**The Book of Esther**

**Wednesday Night Bible Study**

**Wednesday, 26 May 2021**

**Queens Chapel UMC \* 7410 Muirkirk Road \* Beltsville, MD 20705**

**Instructor: Rev. Dr. Will Butler**

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**Theme:** **“A Woman for Such a Time as This”** **(Esther 4:14)**

"For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

**Esther Chapter 1**

**Esther 1:13-15**

 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?”

**Amplified**

 13 Then the king spoke to the wise men who understood the times [asking for their advice]—for it was the custom of the king to speak before all those who were familiar with law and legal matters—

 14 and who were close to him [as advisors]: Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven officials of Persia and Media who had access to the king and were ranked highest in the kingdom.

 15 [He said,] “According to the law, what is to be done with Queen Vashti because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus which was conveyed by the eunuchs?

* The King met with his cabinet because they had direct access to the king—which meant they were giving the king advice.
* The people who gave him counsel may be similar to those who are connected to us. They consisted of:
* Carshena [kar-she-na]—*plowman*—to cut with the intention of lifting something that was permanent

 If there are godly principles in your life that you do not want to be compromised, a person with an *ungodly Carshena [kar-she-na]* attitude will not be right for you. He/she will try to remove that which the Spirit of God has permanently placed in you.

* Shethar [she-thar]—he was a foreign derivation, he was obtained for his knowledge

 Is there a person in your life that you seek after for knowledge? Can this person be trusted to tell you the truth about the subject matter you’re inquiring about? Make sure the ***Shethar [she-thar]’s*** in your life are solid and trust worthy

* Admatha [ad-ma-tha]—*dark color*, probably from Africa
* Tarshish [tar-shish]—*smelting*, which is the extraction of metal from a rock by a process involving heating and melting.

 *Tarshish [tar-shish]* type people are those that use words and kind gestures to draw you in and before you know it, he/she is extracting out of you what God’s Word has placed in you—ask God for discernment.

* Meres [me-rez] (?)
* Marsena [mar-se-na] *nobleman* he was distinguished by rank
* Memucan [me-mu-kan] (?)

 These three men were considered noblemen because of their rank. The rank, class or leadership title of a person does not define what is in the heart of a person. Jesus said in **Matthew 7:17,18, 20**

  17 A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit.

 18 A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit…20 Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

 David declares that we can always depend upon God’s guidance—**Psalms 16:7-8**

 7 I will bless the Lord who guides me; even at night my heart instructs me.
 8 I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.

* These seven men met with the King privately because this was not a matter to be ignored—a decision had to be made—the Queen refused to obey the King’s command.
* The question on the floor was “what should be done about Queen Vashti behavior towards the King?”

Q = Has anyone ever plotted against you because you stood up for what was right? What happened and what did you do?

 There are promises given to the believers when evil people plot against them:

* Evil people will be humiliated—**Psalm 35:4**

 Let those be ashamed and dishonored who seek my life; Let those be turned back and humiliated who devise evil against me.

* Evil people will not succeed—**Psalm 21:11**

 Though they intended evil against You And devised a plot, they will not succeed.

* Evil people’s plans will backfire**—Proverbs 26:27**

 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.

**Esther 1:16**

 And Memucan [me-mu-kan] 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.

Amplified

 *And Memucan answered in the presence of the king and the officials, “Vashti the queen has not only wronged the king but [also] all the officials (royal representatives) and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.*

* Memucan wanted to treat Vashti as human property—as women often were during this time.

* Yet, there was no law which could force her to obey the King’s command.
* The cabinet must come up with a severe and harsh law to take care of this situation
* Memucan is the spokesperson of the group—notice what he says in **verses 17-18**

**Esther 1:17-18**

 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.

Amplified

 *17 For the queen’s conduct will become known to all women, causing them to look on their husbands with contempt (disrespect), since they will say, ‘King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she did not come.’*

 *18 This [very] day the ladies of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen’s refusal will speak [in the same way] to all the king’s officials, and there will be plenty of contempt and anger.*

 *“Memucan’s statement reveals that he was henpecked or intimidated by how much power this would give his wife if Vashti gets away with this.”*

**Dr. J. Vernon Mcgee**

* In other words, Memucan is demanding that something be done to protect the male image of dictatorship in the home.

**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.

Amplified

*If it pleases the king, let a royal command be issued by him and let it be written in the laws of the Persians and Medes so that it cannot be repealed or modified, that Vashti is no longer to come before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better and more worthy than she.*

* Memucan talks the King into making a law [that cannot be repealed] that Queen Vashti [your wife] is no longer allowed to come before the King
* Memucan wanted to send a message to all the women of the kingdom *“I would not try this if I were you.”*
* This was also a pagan law being enacted that was against the Mosaic—that protects women.
* This pagan law also sets the tone for the entire book of Esther

**Esther 1:20-22**

 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.”

 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.

**Amplified**

 20 So when the king’s great decree is proclaimed throughout his [extensive] kingdom, all women will give honor to their husbands, from the great to the insignificant.”

 21 This statement (advice) pleased the king and the officials, and the king did what Memucan proposed.

 22 So he sent letters to all the royal provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language, saying that every man should be the master and rule in his own home and that he should speak [in the household] in the language of his own people.

