

The Book of Esther – Part Six

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

1). Esther 2:1

After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her. 2 Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king; 3 "and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of Hegai the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them. 4 "Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti." This thing pleased the king, and he did so.

a). Considering the very broadest of anti-type pictures, we saw that chapters one and two of the Book of Esther provide us with a complete panoramic picture of the history of Israel -- past, present and future.

b). The king commands Vashti, his queen, to appear before him on the 7th day wearing her royal crown, and Vashti refuses to appear. This pictures for us centuries of unfaithfulness and disobedience on the part of Israel (in relation to her calling), resulting in God's rejection of the unrepentant nation and the promise of a continually multiplied judgment upon the nation until it did repent. (Remember Leviticus Chapter 26.)

2). And always keep in mind that God's rejection of and God's judgment upon Israel has always been for the purpose of restoration –

Joel 2:12

"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

a). 2Chronicles 7:14

"...if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

b). The culmination of the fierceness of God's wrath, that which will bring about what is spoken of in Joel and 2 Chronicles - repentance and healing – still awaits a future time to be fulfilled.

c). In Esther, we see it stated this way -

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; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.

d). And although this pictures God's wrath upon the nation throughout the whole of Israel's history, its main focus is the final expression of God's wrath which is poured out during the last 3½ years of Daniel's seventieth week. We can see the following description of this in -

f). Zechariah 13:8

And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one -third shall be left in it: 9 I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

h). In Scripture, whenever we see God's wrath being proclaimed upon the Jewish people by the prophets (for their present activities), the events surrounding God's final dealings with the Nation at the end of this age are invariably brought to the forefront. Almost every time that the subject is mentioned in Scripture, the end of the matter is brought into view. Why do we think that this is? Because all matters of God's wrath on the Nation have to do with her shunning her calling, thereby propelling God (and us) to the end when she actually accepts and carries out her calling. In other words, just as with all matters in the scope of the whole of Scripture, the focus is always on the 6 days of work IN ORDER to get to the Seventh Day. One does not exist without the other.

i). Just look at what we find at the end of our Zechariah scripture - repentance and restoration in complete accord with 2 Chronicles 7:14. And Scripture is replete with these same type promises of salvation and restoration for the nation of Israel at the end of this great Tribulation-

j). Jeremiah 30:7

Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it. 8 'For it shall come to pass in that day,' Says the LORD of hosts, 'That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will

burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. 9 But they shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them. 10 ¶ 'Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,' says the LORD, 'Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, And no one shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with you,' says the LORD, 'to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.'

3). And all of this is in perfect keeping with our other types: the restoration of a marriage relationship (one that is fruitful) for Abraham, Jonah completing his calling after being in the place of death for 3 days, and Lazarus receiving new life after being in the tomb for 4 days. Jesus dying on Passover and not coming back to life until the 3rd day....to name a few.

4). And this is exactly what is pictured for us in the opening 4 verses from Esther Chapter 2 that we began with this morning.

a). Esther 2:1

After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her.

b). What we see here is the subsiding of Ahasuerus's wrath and his remembering Vashti, 'what she had done and what had been decreed against her'.

c). Again, this is looking to the time at the conclusion of Daniel's 70th week when Israel comes to repentance, resulting in God once again turning to the nation.

d). Isaiah 40:1

"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. 2 "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD'S hand Double for all her sins." 3 ¶ The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.

e). Ezekiel 16:58

"You have paid for your lewdness and your abominations," says the LORD. 59 'For thus says the Lord GOD: "I will deal with you as you have done, who despised the oath by breaking the covenant. 60 ¶ "Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.

k). Hosea 6:1

Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

5). Within the context of our opening scripture from Esther Chapter 2, after the king has remembered Vashti, we find a search being made for someone who will replace Vashti, who will take her royal position –

2 Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king;

a). In the antitype of the search seen here in verse 2, we should not see this as God making a choice from amongst all those on the earth at the conclusion of the tribulation, but more in the sense of the re-gathering of Israel from amongst the Gentile nations where she had been scattered –

Jeremiah 16:14

"Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that it shall no more be said, 'The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,'¹⁵ "but, 'The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers.

b). And in one sense we can see Israel in this day as an entirely different person, as the Israel associated with harlotry is now seen as dead and repentant Israel, cleansed, forgiven and apart from harlotry is now in view. Hence we can see her described as 'beautiful young virgins'.

c). But in another sense, it is the same Israel who is now resurrected from the dead and given life –

Ezekiel 37:4

Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5 'Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. 6 "I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD.'"

d). Again though, the resurrected Israel's spiritual condition will be so far removed from the condition of Israel the harlot that were we able to place both side by side they would be so completely different in appearance and action as to be completely separate.

