

# The Book of Esther – Part One

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

## 1). Esther 1:1

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), 2 in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the citadel, 3 that 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-

2). There are just two books in the Bible that have been named after a woman, with that woman also being the main protagonist within each book: one is Ruth and the other is Esther.

a). Even though God has seen fit not to reveal the names of the persons whose hands were used to write them, it shouldn't concern us too much, for we know that the author of all scripture, regardless of the hand used to write it, is God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

## 2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

## 2 Peter 1:20

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

b). Both the Book of Ruth and the Book of Esther have their historical setting within the boundaries of the OT, and together, through their type / antitype structure, present the most complete overview, to be found in any one place, of God's plans and purposes for His people – Ruth in respect of the Church and Esther in respect of the nation of Israel.

c). Just to quickly review, types and antitypes are an absolutely necessary part of hermeneutics (the method of interpreting the Bible texts). God has structured His revelation to man (the Bible as we currently know it) after such a fashion in which not only true, correct history is presented, but this history is highly typical in nature. Meaning, God, within His sovereign control of all matters, brought

things to pass in such a way (within the history of the earth, angels, and man) that He could, at a later time, have these vents to draw upon in order to teach His people the deep spiritual truths surrounding Himself, His plans, and His purposes.

3). So historically, the events recorded in these books are separated by some seven hundred years. The events in Ruth are set during the times of the Judges (approx. 1380 BC - 1045 BC) , and the events in Esther are set somewhere between 483 BC - 473 BC, when Israel had already been captured and scattered amidst the Gentile nations. The Book of Esther transpires during the time when the Medes & Persians are in power (after the Babylonians but before the Greeks).

a). Both books, within their type / antitype structure, however, have their focus on the future, rather than on the past or the present. And in this respect, both books deal with exactly the same period of future time - that which is also to be found in the first 20 chapters of the Book of Revelation. (We shouldn't be concerned with the historical gap of time that separates all of these books because everything within the Word of God moves towards and has its focus on that same time period, the Seventh Day; therefore, we can find innumerable pictures dealing with those things that will take place *then*.)

i/ It is the work of an omnipotent and omniscient God who has sovereign control of all things who can take different historical events, vastly different in time, and use them to teach significant spiritual truth about the same prophetic event.

b). Ruth presents this time from the perspective of the Church (which we have looked at extensively over the past few months) and Esther from the perspective of Israel.

And of course at this point we probably should state the obvious: the Church and the Nation of Israel are two completely different creations; both are special creations by God and neither has or will replace the other. Contrary to some Christian thought, God still has a special place for Israel, even though for now He is not dealing with her (because right now He is dealing with His Church). However, God will again one day deal with her in respect of her harlotry and disobedience and will one day bring to pass every single promise He has made to her.

c). On another side note, this exact same time period dealing with the two separate creations can also be seen in the parable of the treasure and the parable of the pearl in Matthew Chapter 13, but we will be looking at that at a later time.

4). Ruth, as we have noted, records events taking place during the times of the Judges. This time frame began right after Joshua's death and lasted until the time of Samuel the

prophet – a period of about 300 years. This 300 year period followed a period of about 450 years going back to the birth of Isaac –

**Acts 13:17**

"The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. 18 "And for a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. 19 "And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance--all of which took about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

a). The events in Ruth though take place at a time much closer to the end of the time of the Judges, for we read–

**Ruth 4:17**

Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

b). The son born to Boaz and Ruth is the grandfather of David, and we will remember that it is Samuel the prophet who anoints David as King over Israel in accordance with God's command.

c). Chapters one and two of Ruth deal in the anti-type with past and present events for the Christian, e.g. the initial salvation that places us in the family of God through the death of a Son, followed by the determination to make the journey with Naomi (the Word of God/the Spirit) to find rest in the house of a husband. Chapters three and four in the Book of Ruth deal almost entirely with future events, future events that begin with things surrounding the Judgment Seat of Christ at the end of this present dispensation, followed by the redemption of the inheritance immediately preceding the Millennial Kingdom.

