

Esther 1

Jesus

I. Introduction to the Book of Esther

- *Not Chronological* Order in our Bible
- **Events in Esther occur...**
 1. After Judah's Exile to Babylon [Many Jews chose to remain]
 2. After Ezra builds the Temple but before Nehemiah builds the wall...

So, the book of Esther fits about halfway between the rebuilding of the temple [the decree given by Cyrus] and the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem [the decree given by Artaxerxes to Nehemiah]. About halfway between fits in the story of the Book of Esther. [Smith]

- **No mention** of the word "God" in entire book yet...
- **Regarded as one of the most important** books of OT to the Jews
- **Esther begins** w/a feast culminates w/assassination of Haman 473 B.C.
- **Esther/Ishtar:** Persian name. **Hadassah her Jewish name**
- Hailey's Thesis statement summarizing Book of Esther...

This is the Hebrew Nation's Deliverance from Annihilation In the days following the Babylonian Captivity

- **Author:** Unknown. Likely a Jew living in Persia?
 1. Author mentions Jewish Festivals
 2. Author also acquainted w/Persian festivals/geographic sites
 3. Thus, some believe **Mordecai wrote the Esther?**
- **Date Written:** Latter half of 5th Century 500-450 B.C.
- **Chronology:** Events span decade w/in reign of Ahasuerus [486-465 B.C.]
 1. **AKA Artaxerxes**
 2. **AKA Xerxes** ruling over 127 nations in time of Esther...

Persian Empire was the largest the world had ever seen. It covered what we call today Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel; also, parts of modern-day Egypt, Sudan, Libya, and Arabia.

**Though God is not mentioned in the entire Book of Esther
His Providence/Sovereignty are clear in the events that unfold...**

1 Timothy 1:17 [Paul praises...] the King eternal, immortal, **invisible**, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever.

**God is invisible as is the wind
We don't see the wind but only it's effects...so with God**

John 3:8 The wind [like the Spirit] blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but **cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes...**

- **We see the effect of the Wind...**Trees bend/leaves blow/Kites fly

Ecclesiastes 11:5 As you do not know what is the way of the wind [spirit], Or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.

God is not mentioned once...yet is undeniably present on every page of Book of Esther

- **Setting**

God is preparing the way for Esther and the deliverance of His people through her
From what only He knows is coming...

Isaiah 46:9b... [God outside of time declares...] I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times **things that are not yet done...**

- God prepares way for Esther. Meanwhile...**King of Persia prepares for war**

II. King Dethrones Queen Vashti Making Room for Esther

1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus (this was the Ahasuerus who reigned over **one hundred and twenty-seven** provinces, from India to Ethiopia), ²in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the citadel, ³that in the third year of his reign he **made a feast for all his officials and servants**—the powers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces *being* before him

- **King Ahasuerus** [Xerxes]: **Inherited 127** provinces/nations father Darius
- **3rd Year of his reign** 483 B.C. prepared for an imminent **battle against Greece**

At this time the city of Athens was in its **classical glory** and in Greece they were celebrating the 79th Olympic games. [Guzik]

- **NOTE:** As prophesied in Daniel...Greece/Alexander the Great will win that battle [300]

King invites his top governing officials to His summer home...

- **Shushan/Susa the Citadel**

1. **Citadel** Palace fortress built on highest point of city
2. **Shushan** One of four Capitals of Persian Empire [modern Iran]
3. **Location** 150 Miles north of Persian Gulf

4... he showed the riches of his **glorious kingdom** and the splendor of **his excellent majesty** for many days, **one hundred and eighty** days in all.

- Shows off his riches/kingdom/majesty **180 Days?**
- **Q.** How do I top that?... **A.** Invite more people/make more food...

5 And when these days were completed, the king **made a feast lasting seven days for all the people** who were present in Shushan the citadel, from **great to small**, in the court of the garden of the king's palace. **6** There were white and blue linen curtains fastened with cords of fine linen and

purple on silver rods and marble pillars; and the **couches** were of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black marble.

- **First** 180 Day Feast with prominent men of 127 provinces of Persia
- **Followed by** 7-Day Feast with **all people great/small from Shushan**
 1. **Place:** In Garden Court of the Palace
 2. **Décor:** White and Blue Curtains; i.e. Royal Colors of Persia
 3. **Table Setting:** Couches of Gold/Silver on Mosaic Pavement to recline at tables

7 And they served drinks in **golden vessels**, each vessel being different from the other, with **royal wine** in abundance, according to the generosity of the king. 8 In accordance with the law, the drinking was not compulsory; for so the king had ordered all the officers of his household, that they should do according to each man's pleasure.

- **Drinking not required?** Custom to do as the King did. People are now free

**King used Golden Vessels of different shapes/sizes filled w/Royal Wine
Scripture describes our physical bodies as vessels...**

Acts 9:15 [Lord regarding Saul/Paul] "... he is a **chosen vessel** of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

- Vessel to be used to exalt God's Name
- Vessel to be set-apart to God through discipline

1 Thessalonians 4:4 ... each of you should know how to **possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor**, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God...

- Vessel that must be cleansed in order to be useful to God

2 Timothy 2:20 ... there are not only **vessels of gold and silver**, but also of **wood and clay**, some for **honor and some for dishonor**. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a **vessel for honor**, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work...

- **Vessel to be filled...**with Cleansing Royal Wine

Titus 3:5 [We are saved/cleansed by the...] washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom **He poured out on us abundantly** through Jesus Christ our Savior...

