tells us that the king became furious.

### **Cross References**

#### **Proverbs 16:14**

“A king's anger can mean death, but a wise person knows how to calm him.”

A ruler's anger can be extremely dangerous.

#### **Daniel 3:13**

“Then Nebuchadnezzar became furious and very angry, and he ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be brought before him.”

Nebuchadnezzar's anger also resulted in an immediate response.

#### **Ecclesiastes 8:3**

“Do not be in a hurry to leave the king's presence. Do not support a bad cause, because the king can do whatever he pleases.”

Earthly authority can be dangerous when combined with unchecked emotion.

### **Crawford Commentary**

We should be careful not to read more into Vashti's refusal than the text tells us.

The Bible does not explain every detail of her motivation.

What it does clearly tell us is that the king became angry and that his anger set the next events into motion.

### **Spiritual Principle**

**Anger can turn a personal conflict into a life-changing crisis.**

## **XIII. THE KING SEEKS COUNSEL**

### **Esther 1:13 — Wise Advisers Were Consulted**

#### **Verse 13**

“The king turned to his advisers, who understood the laws and customs of the kingdom. It was the king's practice to ask those who knew the law and justice.”

Instead of immediately making the decision himself, the king consulted advisers.

This was wise in principle.

But good counsel is only useful when the people giving the counsel are actually wise.

### **Cross References**

#### **1 Chronicles 12:32**

“Men from the tribe of Issachar understood the times and knew what Israel should do. Their leaders numbered 200, and all their relatives were under their command.”

Understanding the times is a valuable leadership quality.

#### **Daniel 2:12**

“Because of this, the king became very angry and furious and ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.”

A ruler's anger can even turn against his own advisers.

#### **Genesis 41:8**

“In the morning Pharaoh was troubled, so he called for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could explain them.”

Kings often depended upon advisers and wise men.

## **Crawford Commentary**

Leadership requires counsel.

But leaders must distinguish between **wise counsel** and counsel that simply confirms their emotions.

### **Spiritual Principle**

**Do not ask for advice merely to find someone who agrees with you. Seek wisdom that will help you obey what is right.**

## **XIV. THE SEVEN NOBLES**

### **Esther 1:14 — Men With Access to the King**

#### **Verse 14**

“The king's closest advisers were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan. These seven nobles of Persia and Media had direct access to the king and held the highest positions in the kingdom.”

These men had tremendous influence.

They were not ordinary advisers.

They were among the highest officials in the empire.

### **Cross References**

#### **Ezra 7:14**

“The king and his seven advisers are sending you to Judah and Jerusalem to find out whether the people are following the Law of your God, which you have in your possession.”

The Persian government used a group of prominent advisers in important decisions.

#### **Daniel 6:2**

“The king planned to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, with three administrators over them, including Daniel, so that the king would not suffer loss.”

This demonstrates the administrative structure of the empire.

#### **2 Kings 25:19**

“From the city he took an officer who was in charge of the fighting men, five royal advisers who were still in the city, the secretary who was commander of the army, and sixty other men.”

Royal advisers could hold significant positions.

## **Crawford Commentary**

The people closest to a leader can strongly influence the direction of that leader's decisions.  
Therefore, leaders must be careful about whom they allow to shape their thinking.

# **XV. WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT VASHTI?**

## **Esther 1:15 — The King's Question**

### **Verse 15**

“The king asked them, ‘According to the law, what should be done to Queen Vashti? She refused to obey my command that was delivered by the eunuchs.’”

The king now wants a legal answer to a personal problem.

This is an important distinction.

The king's question was not simply:

**“What is wise?”**

It was:

**“What does the law say we should do?”**

## **Cross References**

### **Deuteronomy 17:9**

“Go to the Levitical priests and to the judge who is serving at that time. Ask them, and they will tell you the decision.”

God's law established proper procedures for difficult legal matters.

### **Ezra 7:25**

“You, Ezra, according to the wisdom your God has given you, appoint judges and officials to administer justice among all the people in the region west of the Euphrates, especially those who know the laws of your God.”

Justice requires knowledgeable and qualified leadership.

### **Daniel 6:8**

“Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.”

Persian law was treated as binding once officially established.