d). And so it is in chapter three that Ruth appears on Boaz's threshing floor, in the anti-type of the Church appearing at Christ's Judgment Seat. And looking at the type picture, we saw that it is in the recognition of Ruth as his bride that Boaz then goes to redeem the inheritance for her –

**Ruth 4:1**

Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. 3 Then he said to the close

relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. 4 "And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.'" .....9 And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. 10 "Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day."

e). And so in the corresponding anti-type picture of this, we can know that it will be at Christ's Judgment Seat that the Bride will be revealed. This will then set in motion the events beginning in Revelation Chapter 5 –

Revelation 5:6

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

f). The scroll contains the terms of the redemption of the inheritance (the inheritance being the heavens and the earth, *cf.* Heb 1:2; Rom. 8:17; Rom. 4:13; I Cor. 6:10 to name a few), a redemption to be accomplished through judgment upon the earth dwellers.

g). However, the judgments accomplishing the redemption of the inheritance cannot be separated from the judgments brought to bear on Israel in order to bring them to repentance – The redemption of the inheritance and the time of Jacob's trouble (the 7-year Tribulation) are one and the same period of time.

h). Now please note that the identification of the Bride for God's Son must precede the redemption of the inheritance, as we saw in Ruth. The one for whom the inheritance is redeemed (the Bride) must be on hand and waiting. Without the Bride there can be no redemption of the inheritance (which will belong to *both* the Man and His Bride), as God must work within the bounds He set at the beginning –

Genesis 2:18

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

5). And scripture is replete with typological pictures of this very thing, that the entire Church (the body of Christ) is removed from the earth prior to the Tribulation, and that the Bride is identified *prior to* the Tribulation.

Here are just some examples:

a). Beginning in the foundation in Genesis, we see the man Enoch, the 7th from Adam (the number 7 showing us the completeness of that which is in view), taken from the earth without him tasting death. This pictures for us the “rapture” of the church.

b). Now interestingly enough, as we continue to see how Genesis paints the picture of the order of events concerning the end times, we see Noah, the 10th from Adam (the number ten giving us another number of completeness), with his family, going through a worldwide flood, which pictures for us Israel going through the time of Jacob’s trouble.

To review, we see one man being taken up after a complete period of time *without tasting death*...and after another complete period of time we see a family being safely taken through a worldwide time of judgment.

c). And we see another picture in Genesis concerning the end times in the story of Joseph. Joseph, who is a type of Christ, is at first rejected by his brothers. But then, having been elevated to the second position within the kingdom of Pharaoh, he takes a Gentile bride *before* he deals with his brothers a second time, wherein he brings them blessing –

Genesis 41:45

And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

d). And how about another picture of end times events pictured for us in the beginning books of Scripture? Let’s look at Moses, who is at first rejected by his brothers, and while separated from them he takes a Gentile bride. Moses takes his bride *before* returning to his brothers *the second time* as their deliverer –

Exodus 2:21

Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses.

e). And more evidence from Genesis? Let's look at the whole panoramic picture of Genesis Chapters 21 - 25 concerning Isaac, the finding of a bride for this son of promise, and the re-establishment of Abraham's household through another marriage. We can see that it is only *after* Isaac has taken Rebecca as his wife (*who is already part of the family prior to her becoming the wife of the son of promise*), as a result of the completion of his father's oldest servant's work amongst the family, that Abraham then marries Keturah and is fruitful. And we would also note that Sarah, Abraham's first wife, dies *before* a wife is searched for and found for the son.

f). And to take us back to our jumping off point, this is exactly what we have seen in the Book of Revelation. In chapter one the whole church appears before Christ, and in chapters two and three the Bride is revealed through judgment. In chapter four, the 24 elders relinquish their crowns because the ones who will now wear those crowns have been identified, and then in chapter five (the Bride having now been identified) the events that begin the redemption of the inheritance are set in motion. And then in chapters 6-20, Christ, who had been rejected by His brothers the first time, *now having a Bride*, deals with them a second time, bringing both deliverance and blessing.

