

## **Esther 1:1-9 Part 1 – Welcome to the party!**

This is what happened during the time of Xerxes, the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush.. At that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa, and in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. The military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces were present. For a full 180 days he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendour and glory of his majesty. When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king`s palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest, who were in the citadel of Susa.

The garden had hangings of white and blue linen, fastened with cords of white linen and purple material to silver rings on marble pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and other costly stones. Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant, in keeping with the king's liberality. By the king's command each guest was allowed to drink in his own way, for the king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished. Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes.



This is what happened during the time of Xerxes,



Xerxes I, commonly known as Xerxes the Great, was the fourth 'King of Kings' of the Persian Empire, ruling from 486 to 465 BC

## In about 483 BC

This is what happened during the time of Xerxes,

The Bible name for him was Ahasuerus

In Hebrew A-cha-sh – ver –osh

In English A –ha –su – erus.

The meaning of his name in Persian was  
'king of all male; Hero among Kings'  
= lion-king

Ahasuerus was the name of one  
Median and two Persian kings  
mentioned in the Old Testament.

These events happened in between the times recorded in Ezra and  
Nehemiah who served under Artaxerxes (465-425 BC).



the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush..





At that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne  
in the citadel of Susa,



On the outskirts of the city of Shush in western Iran lie the remains of Shushan (Susa), the winter palace of the kings of Persia.



# It wasn't just a banquet

and in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. The military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces were present.



The Greek historian Herodotus (484 - 425BC) describes an assembly of Persian nobles called by Xerxes to advise him on the proposed war against Greece. The date – "after Egypt was subdued" – corresponds to Xerxes' third year.



For a full 180 days he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendour and glory of his majesty.



We can assume that the invited guests came on a rota basis over that time rather than all at once for all the period.



## Another banquet – for the locals

When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king's palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest, who were in the citadel of Susa.



# A Luxury Garden!

The garden had hangings of white and blue linen, fastened with cords of white linen and purple material to silver rings on marble pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and other costly stones.





# Drink and be merry !

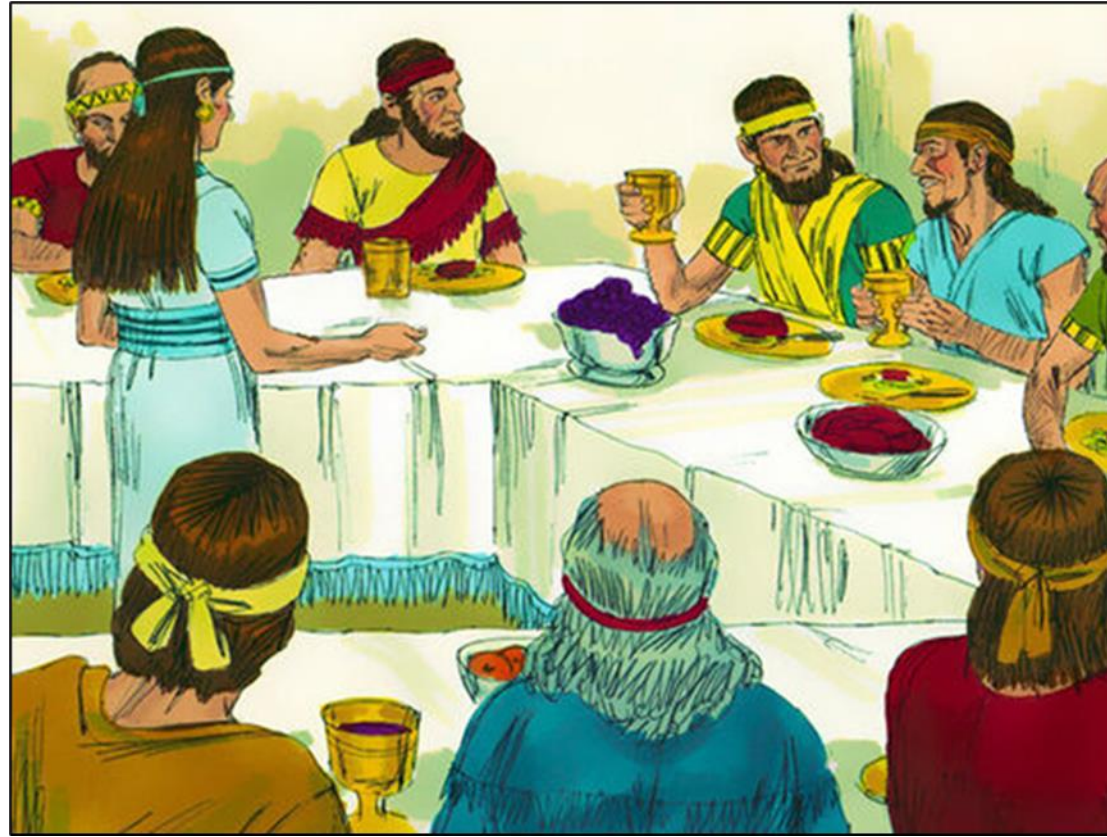
Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant, in keeping with the king`s liberality.