## **Crawford Commentary**

A dangerous mistake is to use legal authority to settle what is really a matter of wounded pride.

Wisdom asks:

**What is right?**

Pride asks:

**How can I protect my authority?**

# **XVI. MEMUCAN'S ACCUSATION**

## **Esther 1:16 — Vashti Is Blamed for a National Crisis**

### **Verse 16**

“Memucan answered the king and the officials, ‘Queen Vashti has done wrong not only against the king, but also against all the nobles and all the people in every province of the empire.’”

Memucan dramatically expands the issue.

What began as a conflict between a husband and wife is now presented as a threat to the entire empire.

## **Cross References**

### **Proverbs 11:14**

“Without wise guidance, a nation falls, but victory comes when there are many wise advisers.”

Leadership requires wise counsel.

### **1 Kings 12:8**

“But Rehoboam rejected the advice the older men gave him and asked the younger men who had grown up with him and were now serving him.”

Rehoboam demonstrates the danger of rejecting wise counsel.

### **Genesis 3:12**

“The man said, ‘The woman you gave me gave me the fruit, and I ate it.’”

Adam attempted to shift responsibility onto someone else.

## **Crawford Commentary**

There is a human tendency to enlarge personal problems.

A private disagreement can become:



- A family crisis.
- A church crisis.
- A community crisis.
- A national crisis.

Wisdom recognizes when a problem is personal and when it truly affects others.

## **XVII. THE FEAR OF OTHER WOMEN**

### **Esther 1:17 — “They Will Hear About It”**

#### **Verse 17**

“If other women hear what the queen did, they will begin to treat their husbands with contempt. They will hear that Queen Vashti refused to come when the king summoned her.”

Memucan argued that Vashti's actions could influence other women.

#### **Cross References**

##### **Ephesians 5:33**

“Each husband must love his wife as he loves himself, and each wife must respect her husband.”

Marriage requires both love and respect.

##### **Titus 2:5**

“They should live wisely and purely, manage their homes well, be kind, and respect their husbands, so that no one will dishonor God's Word.”

God's Word speaks about godly conduct and respect.

##### **1 Peter 3:1**

“In the same way, wives should submit to their husbands so that, even if some husbands do not believe God's Word, they may be won without words by the behavior of their wives.”

Peter emphasizes the influence of godly behavior.

#### **Crawford Commentary**

The Bible teaches respect within marriage.

But biblical marriage is not a one-sided arrangement where only the wife has responsibilities.

Husbands are commanded to love sacrificially, and wives are commanded to respect their husbands.

## **Spiritual Principle**

**A healthy marriage requires godly responsibility from both husband and wife.**

# **XVIII. A KINGDOM-WIDE FEAR**

## **Esther 1:18 — Fear of Widespread Disrespect**

### **Verse 18**

“Today the noblewomen of Persia and Media will hear about the queen's actions and speak the same way to their husbands. This will produce widespread disrespect and anger.”

Memucan predicted a national crisis.

His argument was essentially:

**“If the queen can refuse the king, other women may refuse their husbands.”**

## **Cross References**

### **Proverbs 21:9**

“It is better to live on the corner of a roof than to share a house with a quarrelsome wife.”

Constant conflict destroys peace in a home.

### **Proverbs 19:13**

“A foolish son brings trouble to his father, and a wife who constantly argues is like water dripping without stopping.”

Constant arguing can destroy the peace of a household.

### **Proverbs 21:19**

“It is better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and angry woman.”

Scripture repeatedly warns against destructive conflict.

## **Crawford Commentary**

The larger principle is that conflict within the home can have consequences beyond the home.

However, Scripture also teaches that husbands must not provoke, abuse, or mistreat their wives.

Peace in the home requires humility from everyone.

# **XIX. THE ROYAL DECREE**

## **Esther 1:19 — Vashti Loses Her Position**

### **Verse 19**

“If it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree and make it part of the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be changed: Queen Vashti must never again appear before King Ahasuerus. Let the king give her royal position to another woman who is more worthy.”

Memucan recommended a permanent solution.

Vashti would no longer appear before the king.

Her royal position would be given to another woman.

The reader does not yet know who that woman will be.

But God does.

### **Cross References**

#### **1 Samuel 15:28**

“Samuel said to Saul, ‘The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to someone else who is better than you.’”

