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ESTHER 1:10

THE SCRIPTURE CONCERNED

> 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, (Esther 1:10 AV)

THE MEANING PEOPLE DRAW FROM THIS TRANSLATION

Some people have assumed that this verse means that King Ahasuerus was drunk when he gave this command to bring the queen into the gathering.

But that is not the case at all! In some regards queen Vashti is used in this story to typify Satan's conduct towards God.

THE PROBLEM

This is not a mistranslation. The problem here is that some people make totally unjustified inferences for this expression "was merry with wine".

The Hebrew language had a word that conveyed the meaning of being drunk, and that is the verb "shakar". A clear illustration of the meaning of this verb is found in Genesis 9:21.

> And he drank of the wine, AND WAS DRUNKEN (shakar); and he was uncovered within his tent. (Genesis 9:21 AV)

So the Hebrew was quite capable of stating that someone was drunk. The context of Genesis 9:21 makes clear that "drunk" is the correct meaning intended here.

But in Esther 1:10 a totally different word with a totally different meaning is used to describe King Ahasuerus' frame of mind. In Esther 1:10 the expression "was merry" is a translation of the Hebrew adjective "towb" (or "tob"). This adjective means: PLEASANT, AGREEABLE, GOOD, etc. This Hebrew adjective is used over 500 times in the Old Testament, and in the KJV it is translated 361 times as "good", 72 times as "better", 20 times as "well", 16 times as "goodly", 7 times as "merry", 4 times as "precious", etc.

The point is that this adjective has NO BAD CONNOTATION AT ALL! It is never used to convey something undesirable or negative.

So there is no hint of any kind in this verse that King Ahasuerus had drunk too much wine or that he was drunk or was approaching being drunk. None at all!

THE SOURCE OF THIS WRONG INFERENCE

The translation is correct. But some people approach the subject of "wine" or any other alcoholic drink with a clear bias. They reject any and all use of alcoholic drinks as something that is wrong. And they readily INTERPRET any statements about wine in line with their own biased views.

THE CORRECT TRANSLATION

The problem is not with the translation, but with how some people interpret this correct translation to agree with their own prejudiced views.

THE MEANING OF THIS CORRECT TRANSLATION

Everything had gone exceptionally well and the king was pleased, relaxed, at ease and in a very positive mood. The moderate amounts of wine he had drunk added to that pleasant relaxed feeling. He was in full control of all his faculties.

IN SUMMARY

This is an example of a Scripture where we need to be very careful to not read our own views into the text of the Bible. If God had intended to tell us that the king was drunk, then there was a perfectly clear Hebrew word available to express this. But that word is not used in this context.

The problem here was that queen Vashti had one gigantic vanity problem, to the point that she felt that she did not need to be subject to the king's authority. The problem was not with the king, but with the queen. SHE is the one who did something wrong.

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