## No limit!

By the king`s command each guest was allowed to drink in his own way, for the king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished.



## A banquet for the ladies too.

Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes.



An illustration from a 1617 scroll of the book of Esther



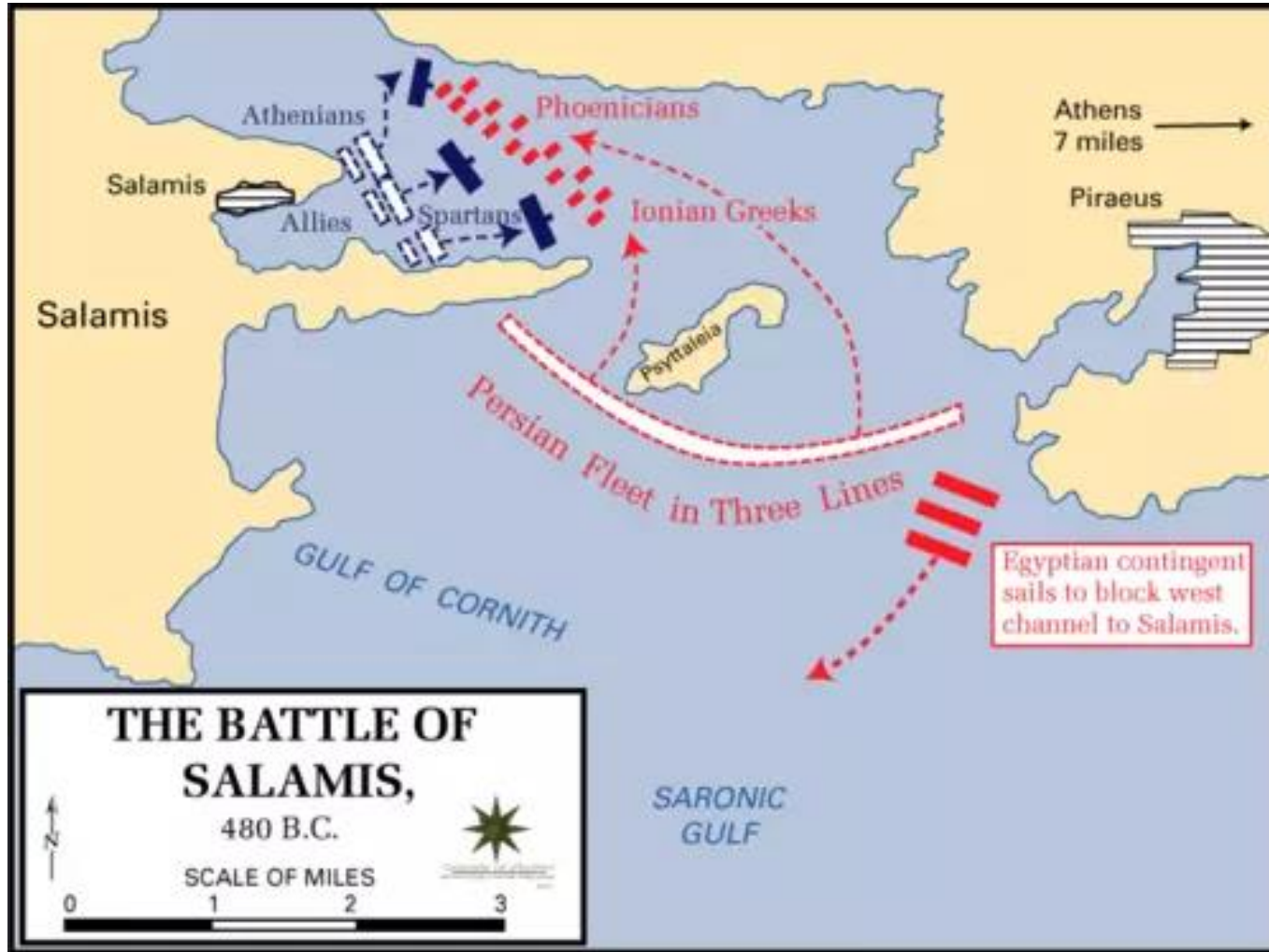
**Just for the record - How it ended.  
Round 1 - a points-win for Persia.**



At the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC The Persian army eventually defeated the Greeks. They won this battle, but lost the war!