Saul lost his position because of disobedience.

#### **Daniel 6:8**

“Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians.”

Persian decrees carried great authority.

#### **Esther 2:17**

“The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she pleased him more than all the other virgins. So he placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.”

This is where we see the significance of Esther 1.

Vashti's removal eventually creates the opportunity for Esther to become queen.

### **Crawford Commentary**

What looks like a political decision is actually part of the providential preparation for God's deliverance of Israel.

God's name is not mentioned in this chapter.

But His providence is visible.

## **Key Truth**

God can work through circumstances even when people do not realize that He is working.

# **XX. EVERY WIFE WILL HONOR HER HUSBAND**

## **Esther 1:20 — The Decree Goes Throughout the Empire**

### **Verse 20**

“When this decree is announced throughout the king's vast empire, every wife will honor her husband, whether he is important or unimportant.”

The king wanted his decree to establish authority throughout the kingdom.

## **Cross References**

### **Ephesians 5:22**

“Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.”

Christian marriage includes an ordered relationship under God.

### **Colossians 3:18**

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is appropriate in the Lord.”

The wife's responsibility is connected to obedience to Christ.

### **1 Peter 3:6**

“Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters when you do what is right and do not give in to fear.”

Peter points to Sarah as an example of respectful conduct.

## **Crawford Commentary**

These passages must be understood together with the husband's command to love his wife sacrificially.

Biblical authority is never permission for cruelty, abuse, selfishness, or domination.

A husband is not called to imitate the pride of Ahasuerus.

He is called to imitate Christ.

## **Spiritual Principle**

**Biblical authority is always accountable to God.**

# XXI. THE KING ACCEPTS THE ADVICE

## Esther 1:21 — The Decision Is Made

### Verse 21

“The king and his officials liked Memucan's advice, so the king did exactly what Memucan suggested.”

The king accepted the advice.

The decision was made.

Vashti would no longer be queen.

### Cross References

#### Proverbs 21:1

“The king's heart is like a stream of water in the Lord's hand. He directs it wherever He wants.”

God remains sovereign over earthly rulers.

#### Proverbs 16:9

“People may make plans in their hearts, but the Lord directs their steps.”

People make decisions, but God's providence remains at work.

#### Proverbs 19:21

“People may make many plans in their hearts, but it is the Lord's purpose that will finally succeed.”

Human beings plan.

God remains sovereign.

### Crawford Commentary

This is one of the great themes of Esther.

The king made a decision.

Memucan gave advice.

Vashti lost her position.

Yet behind the visible circumstances, God was preparing the way for Esther.

### Key Truth

**Human decisions do not cancel God's sovereignty.**

# XXII. THE DECREE IS SENT THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE

## Esther 1:22 — Every Man in His Own Household

### Verse 22

“The king sent letters throughout all 127 provinces, written in the language and writing of each province, declaring that every man should be the ruler of his own household and should speak the language of his own people.”

The decree was distributed throughout the empire.

The king wanted his authority recognized not only in the palace but throughout every household.

### Cross References

#### Genesis 3:16

“To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly increase your pain in childbirth. You will give birth to children with pain. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’”

This verse describes the consequences of the fall and should not be treated as a permission for sinful domination.

#### Ephesians 5:23

“For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and He is the Savior.”

Christ is the ultimate example of godly leadership.

#### 1 Corinthians 11:3

“I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.”

Biblical authority ultimately operates under God's authority.

### Crawford Commentary

The final verse of Esther 1 establishes the cultural setting in which the story unfolds.

But there is a deeper lesson.

The king believed he could establish order throughout his kingdom through a royal decree.

Yet true order cannot be created simply through laws.

It must begin in the heart.

A marriage cannot be made healthy merely by command.

A family cannot become godly merely through authority.

God's design requires love, humility, faithfulness, sacrifice, and obedience.

## **XXIII. MAJOR THEMES OF ESTHER CHAPTER 1**

### **1. PRIDE CAN CLOUD JUDGMENT**

King Ahasuerus possessed tremendous wealth and authority.

But his pride became part of his downfall.

He wanted everyone to admire his greatness.

He wanted to display his queen.

When Vashti refused, his anger took control.