6). And so within the parameters of the search made on the king's behalf, Esther is brought into the royal palace and immediately finds favor -

Esther 2:8

So it was, when the king's command and decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered at Shushan the citadel, under the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king's palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women. 9 Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best place in the house of the women.

a). We also discover that she is a Jew and details are given concerning the situation of her cousin Mordecai who has raised her as his own daughter -

Esther 2:5

In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. 6 Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. 7 And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

b). We see that Mordecai's great grandfather, Kish, had been taken as part of the Babylonian captivity and that from that time, Mordecai's family had remained in captivity. This is the situation in the Book of Esther, and exactly the situation for Israel in the world today.

e). It might just be of interest to note that Esther's Hebrew name, Hadassah, is derived from a word that means a myrtle tree, and that branches from the myrtle tree were used in the construction of the booths that the Israelites built at the Feast of Tabernacles - the seventh of seven feasts. The Feast of Tabernacles (aka Feast of Booths) is a feast that points to the day when God will "tabernacle" with His people once again.

7). Now in connection with the search for the one to replace Vashti, there is a period of preparation -

Esther 2:12

Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women.

- b). Notice that the preparation time is connected to the number 12, '12 months' – 12 being the number of government within scripture, thereby showing us that this preparation time is to make the one chosen ready to rule as the king's queen.
 - c). The preparation time is then further delineated into 2 periods of six months. Six always points to "man," and this first period of 6 months is given over to 'oil of myrrh'.
 - g). Myrrh is seen in scripture in association with death – we will remember the gold, frankincense and myrrh brought by the wise men at Christ's birth. It is a substance that was used by the Egyptians and the Jews for embalming.
 - h). And all this speaks to us of Israel being in the place of death throughout its history, because Israel never reached their God-ordained purpose, thus they were viewed as "dead" from God's perspective. (Understanding the sign in John 11 re: Lazarus is our picture of this.)
 - i). Then the second period of six months, still within the context of God's dealing with Israel, is then given over to 'perfumes'.
 - l). Perfumes = Hebrew – besem – derived from the Hebrew – cam = from an unused root meaning to smell sweet; an aroma:-- sweet (spice).
 - m). What is implied by the sweet smelling aroma would once again take us to repentance on the part of Israel – just as we saw with Abraham marrying Keturah.
 - n). Hence, in the picture given to us of preparation in the Book of Esther, we see the complete experience of the nation of Israel – being in the place of death because of disobedience and then subsequently brought to repentance – all with regality in view.
- 8). And this is exactly what is presented to us in the experience of Esther.

a). Esther 2:16

So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

b). So Esther goes in to the King, fully prepared, at a time associated with the numbers 10 and 7, bringing to mind the completeness of the entire thing.

e). And as with Esther, so with Israel -

Esther 2:17

The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

f). And in perfect accord with the septenary ("seven") arrangement of scripture, these events are followed by rest within the kingdom -

Esther 2:18

Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king.

g). Holiday = Hebrew - hanachah = from 5117; permission of rest, i.e. quiet--release.

h). The 'Feast of Esther' points to the wedding feast that will be given for Israel on the earth at this time - that very thing spoken of in the first sign that Christ gave as recorded in John's gospel -

John 2:1

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

i). And the gifts that the king gives according to his generosity would reference the blessings of God that will flow to the Gentile nations through Israel in fulfillment of -

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."

9). Then to complete the picture, Mordecai, representing Israel's position as a firstborn son, is seen at this time in the place of rulership -

Esther 2:19

When virgins were gathered together a second time, Mordecai sat within the king's gate.

We could see Mordecai as presenting a picture of Israel's status as a firstborn son (think of the overall scope of each of man's creation being both male and female), a status that they hold even now, although disobedient and scattered - and although Israel still holds this firstborn position, the rights of the firstborn cannot be exercised until Israel is once again the wife of Jehovah and elevated to a place of regality.

a). This being something that God had already promised in -

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.

10). And in this position, presented by both facets of the picture - Esther as queen and Mordecai as firstborn son sitting 'within the king's gate' - Israel will rule the nations of the earth with a rod of iron -

Esther 2:21

In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. 22 So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. 23 And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

11). And so, in conclusion, Chapter 2 of Esther completes the panoramic overview of Israel's history - past, present and future - that was begun in Chapter 1.

a). The rest of the Book of Esther, chapters 3 - 10, then go back to give further commentary on the panoramic picture already presented.

12). Esther 3:1

After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. 2 And all the king's servants who were within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage.

