

The Book of Esther – Part Four

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Adapted from John Herbert's Notes; Presented by Ralph Alley

1). Esther 1:10

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.

a). Last week we looked at how King Ahasuerus , while sitting “on the throne of his kingdom,” had undertaken certain regal tasks in connection with certain set times, represented by the numbers 3, 6 and 7 –

i/ Esther 1:3

...that in the third year of his reign he made a feast...

ii/ Esther 1:4

...when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty for one hundred and eighty days..
[6 months]

iii/ Esther 1:5

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.

b). And we also read in Esther that the conclusion of these events had as their focus ‘the seventh day,’ when the King invited Queen Vashti to appear in the King’s presence ‘wearing her royal crown’ in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials.

2). And what we saw within that type/antitype structure was that Ahasuerus is a picture of God the Father... and Vashti, His wife, is a picture of Israel.

a). And just as with Ahaseuerus, God the Father, while sitting on the throne of His Kingdom, has undertaken certain regal tasks in connection with certain set times – represented by the numbers 3, 6, and 7. For example:

i/ Each dispensation during which God deals with different groups of household servants lasts for 2 days, 2000 years – and has its conclusion in the 3rd Day –

Hosea 6:2

After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

ii/ There are 6 days, 6000 years for Man's Day, concluding with the 7th day from Adam, the 7th 1000-year-period of time. At the start of this 7th period of time, the Millennial Kingdom will be established –

Matthew 17:1

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

b). And all events within this one province of God's Kingdom (the earth and the heavens surrounding it) are moving to the concluding point of the 7th Day. All events are moving toward that Day when those called out of the Body will appear in Christ's presence as His Queen.... and Israel, the wife of God, will appear in His presence as His Queen. This will then fulfill the pattern set for rulership in Genesis Chapter 1, with a man and a woman ruling together within a marriage relationship –

Revelation 19:6

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

And—

John 2:1

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

And—

Ezekiel 16:10

"I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 "I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. 12 "And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13 "Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. 14 "Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD.

3). However, with respect to Ahaseuerus's command regarding the 7th day, Vashti refuses to come -

Esther 1:12

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.

- a). And unfortunately, this has been (and continues to be) the case for Israel...even to this present day. This has resulted in God being furious and His anger burning within Him.
- b). That which is portrayed by Vashti's refusal on this one occasion is for Israel a history of unfaithfulness and disobedience that spans the centuries.
- 4). Israel's refusal with respect to God's command for the 7th Day has its beginning with the first generation to come out of Egypt, and starts as early as their encampment at Mount Sinai.
- a). God had delivered the nation of Israel from Egypt in order to take them to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, where they were, *as God's firstborn son and His wife*, to rule with Him within a Theocracy, bringing fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham in –

Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

- b). They were to rule at the head of the nations within the present world system under Satan, *without being a part of that system*, with Michael, an unfallen angel, as their Prince.
- c). Within this position, they were to bring the blessings of God to the Gentile nations of the earth throughout the extent of Man's Day as a prelude to the Kingdom which is to come in the 7th Day.
- d). But also, as we know, their participation in this was conditional. It was based upon faithful obedience –

Exodus 19:4

'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

e). It is while Moses is on the mountain receiving the Law that the people make the golden calf, thereby constructing something they called 'God.' This was an idol made according to their own desires; this was an image that they could manipulate -

Exodus 32:8

"They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'"

f). And their actions had consequences -

Exodus 32:10

"Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them.

And—

Exodus 32:27

And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.'" 28 So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

h). This is part of the picture presented by Vashti's refusal to come into the King's presence wearing the royal crown.

5). This picture continues with this same generation at Kadesh Barnea, at the very doorway to the fulfillment of God's promises -

Numbers 14:1

So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 "Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

a). And of course, again, there are consequences -

Numbers 14:32

'But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 'And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34 'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35 'I the LORD have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.'"

b). And so a repetitive pattern begins to unfold within the nation - a pattern of unfaithfulness and disobedience, where the nation lives according to the lusts of the flesh rather than following the Spirit. And of course there is the resulting judgment and rejection from God -

Hosea 9:10

"I found Israel Like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. But they went to Baal Peor, and separated themselves to that shame; They became an abomination like the thing they loved. 11 ¶ As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird-No birth, no pregnancy, and no

conception! 12 Though they bring up their children, Yet I will bereave them to the last man. Yes, woe to them when I depart from them!

6). The situation for Israel did not improve for the second generation out of Egypt, or for all subsequent generations after them. There were indeed times of faithfulness, but it was always followed by times of extreme disobedience. An example of faithfulness is seen recorded at the end of Joshua's life -

Joshua 24:31

Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

a). And then following this, during the days of the Judges, we read about Israel's disobedience yet again -

Judges 17:6

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

b). This then began the cycle of God bringing persecution upon Israel by using the surrounding Gentile nations ; this was done in order to bring Israel to repentance, which would then cause God to answer their call of repentance and give unto Israel a deliverer that would rescue them from the persecution. And then, upon the Judge's death, we see yet again a downward spiral into greater disobedience.

7). However, we do see the establishment of a kingdom for Israel, with Saul as its first King. While Israel had a kingdom, they did experience times of rest from their enemies during David's reign; and we do see the awesome power and wonder of this kingdom during the reign of David's son Solomon, which foreshadows the Millennial Kingdom.

a). 1Kings 4:25

And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

b). But the latter part of Solomon's reign is marred by disobedience, unfaithfulness and idolatry, which is revealed through the excesses of Solomon himself –

c). 1Kings 11:1

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites- 2 from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David.

d). And the consequence for this was the division of the Kingdom during the reign of Solomon's son.

e). 1Kings 11:30

Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. 31 And he said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you 32 '(but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), 33 'because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god

of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My statutes and My judgments, as did his father David. 34 'However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. 35 'But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you-ten tribes. 36 'And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there.