#### **Spiritual Principle**

**The greater our position, the greater our need for humility.**

### **2. GOD WORKS BEHIND THE SCENES**

The name of God does not appear directly in Esther Chapter 1.

Yet God's providence is already moving.

Vashti is removed.

A vacancy is created.

Esther will eventually be brought into the palace.

She will become queen.

And later, God will use her position to save His people.

#### **Crawford Commentary**

What looked like a royal family dispute became part of a much larger divine plan.

#### **Spiritual Principle**

**God does not have to announce His presence for His providence to be active.**

### **3. ONE DECISION CAN AFFECT MANY PEOPLE**

Ahasuerus became angry because of one event.

His advisers responded.

A decree was created.

Letters were sent throughout the empire.

A personal conflict became a national law.

#### **Spiritual Principle**

**Leaders must understand that their decisions can affect people far beyond themselves.**

### **4. BE CAREFUL WHO GIVES YOU COUNSEL**

The king surrounded himself with advisers.

But having advisers does not automatically guarantee wisdom.

The quality of the decision depends partly upon the quality of the counsel.

#### **Proverbs 15:22**

“Plans fail when there is no counsel, but they succeed when there are many advisers.”

Good counsel is valuable.

But godly counsel must be consistent with God's truth.

#### **Crawford Principle**

**Do not surround yourself with people who only tell you what you want to hear.**

### **5. ANGER CAN CREATE CONSEQUENCES**

The king's anger appears repeatedly in the chapter.

His emotional response to Vashti became a permanent political decision.

#### **Crawford Commentary**

Anger often tells us:

**“Do something now.”**

Wisdom often tells us:

**“Slow down and think.”**



One of the most important disciplines of spiritual maturity is learning not to make permanent decisions during temporary emotional storms.

## **6. BEAUTY DOES NOT LAST**

Vashti was described as beautiful.

But Proverbs reminds us:

“Beauty does not last, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.”

Physical appearance changes.

Youth changes.

Possessions change.

Political power changes.

But character and faithfulness have eternal significance.

### **Spiritual Principle**

**Build your life around what lasts, not merely around what looks impressive.**

## **7. GODLY MARRIAGE REQUIRES MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Esther 1 emphasizes the wife's responsibility to honor her husband.

But Scripture does not stop there.

### **Ephesians 5:25**

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

The husband's authority is not a license to control or mistreat his wife.

Christlike leadership is sacrificial.

### **1 Peter 3:7**

“Husbands, live with your wives with understanding and honor them as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of God's gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”

The husband is commanded to treat his wife with honor.

## **Crawford Principle**

**Biblical marriage is not about who can control whom. It is about two people living under the authority of God.**

## **8. GOD CAN USE IMPERFECT CIRCUMSTANCES**

Esther 1 contains:

- Pride.
- Anger.
- Alcohol.
- Political pressure.
- Human ambition.
- Poor judgment.
- A broken relationship.
- A royal decree.

Yet God is still working.

This is one of the most encouraging truths in Esther.

God's purposes are not defeated by human weakness.

### **Romans 8:28**

“We know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.”

God can work through circumstances that people never intended for His purposes.

## **XXIV. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN ESTHER 1**

The reader knows something the characters do not know.

Vashti does not know what her removal will eventually accomplish.

The king does not know.

Memucan does not know.

The advisers do not know.

But the reader begins to see that a vacancy on the throne will eventually make room for Esther.

This is providence.

God is directing circumstances toward His purposes even when His hand is not immediately visible.

### **Crawford Bible Commentary Principle**

**“Just because you cannot see God's hand does not mean God is not moving.”**

There may be moments in our lives when circumstances appear confusing.

Doors close.

Plans change.

People leave.

Unexpected decisions are made.

Yet God may be preparing something that we cannot see.

## **XXV. WHAT ESTHER 1 TEACHES US ABOUT LEADERSHIP**

### **1. Leadership Requires Humility**

Power without humility can become dangerous.

### **2. Leaders Need Wise Counsel**

No leader knows everything.

### **3. Leaders Must Control Their Emotions**

Anger should never become the master of decision-making.

### **4. Leaders Must Consider Consequences**

A decision made quickly can affect thousands of people.

### **5. Leaders Are Still Under God's Authority**

Earthly authority is temporary.