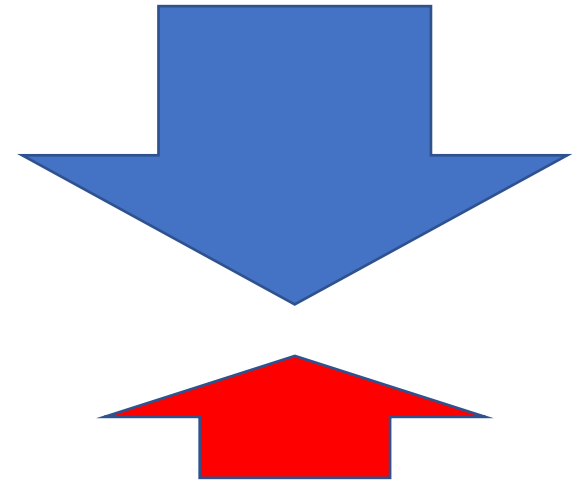
## Round 2 - a knock-out win for Greece.



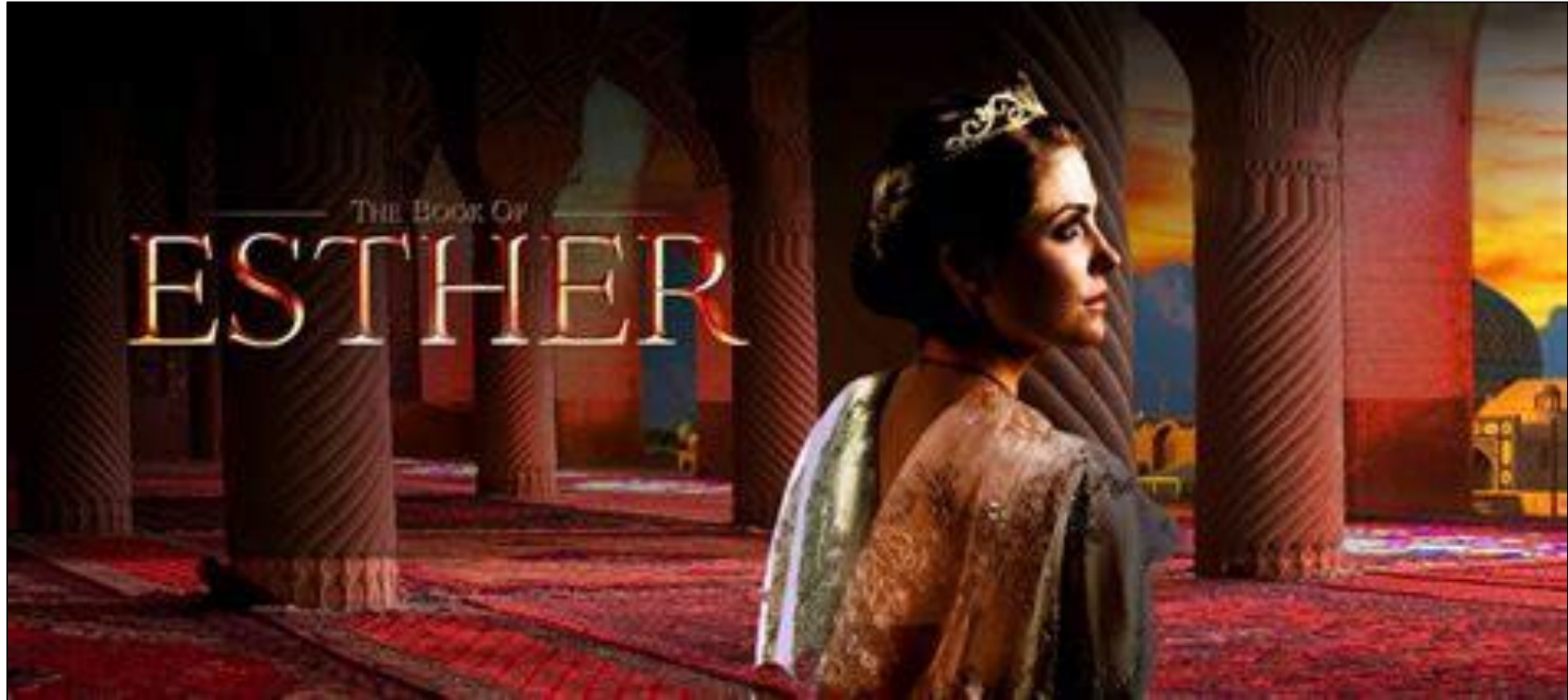
At the Battle of Salamis (480 BC) the Greek fleet defeated the much larger Persian naval forces in the straits at Salamis.