6). Then this whole matter is viewed from a parallel perspective in Daniel. (Pay particular attention to this because this is absolutely crucial to understand! We will be going over this in-depth tonight)-

#### Daniel 9:20

Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23 "At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: 24 "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. 25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant

with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

- a). Weeks = Hebrew - shabuwa = literal, seven, i.e. a week (specifically, of years):-- seven, week.
- b). Now what we see here is that God has allotted a specific period of time 'for your people and for your holy city' - meaning the nation of Israel (Jerusalem is often used in scripture as a metaphor for the nation itself). It is a period of seventy weeks, or literally *seventy* seven-year-periods = which would be 490 years.  $70 \times 7 = 490$
- c). And this specific time has been set for a specifically stated purpose in verse 24 - To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. And again to point out, this is all with regard to Daniel's people - Israel.
- d). Daniel clearly reveals to us that the period of 70 - 7's is to bring to completion the transgression, the sins, the iniquity of Israel. And as a result of this being brought to fulfillment, everlasting righteousness will then be established, vision and prophecy will come to completion and the most Holy will be anointed.
- e). The last part of the verse is clearly Messianic in its scope and is talking of the establishment of Christ's Millennial Kingdom - He is the 'Most Holy' who will be anointed, the very thing to which all vision and prophecy recorded in scripture, *beginning in Genesis*, leads.
- f). And so we have seen in our typological pictures that two things must occur before the establishment of the Millennial reign of Christ:
- 1) The Bride of Christ (determined by a process that takes 2 days - 2000 years) must be revealed, and *then* the inheritance must be redeemed for her.
  - 2) There must also be a completion of the period of time just described for us in Daniel. The 70 weeks, or 490 years, is the time set in which God is working to bring to conclusion His dealings with Israel. This 490 year period must be completed before the establishment of the Kingdom.
- g). The completion of these two things will result in the ushering in of the Millennial Kingdom.

h). Can you see that both sequences of events – for the church and for Israel – end at the same point? They end at the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. This is in complete fulfillment of the prophetic word.

j). 2Peter 1:16

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty (Peter is referring to the time when Jesus transfigured Himself before Peter, James and John, showing them His glory on the mountain. This was when Moses and Elijah appeared with Him... and all of this happened, as Scripture records, “six days later.”). 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...

7). Now quite clearly none of the conclusions to the events we have just looked at have transpired, and the reasons for this are manifold, but we will look a little bit closer at our scripture from Daniel 9:25 –

"Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;

a). This is saying that there would be a command to restore and build Jerusalem. And from the time of the issuing of that command, there would be a period of seven weeks (7 7-year periods) and sixty two weeks (62 7-year periods) until Messiah the Prince.

b). Seven weeks =  $7 \times 7 = 49$  years

c). Sixty two weeks =  $62 \times 7 = 434$  years

d). Giving a total of  $49 \text{ years} + 434 \text{ years} = 483 \text{ years}$

e). And as Daniel tells us, at the end of the 7 + 62 sevens (483 years), Messiah would be cut off. But notice that the total number needed to bring a conclusion to Israel is 70 sevens. Each “seven” is a 7-year period of time, remember. We have just seen 69 sevens (483 years) dealt with. There is 1 seven (7 years) left to deal with.