God's authority is eternal.

## **XXVI. WHAT ESTHER 1 TEACHES US ABOUT THE HOME**

The chapter raises important questions about marriage and family.

A healthy home needs:

- Respect.
- Love.
- Communication.
- Self-control.
- Faithfulness.
- Humility.
- Forgiveness.
- Godly leadership.

A husband should never use Scripture as a weapon against his wife.

A wife should never use disrespect as a weapon against her husband.

Both husband and wife are accountable to God.

### **Crawford Principle**

**The strongest Christian home is not the home where one person dominates; it is the home where both people submit themselves to God.**

## **XXVII. WHAT ESTHER 1 TEACHES US ABOUT PRIDE**

The king spent 180 days displaying his greatness.

He wanted people to see his kingdom.

He wanted them to admire his wealth.

He wanted them to see his beautiful queen.

Yet one refusal exposed how fragile his pride really was.

### **Proverbs 16:18**

“Pride goes before destruction, and a proud spirit comes before a fall.”

The king appeared powerful.

But his inability to control his anger revealed weakness.

### **Spiritual Principle**

**True strength is not the ability to control everyone else. True strength includes the ability to control yourself.**

## XXVIII. WHAT ESTHER 1 TEACHES US ABOUT GOD'S SILENCE

God's name is not mentioned in Esther.

Yet God's providence is everywhere.

This teaches us something important.

Sometimes God is working when:

- We do not hear Him.
- We do not see Him.
- We do not understand the circumstances.
- We cannot explain why a door closed.
- We cannot understand why a person left.
- We cannot see what tomorrow will bring.

Esther teaches us:

**Silence does not mean absence.**

God may be working in ways that are hidden from us.

## XXIX. PERSONAL APPLICATION AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

### Question 1 — Have I ever allowed pride to influence one of my decisions?

**Answer:**

Every person must examine his or her own heart because pride can influence our decisions without us recognizing it. Esther 1 shows us a king who possessed tremendous power and wealth, yet his pride was wounded when Vashti refused his command. Instead of responding with patience and wisdom, his anger led him toward a permanent decision.

The lesson for us is that we should ask God to reveal pride in our hearts before pride influences our decisions.

**Application:**

Before making an important decision, ask:

“Am I doing this because it is right, or because my pride has been wounded?”

## **Question 2 — Do I make important decisions while angry?**

### **Answer:**

Esther 1 teaches us that anger can greatly influence judgment. King Ahasuerus became extremely angry when Vashti refused to appear before him. His anger resulted in a decision that removed her from the position of queen.

The Bible repeatedly warns us about uncontrolled anger.

### **Proverbs 14:29**

“Whoever is patient has great understanding, but whoever is quick-tempered displays foolishness.”

We should not allow anger to become the decision-maker.

### **Application:**

When you are angry, slow down, pray, seek wise counsel, and allow time for your emotions to settle before making a permanent decision.

## **Question 3 — Who do I allow to influence my decisions?**

### **Answer:**

King Ahasuerus allowed seven high-ranking advisers to influence his decision concerning Vashti. This demonstrates how important the people around us can be.

The people we listen to can either encourage wisdom or strengthen foolishness.

### **Proverbs 13:20**

“Walk with the wise and become wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.”

We should surround ourselves with people who respect God's Word and who are willing to tell us the truth.

### **Application:**

Ask yourself:

“Do the people I listen to encourage me to obey God, or do they simply tell me what I want to hear?”

## **Question 4 — Do the people giving me counsel encourage me to follow God's Word?**

### **Answer:**

Not all counsel is godly counsel.

The advisers of Ahasuerus were knowledgeable about Persian law, but their advice did not necessarily represent God's wisdom.

Believers should measure counsel against Scripture.

### **Psalm 1:1**

“Blessed is the person who does not follow the advice of the wicked, stand with sinners, or sit with those who mock.”

Godly counsel should lead us toward righteousness, truth, wisdom, and obedience to God.

### **Application:**

Before accepting advice, ask:

“Does this advice agree with God's Word?”

## **Question 5 — Am I more concerned about appearance or character?**

### **Answer:**

King Ahasuerus was extremely concerned with displaying Vashti's physical beauty before his officials and guests. But Proverbs teaches that physical beauty is temporary.