**Daniel had prophesied the conflict**  
and the rising power of Greece  
- notably under Alexander the Great

Daniel 11:2 “And now I will show you the truth.  
Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a  
fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he  
has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up  
all against the kingdom of Greece.



## So why is the Book of Esther in the Bible ?



Since there are some unusual features in it.



## There is no obvious mention of God's name.

It was a dangerous time when it was written.  
In the account some of the Jews had kept their origins secret.



## But God's Name is there in coded form but it takes some finding!

Esther 1:20 So when the decree made by the king is proclaimed throughout all his kingdom, for it is vast, **all women will give honour** to their husbands, high and low alike.”

ונשמע פתגם המלך  
אשר-יעשה בכל-מלכותו כי  
רבה היא וכל-הנשים יתנו  
יקר לבעליהן למגדול  
ועד-קטן:

י	ת	נ	ו	Y
ה	נ	ש	י	H
ו	כ	ל	W	
ה	י	א	H	

## Is it just a coincidence?

The random chance of 1 occurrence in the Hebrew text is  
**1 in about 6,000**

25 x 7 x 5 x 7 (frequency in 1<sup>st</sup> hundred words of yod, he, vav, he)

There are only 3,200 words in the whole book of Esther.

But this occurs 4 times in the book!

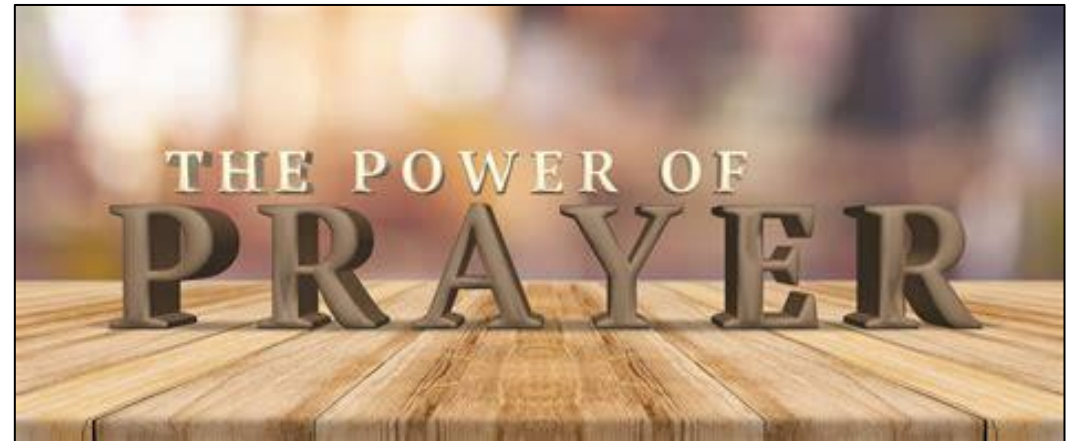




# There are no obvious miracles

All just seem to be amazing coincidences  
providence and prayer working together  
(where God's hands and ours meet)

This can be related to much of the believer's experience.



# Purim

It provides the explanation of origin of the Jewish (secular) feast of Purim. This feast is not given in the annual feasts mentioned in the Torah, as is also the later feast of Hannukah.



## **It is the story of a real-life example of God's protection of Messiah's people – the Jews**

Without the events of Esther's time, there would have been (humanly speaking) no book of Ezra and Nehemiah or the later prophets. Eg Zechariah, Malachi)  
It was essential for Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> comings to succeed.





**Help for people in difficult times** – strangers and pilgrims - living in an alien environment. It shows them staying faithful to God.

Daniel 9:25 Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven sevens. Then for sixty-two sevens it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time.

**69 sevens of  
trouble**

A black and white photograph of window blinds. The blinds are partially open, creating a pattern of light and dark diagonal stripes across the frame. The overall tone is dark and moody.

**The book reveals**

# God in the Shadows

**Even when God is in the shadows - He is still there.**