* The Queen is set aside—no one will see her anymore—all because she refuses to obey the King who wanted to disrespect her.
* The decree declared that a wife was to honor her husband by obeying him and he was to rule his household
* If we read between the lines, women did not have to obey their husbands in this culture—this was probably why Vashti boldly disobeyed the King’s command.
* The law or decree was written out of anger and as a result, the queen was banished from the King’s sight.
* This was a law of the Medes and Persians which could not be altered.
* If the King changed his mind and wanted to reconcile with his wife—it could not be done

Q = Should a wife honor her husband?

Q = If yes, under what circumstances? If not, why not?

**1 Corinthians 11:3**

 “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”

A) The word *“Head”* refers to *“spiritual covering.”*

B) *God is the head of Christ*—Referring to position rather than

 inequality—Jesus is God—yet Jesus falls under God when it comes

 to function and purpose.

C) *Every Man is under Christ*—Every *Man* has Christ

 as head over him. He is not autonomous but must be in

 submission to the authority of Jesus Christ.

 If a man expects his wife to answer to him, *the wife must first see her husband answering to Christ.*

 A man should not be surprised or disappointed if his marriage is in chaos when His relationship with Christ is not right. If a man is out of his lane with God than His marriage will be in chaos; husbands are accountable to God’s Kingdom Agenda—which is the Word of God.

 Kingdom Minded Husbands who are accountable to God through their relationship with Jesus Christ, becomes the *priest, protector, provider, nurturer and preserver* of the home.

 A husband must be in alignment spiritually or the marriage will become like a car out of alignment.

D) *The man is the head of the woman*—the *“head of a woman”*—this

 statement does not indicate a male over female rule. This refers

 to the divine order within the marriage—and nothing more.

* **Headship** means the *wife comes under the husbands covering*—his *priesthood, provision, protection, and guidance*—in other words, headship carries with it a responsibility of spiritual and loving leadership.
* *The wife follows her husband as the husband follows Christ*. This is the divine order within the God ‘s Kingdom Agenda
* This is why Satan went to Eve first in the garden because Adam, who was standing near her, gave up his role as head and allowed Eve to speak for both of them. ***(see Genesis 3:6)***

 **A man does not have absolute authority over a woman—she is to voluntarily place herself under him as he places himself under the Lord’s authority.**

 **A husband cannot ask his wife to do something that violates the mandate of Scripture.**

**IV) Covering of headship—Read 1 Corinthians 11:4-6**

 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.

 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved.

 6 For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered.

 Paul was not starting a universal law of head-covering for women and men. He was acknowledging a local custom which did reflect, metaphorically, a divine principle.

 *A man’s uncovered head* was a sign that God was his covering which qualified him to be a covering for his wife. For a man to cover his head was to suggest a reversal in roles within his marriage.

 *When a woman covered her head*, it was a sign that she was under the spiritual as well as the physical protection and provision of her husband.

 Paul was not laying down an absolute law for women to wear a covering when in church or worshipping. Paul was simply using the physical symbols of hats to illustrate the divinely-established male and female roles in a marriage.

**The Lesson on anger in Verses 13-22?**

* Anger has destroyed many relationships.

Q = Have you ever made a decision while angry that you wish you hadn’t?

* Many irreversible decisions were made out of anger—for example, **Daniel 6**
* King Darius became very close to Daniel. He respected and admired Daniel’s abilities.
* The King appointed Daniel over the 120 provinces because he proved himself more capable than all the other leaders
* The other leader’s anger turned into jealousy—they tried to find something against Daniel that would damage his reputation but they found nothing.
* Finally, they use Daniel’s faith against him. Daniel prayed and worshiped God three times a day.

**Daniel 6:6-9**

 6 So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, “Long live King Darius! 7 We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions. **8 And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked.” 9 So King Darius signed the law.**

**Daniel 6:10-15**

 10 But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. 11 Then the officials went together to Daniel’s house and found him praying and asking for God’s help. **12 So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. “Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?”**

**“Yes,” the king replied, “that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked.”**

 13 Then they told the king, “That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day.”

 **14 Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.**

 15 In the evening the men went together to the king and said, **“Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed.”**

 **16 So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, “May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you.”**

The Lord God was with Daniel—**Daniel 6:19-22**

 19 Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions’ den. 20 When he got there, he called out in anguish, “Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?”

 **21 Daniel answered, “Long live the king! 22 My God sent his angel to shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.”**

* Daniel never sought revenge but kept his cool through the entire experience

Q = Think about an experience in your life where you had to keep your cool—What happened and how did you stay in control?

Q = Finish this sentence, “If I knew then what I knew now about anger, I would have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”

* Many irreversible decisions and moves were made out of anger

*Losing your temper will cause harm***—Psalms 37:8**

“Stop being angry! Turn from your rage! Do not lose your temper—it only leads to harm.”

*Self-control takes you further*—**Proverbs 16:32**

“Better to be patient than powerful; better to have self-control than to conquer a city.”

*Sensible people control their emotions*—**Proverbs 19:11**

“Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs.”

*Angry people are considered fools*—**Ecclesiastes 7:9**

“Control your temper, for anger labels you a fool.”