### **Proverbs 31:30**

“Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.”

God is concerned about the heart.

A person's character, faithfulness, wisdom, kindness, humility, and relationship with God are more important than outward appearance.

### **Application:**

We should not measure ourselves or others primarily by appearance.

Ask:

“What kind of person am I becoming on the inside?”

## **Question 6 — Do I treat my spouse with the love and respect Scripture commands?**

### **Answer:**

Esther 1 emphasizes respect within marriage, but the New Testament makes it clear that both husbands and wives have responsibilities.

Wives are instructed to respect and submit to their husbands as appropriate in the Lord.

Husbands are commanded to love their wives sacrificially.

### **Ephesians 5:25**

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

Therefore, biblical marriage is not about one person demanding everything from the other.

It is about both husband and wife living under the authority of Christ.

### **Application:**

A husband should ask:

“Am I loving my wife sacrificially?”

A wife should ask:

“Am I showing my husband the respect Scripture commands?”

Both should ask:

“Am I honoring Christ in my marriage?”

## **Question 7 — Am I willing to trust God when I cannot see what He is doing?**

### **Answer:**

This is one of the greatest lessons of Esther.

God's name is not directly mentioned in the chapter, yet His providence is already moving.

Vashti's removal appears to be a royal decision.

But God is preparing the way for Esther.

The same principle applies to our lives.

We may not understand why something happens.

We may not know why a door closes.



We may not understand why circumstances change.

But God remains sovereign.

**Proverbs 3:5–6**

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not depend on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.”

**Application:**

When you cannot see the whole picture, trust the One who can.

## **Question 8 — Could God be using a disappointing circumstance to prepare me for something else?**

**Answer:**

Yes, Esther 1 demonstrates that God can use a disappointing or unexpected circumstance to prepare the way for something greater.

Vashti's removal appeared to be the end of her royal position.

But it also created the circumstances that eventually led to Esther becoming queen.

Esther's position would later become critical to the survival of the Jewish people.

**Romans 8:28**

“We know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.”

This does not mean that every painful event is good in itself.

It means God is capable of working through circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

**Application:**

Do not automatically assume that a closed door means God has abandoned you.

Sometimes God closes one door because He is preparing another.

## **Question 9 — Do I understand that my decisions can influence other people?**

**Answer:**

Esther 1 clearly demonstrates that one decision can affect many people.

Ahasuerus' decision concerning Vashti began as a personal conflict.

But the decision became a royal decree.

The decree was sent throughout 127 provinces.

Therefore, the king's decision affected people far beyond the palace.

Our decisions can also affect:

- Our spouse.
- Our children.
- Our family.
- Our church.
- Our friends.
- Our coworkers.
- Our community.

**Application:**

Before making an important decision, ask:

“Who could be affected by what I am about to do?”

Wisdom considers consequences before acting.

## **Question 10 — Am I willing to surrender my plans to God's purposes?**

**Answer:**

Esther 1 teaches us that human beings make plans, but God remains sovereign.

The king had his plans.

Memucan had his advice.

The officials had their expectations.

But God's larger purpose was moving forward.

**Proverbs 19:21**

“People may make many plans in their hearts, but it is the Lord's purpose that will finally succeed.”

Surrendering our plans to God does not mean that we stop planning.

It means that we recognize that God's purposes are greater than our own.

**Application:**

We should pray:

“Lord, I have my plans, but I surrender them to You. If my plans are not Your plans, redirect me.”

## **XXX. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM ESTHER CHAPTER 1**

### **1. Pride Can Destroy Good Judgment**

Ahasuerus had tremendous authority, but pride and anger influenced his decision.

**Lesson:** Stay humble even when God gives you influence.

### **2. Anger Should Not Control Decisions**

The king's anger helped turn a personal conflict into a national decree.

**Lesson:** Pray before acting when emotions are strong.

### **3. Counsel Matters**

The people around us can influence the decisions we make.

**Lesson:** Seek wise, godly, truthful counsel.

### **4. God Works Through Unexpected Circumstances**

Vashti's removal seemed to be a political event.

But it prepared the way for Esther.