13). Chapter 3 of the Book of Esther begins with statements concerning the promotion of Haman, the action of the king's servants with respect to Haman, and Mordecai's attitude towards him.

a). The opening three words, 'after these things', draws our attention back to the events we had witnessed in the first two chapters of the Book. These first 2 chapters show that Israel's restoration and future exaltation is an absolute certainty.

b). But we also know that from the Garden of Eden onwards, the incumbent ruler of this world, Satan, has done (and still does and will do) everything in his power to prevent the fulfillment of God's as it pertains to man, and more specifically, as it pertains to Israel.

c). So as we move forward in Esther, we need to view things regarding the rise and fall of Haman in this context.

d). However, as we have seen in the chronology of the account of Esther, Esther is already crowned queen before Haman is raised up, and Israel, within the bounds of prophecy, will not be crowned queen when the one whom Haman represents, the man of sin, Antichrist, rises to power. Scripture is replete with references to Antichrist arising while Israel is still in an unrepentant state, and his demise occurs before Israel is established back into her rightful marriage relationship (see John 2:1 ff).

e). So as we begin Esther Chapter 3, we can't see it as literal prophetic chronology, but rather commentary - on the one hand concerning Satan's attempt to prevent the fulfillment of God's purpose for Israel, and on the other hand God using Satan's actions as the means by which to bring His purpose to fruition.

f). Here's a perspective to keep as we move forward. Esther is Queen, typifying Israel in regards to rulership, and Mordecai is sitting at the King's gate, typifying rulership. We can see how primary this picture of rulership is throughout God's dealings with man, specifically Israel. And this keeps our focus on the certainty of the end result on which our hope rests.

i/ And if the certainty of the fulfillment of God's plan for Israel is evident, it is also evident that His purpose with respect to the Bride for His Son is certain. This being the case the one will give reinforcement to the other, which should motivate us to keep our focus in the right place.

g). And now again, as we set forth to study Haman, please realize that the events surrounding Haman do not give commentary on the whole panorama of Israeli history, but rather focuses in on God's wrath upon Israel, and more specifically with regards to

God's wrath which will take place during the last three and one half years of the Tribulation when Antichrist becomes world ruler and the last king of Babylon - in fulfillment of the fourth part of Daniel's image. This specific time period is also the focus of Revelation Chapters 6-19.

4). Esther 3:1

After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him.

i/ 'seat' = Hebrew - 'kicce' = or kicceh {kis-say'}; from 3680; properly, covered, i.e. a throne (as canopied):--seat, stool, throne.

- a). Notice that Haman advances in his position because the King promotes him.
- b). Ahasuerus is a type of God the Father; therefore, God places the one Haman represents, Antichrist, in a position, 'above all the princes who were with him'. This is exactly the way it will happen.
- d). With regards to Antichrist, we read this -

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.

- e). In the metaphorical language of Revelation we see Antichrist presented as a fantastic beast and Satan as 'the dragon'. And here Satan gives his power, his throne and great authority to Antichrist. This is exactly the position that Satan offered Christ during the temptation in the wilderness -

Luke 4:6

And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

- f). But let us remember that Satan's authority and his ability to give it to 'whomever I wish' comes directly from his appointment from the throne of God.
- g). Satan, in his unfallen state, was appointed by God -

Ezekiel 28:14

"You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you;

h). God alone, in the three persons of the trinity, placed Satan on his throne with respect to the rulership of the earth and God alone will remove him – the authority that Satan has as God’s anointed, even though in a rebel capacity, comes from God.

i). Likewise with the fallen angels that have subordinate positions under Satan – their positions and authority ultimately come from God through Satan.

j). And in the same way, the earthly rulers of the Gentile nations on the earth have their authority from God, through Satan and through Satan’s subordinate angels.

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.

Daniel 4:17

'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'

Daniel 4:25

They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. 26 And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that the Heavens do rule.

m). It is in Daniel that we get our clearest picture of affairs in the angelic realm with respect to rulership over the earth –

Daniel 10:20

Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21 "But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

o). What we need to conclude from this is that events in our ‘modern’ world do not happen in a vacuum, nor apart from the scope of Biblical prophecy – whether an earthly

ruler comes to power through a bloody coup or the ballot box is not the issue – the issue is - the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

p). Ultimately, within the context of God's plans and purposes, it is of little consequence who sits in the oval office – whoever is there is there because God has given it to whomever He chooses for the purpose of accomplishing this part in the puzzle, so to speak, that is the out-workings of His plans and purposes.

q). And to have one person elected over another does not make the world a better place, a safer place, a fairer place – the future of this world is laid out in the pages of scripture, not in a manifesto or a policy document or a political system. HOWEVER, the impact on individuals within this world system is most surely within our reach, and we must seek the Lord's direction each and every day as we interact with the individuals he puts in our path. And this extension of the Lord's love we are to give to each and every individual can, and will, have far-reaching results, not only in relation to the individuals' live (both present AND future), but will no doubt have far-reaching results in our own lives (both present AND future).

s). So then, to put it simply, the affairs of men are within the sovereignty of God. And do not forget that we are His chosen messengers.

6). And so when Antichrist sits on Satan's throne at the midway point in Daniel's 70th week, 3 1/2 years into the Tribulation, he assumes this position under God's authority for the purpose of what appears to be a glorious paradox.

We'll continue with this next week.