Golden Vessels of Royal Wine...**each being different from the other v.7**

Romans 12:4 ... we have many members in one body, but all the members **do not have the same function**, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them

Royal Wine was given in abundance according to the generosity of the King v7

Drinking was not compulsory: We must ask to be filled...

Luke 11:13... how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

- **Use what's given:** Prophecy, Ministry, Teaching, Exhorting, Giving, Leading, Mercy

As the King pours into us and we are to overflow to others

John 7:38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, **out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**" 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive

- **OT** Physical representation of a **NT** Spiritual Truth...
- Using the text re. drinking: Application purposes only. Using allegorical method...

Ephesians 5:18 ... **do not be drunk with wine**, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord...

- **Good Times in Palace:** All people great/small are enjoying Kings generous provision

9 Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women in the royal palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus. 10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, **Harbona**, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus, 11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king, wearing her royal crown, in order to **show her beauty** to the people and the officials, for **she was beautiful to behold.**

- **Tradition:** Argument over which province had most beautiful women?
- King sends 7 Eunuchs to call his wife Queen Vashti to the Feast

King wants to show off his bride...

12 But Queen Vashti **refused to come** at the king's command brought by his eunuchs; therefore the **king was furious**, and his anger burned within him.

- **Refused to come at the Kings command?** Right or Wrong. Noble or Rebellious

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

Queen Vashti refused to obey the King...Rejoice in the King's Joy

- **Instead of complying with King ...she competed w/ the King**
 1. Created own feast refusing/disgracing the King before the ladies at **her feast**
 2. Rebellion/Disregard for King humiliated King in the eyes of others at **his**

feast

Queen Vashti refused to come at the Kings Command...

...Therefore, the king was furious, and his anger burned within him

13 Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times (for this was the king's manner toward **all who knew law and justice**, 14 those closest to him being Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who had access to the king's presence, and who ranked highest in the kingdom): 15 **"What shall we do to Queen Vashti, according to law, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus brought to her by the eunuchs?"**

▪ Seven Princes of Persia

1. Wise men close to him who knew Law and Justice
2. This was the Kings manner? **To get advice from smart people**

Smart people are humble enough to know they don't know everything
Humble people are smart enough to seek advice from **smarter people** [NJC]

Q. What shall we do to Queen Vashti now that she broke the Law?

16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: "Queen Vashti has not only **wronged the king**, but also **all the princes**, and **all the people** who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. 17 For the queen's behavior will become known to all women, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes, when they report, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.' 18 This very day the noble ladies of Persia and Media will say to all the king's officials that they have heard of the behavior of the queen. Thus there will be excessive contempt and wrath.

▪ Wise man Memucan: Begins with the facts

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Queen wronged the King | Broke the Law and humiliated the King |
| 2. Queen wronged the Princes/People | Impact of sin begins to spread |
| 3. Extensive Repercussions | Throughout 127 provinces. India- Ethiopia |
| 4. Likely Result? | Family structure threatened/King weakened |

How one action can set off chain events

Q. What shall we do to Queen Vashti?

▪ Wise decisions begin w/ having all the facts:

1. This is **what happened**
2. This is **what is happening** now
3. This is **what will happen** if not dealt with correctly/immediately

Wisdom is the application of Knowledge; i.e. acting on **all known facts**
We cannot act in Wisdom without having facts.

Impulsiveness is all right in a child, but is disastrous in a man or woman. An impulsive adult is always a spoiled person. Impulsiveness needs to be trained into intuition through discipline. [Chambers] i.e. Discipline on waiting/acting on facts [NJC]

- **Q.** What shall we do to Queen Vashti? **These are the facts so...**

19 If it pleases the king, let a **royal decree go out from him**, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. 20 When the king's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout all his empire (for it is great), all wives will honor their husbands, both great and small."

**Issue a Royal Decree and Make it Law...
Vashti is no longer Queen/Will be replaced by a better Queen**

- **Law of Persians/Medes:** Unable to be reversed
- Use this situation as an example prevent others from doing same...

1 Timothy 5:20 [Church discipline of Elders] Those who are sinning **rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.**

- Undealt with rebellion [witchcraft] will spread like gangrene
- Rebellion swiftly dealt with allows God's work to continue unhindered w/freedom/joy...

Proverbs 11:10 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; And **when the wicked perish, there is jubilation.**

Proverbs 28:28 When the wicked arise, men hide themselves; But **when they perish, the righteous increase.**

- As Ahasuerus prepares for war with Greece...
- God prepares the way for a better Queen who will deliver His people

21 And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan. 22 Then he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be **master in his own house**, and speak in the language of his own people.

- **Wisdom:** King sent letters out to 127 Provinces under him in own dialect
- **Each man a master in own house:** Take personal responsibility for family

So What?

So, the King of Kings has a program which He implements through His Holy Spirit
The Bride is responsible for getting with God's program...not coming up with her own

- **Former Queen Vashti**

1. **Most beautiful to behold:** As was Satan before fall
 2. **Picture of pride:** Rising against King/His generous Agenda for His people...
- Result of allowing individuals their own agenda in a church setting?
 1. **Disrespect** toward authority
 2. **Division** among the people
 3. **Deterioration** of Congregation

**The Bride must get on God's program/Movement of His Holy Spirit
We have one King and it's not us. There is one agenda and it's not ours.**

- Are we complying or competing with the King?
- Are we demanding our way or desiring to walk in His ways?
- Are we Jealous of/Taking advantage of the Kings generosity? [ready to be smitten]
- Are we too filled w/self to be filled w/ King's Royal Wine? Joy/Peace in HS

Vashti came no more before King
Her royal position will be given to another who is better than she

- **Enter Esther in Ch. 2** God's Providence/Sovereignty made clear as events unfold