8). And then within the divided Kingdom, matters remained the same –

Jeremiah 3:6

The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. 7 "And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 "Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. 9 "So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. 10 "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense," says the LORD.

9). And the result of this spiritual idolatry (which was looked upon by God as adultery) was the captivities.

a). First, the northern ten tribes of Israel were taken into captivity by the Assyrians, and then about 100 years later, the southern two tribes of Judah were taken into captivity by the Babylonians.

b). The very nations whom Israel was to rule over and bring God's blessings to found themselves as instruments of God's judgment upon Israel. And Israel found herself separated from the blessings and out of her rightful place.

c). This same situation continues to this day, and will continue until the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. Israel is out of place, the Gentile nations are out of place and the blessings of God cannot be administered. Israel's disobedience has an effect that extends beyond the consequences for the nation itself – these consequences literally affect the whole world. And the ramifications extend into the heavens –

Esther 1:16

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.

10). Although a remnant did return to the land under Zerubbabel and Ezra, which formed the nucleus of those present in the land at Christ's first advent, the captivities and subsequent dispersions have not yet come to an end.

a). The return to the land by a remnant of Jews in 1948 should be viewed in this same way. It is a remnant of the nation returning after the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion which followed in 70AD.

b). Just as there needed to be a remnant in the land as a prelude to Christ's first coming, so there needs to be a remnant in the land as a prelude to Christ's second coming.

c). Prior to Christ's first coming, God described the spiritual condition of the nation through the prophet Isaiah, a description that still holds true today.

d). Isaiah 1:5

Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more.

The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment. 7 Your country is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire; Strangers devour your land in your presence; And it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

e). Not only does God see His people as being totally 'sick,' He also sees the land in the same way. Israel may appear flourishing to the natural eye, but from God's perspective, this is not the case at all.

11). Now concerning the promises that God made to Abraham and his descendants, remember that not only the earthly portion of the kingdom was in view, but the heavenly portion as well -

Genesis 22:17

"...blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

a). It was the heavenly portion of the Kingdom that Christ was offering to the nation of Israel at His first coming.

b). This is the message of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the twelve disciples and also the seventy -

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

c). And once again, *because of Israel's unbelieving, stiff necked disobedience*, (expressed through their religious leaders), the Kingdom is taken from them (only this time it is the heavenly portion) -

Matthew 21:43

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

d). This unbelief on the behalf of Israel, coupled with their earlier unfaithfulness with respect of the earthly portion of the Kingdom, is Israel refusing to appear in God's presence in a regal capacity on the 7th day. This is another facet of the picture given by Vashti's refusal to appear before Ahasuerus on the 7th day.

e). Christ, in dealing with the whole panorama of Jewish history, presents this whole matter in the form of a parable -

Matthew 21:33

"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 34 "Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 "And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 "Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 "Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 "But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39 "So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" 41 They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."

f). And then the same thing is told in another parable, but from another perspective -

Matthew 22:1

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 "and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 "Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'" 5 "But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 "And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7 "But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' 10 "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

12). Following the Lord's crucifixion and the inception of the Church, the Kingdom of the heavens is once again offered to Israel by the Church, which is the primary subject matter of the Book of Acts -

Acts 2:36

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 ¶ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

a). This reoffer finds its most poignant rejection by Israel in the martyrdom of Stephen, a rejection that has its final expression at the end of the Book of Acts -

Acts 28:25

So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, 26 "saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; 27 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'" 28 "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"

b). It is at this point in Jewish history that we can see the completeness of that represented by Vashti's refusal to appear before the king on the 7th day.

c). And then, just as Queen Vashti was not able to ever come into the King's presence again, Israel is seen by God as being in the place of death because of her continued disobedience and rejection, and can never come into His presence again (while in an unrepentant state). We see this presented in the types of the death of Sarah (within the panoramic picture of Genesis Chapters 21-24), Jonah in the belly of the great fish in Jonah Chapter 1 and the death of Lazarus in John Chapter 11.

Esther 1:19

"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;

13). However the matter does not end here, because God has promised Israel that He would bless them beyond measure if they would be faithfully obedient... but if not, He would subject them to judgment through unbelievable horrors at the hands of the Gentile nations until they would repent and return to Him. What we are about to read in Leviticus takes us from the beginning of the nation all the way through to the end of the time of Jacob's trouble -

Leviticus 26:14

'But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, 15 and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, 16 I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you. 18 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. 20 And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit. 21 'Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins. 22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number; and your highways shall be desolate. 23 'And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, 24 then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins. 25 And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. 26 When I have cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall bring back your bread by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied. 27 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, 28 then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. 29 You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters. 30 I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you. 31 I will lay your cities waste and bring

your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. 32 I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. 33 I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. 34 Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. 35 As long as it lies desolate it shall rest-for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it. 36 'And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee; they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues. 37 They shall stumble over one another, as it were before a sword, when no one pursues; and you shall have no power to stand before your enemies. 38 You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. 39 And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away. 40 ¶ 'But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, 41 and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt- 42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land.

a). The events of centuries of European persecutions, the excesses of the Crusades and the horror of the Holocaust can, in one sense, be explained very simply – the disobedience of Israel and God's faithfulness to His word as written here in Leviticus.

14). Reading on in Esther we see this –

Esther 1:17

"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.

a). The decree issued against Vashti is to serve as a warning to 'all women, so that they will not despise their husbands.'

This we will look at next week. If the Lord is willing.

Let's pray.