8). Now for some historical dates to put this in perspective. The Babylonian captivity for the southern tribes of Judah began around 605 BC, and Jerusalem was destroyed during the captivity period around 586 BC.

a). The command to restore and build Jerusalem (which signals the beginning of the counting of the 70 “sevens,” or the 490 years) did not come until after the Babylonian empire had been conquered by the Medes and Persians, which happened in 539 BC (the conquering of the Babylonian Empire, not the decree itself).

b). The events surrounding the command to restore and build Jerusalem can be found in the Book of Nehemiah –

#### Nehemiah 2:1

And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before. 2 Therefore the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart." So I became dreadfully afraid, 3 and said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?" 4 Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."

c). Now we are not sure exactly when this conversation took place, and we're not sure of the exact date when the command to rebuild the temple was given. But we have a rough estimate given to us by historians. They put the giving of the decree somewhere between the years 447 BC and 450 BC. So, using simple math, when we add 483 years (7 sevens + 62 sevens = 69 sevens, or  $69 \times 7 = 483$  years) to these dates, we will arrive at 30 or 33 AD. This estimate of a date would seem quite familiar to us.

d). Around 30 or 33 AD is when we would find Messiah the Prince 'cut off' at the crucifixion. And isn't that exactly what Daniel prophesied? After 7 and 62 sevens, 69 sevens, 483 years, Messiah the Prince would be "cut off."

9). Now we know that God has allotted 490 years to deal with Israel (beginning with the decree to build the temple) and anoint Christ as King. But after 483 years, Christ was cut off and has not yet been crowned as King.

a). There remains then 7 years = 1 week/seven, still to be completed for Israel before the Millennial Kingdom is established.

b). This is the period of time known as Daniel's seventieth week (seven years), for very obvious reasons. We also know this time period as the tribulation, or the time of Jacob's trouble.

c). So knowing all of this, that there still remains a "week/seven" to be dealt with, and Daniel clearly shows Messiah "cut off" after 69 weeks, why is there no mention of the 2000 years that separates the cutting off of Messiah and the seventieth week in the Book of Daniel?

d). Quite simply because of that stated in the scripture - "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city. God's revelation to Daniel concerns Israel alone and therefore there is no mention of the dispensation of the Church.

e). God set 490 years from that specific point in time to deal with Israel, and 490 years is exactly what it will take. And in this respect, the gap of 2000 years is inconsequential to the fulfillment of God's allotted time for Israel.

f). From God's perspective, He hit the pause button, so to speak, in His dealings with Israel at the point where Messiah was cut off; He will push play again once He has taken from the Gentiles a people for His name, once the church has been resurrected/raptured, thereby continuing from the very point where He left off, as if there had been no gap.

10). Our scripture from Daniel Chapter 9 concludes with this -

26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out.

a). We see here that once again the city and the sanctuary of Jerusalem is to be destroyed - on this occasion by the people of the prince who is to come.

b). This takes us to a time that remains yet future, as it is an event that must take place within the final 7 years of God's dealing with Israel. Jerusalem is to be destroyed after Messiah is cut off, which must place it within that seventieth week, which is still

awaiting fulfillment. In this respect, this scripture has nothing to do with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by the Roman Emperor Titus.

c). It is also in connection with a covenant that is to be made between “the prince who is to come” and Israel, a covenant that has a time frame of one week. That one week - 1 seven - is 7 years.

d). It is in the middle of this 7 year period, the one week, that the prince who is to come will break that covenant (v. 27), setting in motion the destruction of the city and the sanctuary and almost the destruction of the nation of Israel itself.

e). The “prince who is to come” is of course antichrist, to whom Satan will have given his power and authority -

#### Revelation 13:2

Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

f). He is the one who, following the rapture of the church, will establish his worldwide government in Babylon in preparation for the bloodiest persecution of the Jews the world will have ever witnessed -

#### Luke 21:20

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22 "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24 "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

#### Matthew 24:21

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

11). It is this period of time - Daniel’s seventieth week, the great tribulation, the time of Jacob’s trouble, followed by Divine intervention and the restoration of Israel to her

rightful place at the head of the nations – that is the central focus of the Book of Esther. And so this will be the focus of our study as we look at this Book in the weeks to come, if God is willing.

Jeremiah 23:5

"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7 "Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' 8 "but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land."