**Lesson:** A closed door may become part of God's larger plan.

### **5. God's Providence Does Not Require His Name to Be Visible**

God is not mentioned directly in Esther 1.

Yet the events are moving toward His purpose.

**Lesson:** When you cannot see God working, continue trusting Him.

## **XXXI. THE SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION OF ESTHER 1**

Esther 1 gives us a powerful progression:

**A great king**

↓

**A great feast**

↓

**A display of wealth**

↓

**A demand for recognition**

↓

**A refusal**

↓

**Anger**

↓

**Counsel**

↓

**A decree**

↓

**Vashti removed**

↓

**The way prepared for Esther**

The characters saw a political crisis.

God was preparing a deliverance.

## **XXXII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

### **“What Looks Like the End May Be the Beginning of God's Next Move”**

Vashti probably did not know that her removal would eventually lead to Esther becoming queen.

The king did not know.

The advisers did not know.

But God knew.

This is one of the great lessons of biblical providence.

Sometimes we experience something that feels like:

**“Everything is falling apart.”**

But God may be saying:

**“I am preparing something you cannot yet see.”**

A closed door does not automatically mean God's plan has failed.

A changed circumstance does not automatically mean God has abandoned you.

A disappointing event does not mean God has stopped working.

Esther 1 reminds us to trust God even when we cannot understand the circumstances.

## **XXXIII. FINAL APPLICATION**

Esther Chapter 1 challenges every believer to examine the heart.

Are we like Ahasuerus, more concerned with being admired than being wise?

Do we allow anger to control our decisions?

Do we seek counsel from people who tell us the truth?

Do we understand the importance of godly marriage?

Do we judge people by appearance instead of character?

And perhaps most importantly:

**Can we trust God when we cannot see what He is doing?**

The Book of Esther begins with a king who appears to control everything.

But as the story unfolds, we discover that the king is not really the one controlling the outcome.

God is.

The king can issue decrees.

The king can remove a queen.

The king can appoint officials.

The king can rule an empire.

But God can take every one of those circumstances and use them for His purposes.

### **Crawford Bible Commentary Central Truth**

**Human beings may make plans and decisions, but God remains sovereign and can use even unexpected circumstances to accomplish His purposes.**

## **XXXIV. CLOSING PRAYER**

**Heavenly Father,**

We thank You for the lessons found in Esther Chapter 1.

Teach us to recognize that You are working even when we cannot see Your hand. Help us trust Your providence when circumstances are confusing and when life does not unfold according to our plans.

Protect us from pride.

Protect us from uncontrolled anger.

Give us wisdom when we make decisions.

Help us seek godly counsel and listen to people who will speak truth rather than simply tell us what we want to hear.

Teach husbands and wives to honor one another according to Your Word. Help husbands lead with sacrificial love and help wives respond with respect and godliness.

Remind us that beauty, wealth, power, and earthly position are temporary. Help us seek the things that have eternal value.

When a door closes, help us trust You.

When circumstances change, help us trust You.

When we cannot understand what You are doing, help us trust You.

Give us the faith to believe that You can take circumstances we do not understand and use them for Your purposes.

Help us remember that You are sovereign over kings, kingdoms, families, churches, communities, and individual lives.

May we never allow pride to take the place of wisdom.

May we never allow anger to control our decisions.

And may we always remember that even when Your name seems hidden, Your providence is still at work.

**In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## **KEY VERSE**

**“When this happened, King Ahasuerus was seated on his royal throne in the fortress of Susa.” — Esther 1:2**

## **CENTRAL TRUTH**

**Human beings may make plans and decisions, but God remains sovereign and can use even unexpected circumstances to accomplish His purposes.**

# ESTHER CHAPTER 1 — THE CRAWFORD COMMENTARY SUMMARY

Esther Chapter 1 introduces us to the enormous Persian Empire, the wealthy King Ahasuerus, Queen Vashti, and the royal crisis that removes Vashti from her position.

The chapter teaches us about **pride, anger, leadership, marriage, counsel, authority, consequences, and divine providence.**

Most importantly, Esther 1 prepares the reader for something that the characters themselves cannot see.

**Vashti's removal is preparing the way for Esther.**

God's name is not mentioned, but God's providence is already moving.

**What appears to be a human decision is becoming part of a divine plan.**