

Esther Series
King Xerxes – Wk 1
(I wrote)

Today, we are going to learn about a powerful king named King Xerxes.

Many of you have probably never heard this king's name before, but you will find him in the Bible in the Book of Esther.

King Xerxes ruled over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. All the way from India to Cush.

But there was one province that he did not rule over and that was the province of Greece.

And King Xerxes WANTED to rule over Greece as well. BUT...he knew that in order to take over Greece, he would need great support from many, many people.

So one day....King Xerxes threw a big banquet.

And he invited all the important people whom he thought could help him in his efforts to rule over Greece.

He invited all the army officers, the nobles, and all the princes from each of the provinces that he ruled over.

The banquet lasted for ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY DAYS!!! That's 6 whole months!!

And all during this six month period, King Xerxes was showing off the great wealth of his kingdom and his own great riches and glory.

Now once the 180 day banquet was over, King Xerxes held yet another banquet.

This time, he invited all the men and women in Susa. From the richest all the way down to the poorest.

This banquet lasted for seven whole days.

Once again, King Xerxes showed off all his riches to everyone in attendance.

Close your eyes for just a moment and try to picture the kind of place that King Xerxes lived in.

First... I want you to imagine that you are standing in a huge garden, because that is where Xerxes's party was held.

Now this can't be a little garden...it's a huge garden because we have to fit all the people of Susa into the garden.

Now...I want you to imagine that the garden floor is paved with the finest marble that you could ever imagine.

Now imagine that there are precious jewels pressed down into the marble.

Every step you take, you are walking on jewels.

Now imagine that there are huge marble columns trimmed with silver and gold standing around in the garden.

As you look around the garden, I want you to imagine that huge banners made from fine purple and white linen are being suspended from the beams.

Each banner is being hung from cords that are made of fine purple linen.

And each cord is attached to silver rings.

Now I want you to envision couches that are made of gold and silver.

These couches are sitting on the marble and jewel pavement.

Next, I want you to imagine the crowd of men who were in attendance at King Xerxes party.

Each person has a gold vessel and they are all drinking various drinks from their vessels.

Now most of the time, the kings wine is served at the end of a meal, but for this special occasion, the wine is being served throughout the entire seven days.

So...you might imagine that all the men in attendance are drunk.

Now, I want you to open your eyes.

Did you get a good picture of all the wealth that King Xerxes had? It was amazing, wasn't it?

And everything that we envisioned was outside....in a garden....I can't even imagine what the inside of his palace looked like.

Now, while King Xerxes was having his party outside with the men...his wife....Queen Vashti was inside the palace...having a banquet for all the women.

On the seventy day of the banquet....when King Xerxes was drunk on wine...he commanded his eunuchs, or helpers to get Queen Vashti and bring her and her her royal crown to him.

You see, Queen Vashti was a very beautiful woman and the king wasn't through showing off all of his possessions yet.

He wanted to show off her beauty as well as the beauty of her royal crown.

But....there was one big problem.

Queen Vashti REFUSED to go with the eunuch's.

Why do you think that she refused to go with the eunuch's?

Well, the Bible doesn't tell us why...but I can think of a couple of reasons why.

For one...all the men were drunk...why would anyone want to be paraded in front of a bunch of drunk men?

After all...she was the royal queen...she should not have been subjected to such treatment.

Secondly....what was Queen Vashti doing? She was giving a banquet of her own.

She was the host for the women's banquet.

How rude would it be if she just left the banquet with all the women waiting for her return?

When the eunuch's returned to King Xerxes and told him that the queen refused to come....this made King Xerxes very angry.

King Xerxes went to his wise men...men who understood the times... and he sought their counsel.

“What am I to do?” King Xerxes asked.

“Oh, this will never do” replied the wise men.

“Queen Vashti has wronged you. Not only this, but if all the other women hear of this...they too will refuse to obey their husbands.”

“There is only one thing that you can do.” They answered.

“A royal law must be issued that Queen Vashti may no longer be allowed into the presence of the King....and...her position as queen must be taken away from her and given to one more worthy than she”

Now remember...King Xerxes had been drinking wine for seven days...his wise men too...had been drinking for seven days.

So the decision that they made that day was probably not the best decision that they could have made.

In fact, when the King’s anger had subsided...and when he had sobered up a little...he remembered Queen Vashiti.

**He realized that he had made a big mistake...but
the damage had already been done.**

**There was nothing that the king could do about
the decree.**

**For three long years...King Xerxes mourned and
regretted the day that he had sent Queen Vashti
away.**

**Do you think that King Xerxes regretted the
second banquet that he held?**

**Do you think that he regretted drinking for seven
whole days?**

**Why do you think that King Xerxes had the
second banquet? The one where he invited all the
men of Susa?**

**I believe that the first banquet went so well that
King Xerxes started celebrating his victory over
Greece before he had even gone to battle.**

**But the problem with that way of thinking is that
King Xerxes was depending on himself and his
allies to win the battle...he wasn't depending on
God at all.**

In fact...sometime during the three years time period where King Xerxes mourned over Vashti, he made a failed attempt to defeat Greece.

The Bible tells us of one or two other times that he tried to defeat Greece as well. But each time, he failed.

Do you think that King Xerxes will find a way to bring Queen Vashti back? Or do you think that the damage has already been done?

Next week, we will learn a little more about King Xerxes.