**The Book of Esther**

**Wednesday Night Bible Study**

**Wednesday, 26 May 2021**

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

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

"…Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

**Esther Chapter 2**

**(Part 1)**

**Esther 2:1**

 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.

**Message**

 *Later, when King Xerxes’* ***anger had cooled******and he was having second thoughts about what Vashti*** *had done and what he had ordered against her,*

* “After these things,” what things? After the king’s ill-fated war with Greece (481-479 BC). The king became depressed and lonely.

Q = Who remembers why Xerxes invited leaders from **27 provinces,** which probably number about **2,000 people,** to his banquet?

* History declares that his campaign against the Greeks did not go well. Even though king Xerxes’ army out numbered the Greeks, they still lost.
* Historians affirmed that the average Persian Soldier was not trained as well as the Greek Soldier.
* In fact, the Greeks were so skillfully trained for combat that the average Greek Soldier had the ability to take down ten Persian Soldiers at one time.
* The Greeks spanked them and sent them back home with their tails between their legs.
* The King’s pride was hurt; he lost his beautiful wife because his pride caused him not to control his anger.
* **Verse 1** says, “he remembered Vashti,” his beautiful wife. He had second thoughts and he wanted her back in his life but legally he was unable to restore his relationship.

Why?

* Confirm **Esther 1:19**

 “**So if it please the king, we suggest that you issue a written decree, a law of the Persians and Medes that cannot be revoked.** It should order that Queen Vashti be forever banished from the presence of King Xerxes, and that the king should choose another queen more worthy than she.”

* The brother was suffering from a “love-jones”

**Note:**

 The R&B group “Brighter Side of Darkness” recorded a single in 1973 entitled “Love Jones” Part of the lyrics went something like this:

 *“A love jones is when you love someone very, very much and you just can’t get yourself together”*

* His servants and those close to him saw his mental condition and they knew something was wrong and they had to do something—so they came up with a plan.

Your Actions reflect what is in your heart.

Q = What doesProverbs 4:23mean to you?

 “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

 God, through His wise providence, began to work with the King’s servants by directing events towards Ether’s throne room appearance.

**Esther 2:2-4**

 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 *[heg-a-i]* 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.

* They suggested that there be a beauty contest and that the entire kingdom be searched for just the right woman
* The women who were brought in probably were in the hundreds.
* What they didn’t realize was that God was directing the entire process through His divine providence.
* **Verse 3** says, “they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women’s quarters, under the custody of Hegai *[heg-a-i]* the king’s eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given them.”

**Note:**

 *Hegai was a man entrusted with the oversight of the king’s harem for obvious reasons. Hegai is specifically mentioned by the Greek historian Herodotus as being an officer of king Ahasuerus.*

Q = How would you classify this search for a new queen?

* A real beauty pageant
* Stupid
* Exciting
* Chauvinistic
* Important

Q = Does this type of search still happen today? If so, How?

**Esther 2:5**

 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.

* Mordecai is a Benjamite descendent of King Saul. He was among the 4th generation of deported Jews.
* He was the son of Jair [ja-ir]—his father was Segub [se-gub]

A ruler **1 Chronicles 2:22**

 “Segub was the father of Jair, who ruled twenty-three towns in the land of Gilead.”

* Jair was the son of Shimei [she-me-i], a Levite—God appointed Levites for the service of the sanctuary where God’s presence dwelt.
* Shimei [she-me-i] was the son of Kish—he was Mordecai’s great grandfather who actually experienced the Babylonian deportation of Jews.

 ~In other words, Kish’s family name could be traced back to

 King Saul’s father’s family who was of the Benjamites

* The reason why the writer traced the history of Mordecai was to single out that he came from a line of Kings and his role in God’s plan was significant.

 6 Kish had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah *[jek-o-ni-a]* king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

**Amplified**

 *Kish, who had been deported from Jerusalem with the captives who had been exiled with Jeconiah [jek-o-ni-a] king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled.*

* Historians declared that Jeconiah *[jek-o-ni-a]* was the former king of Judah. He was deported 597 B.C.
* Due to his disobedience, the Lord God removed his descendants from the line of David to Christ.

**Jeremiah 22:26-27, 30—**his descendants were considered bad seeds in the house of Jeconiah *[jek-o-ni-a]*

 26 "So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die.

 27 "But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return.

 30 Thus says the LORD: 'Write this man down as childless, A man who shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, And ruling anymore in Judah.'"

Why is this important for us to know?

* The family of Mordecai and Esther were part of the good figs—**Jeremiah 24:**

 3 Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, which cannot be eaten, they are so bad."

 4 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

 **5 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans.**

 **6 'For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up.**

 **7 'Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.**

 The family of Mordecai and Esther stayed faithful to God through obedience and as a result:

* God’s divine favor was upon Mordecai and Esther—**Proverbs 3:1-4 NLT**

 1 My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart.
 2 If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying.
 3 Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart.
 **4 Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation.**

* Through Esther, God established His people—**Psalms 40:1-3 NLT**

 1 I waited patiently for the Lord to help me, and he turned to me and heard my cry.
 2 He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire.
He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.
 3 He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see what he has done and be amazed. They will put their trust in the Lord.

**Esther 2:7**

 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.

* When the announcement was made that there was to be a choice of another queen for Ahasuerus, immediately, Mordecai thought about his adopted daughter, Esther.
* Mordecai’s position in the palace gave him a front row view of all the different girls that were brought from all over the kingdom to enter the contest.
* He felt that none of them were as beautiful as Esther
* So, he brought Hadassah [ha-das-sah], which was the Hebrew name for Esther—it means “Star” to the palace.
* Esther was a beautiful woman and Mordecai had no doubt that she would win the heart of the King.

**Esther 2:8-9**

 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.

* We can see God’s providential hand moving this situation in the direction of God’s divine will.
* Esther was brought to the King’s house
* God gave her favor in the eyes of Hegai, the custodian of hundreds of women
* Hegai showed extra-kindness to Esther by (1) giving her extra purification treatments; (2) special portions of food; (3) seven hand-selected maids from the King’s house
* Mordecai took a big chance that could have went terribly wrong:

Q =He had disobeyed the Mosaic Law—what was that Law?

Q = What would have happened to Esther if she lost the beauty contest?

**Esther 2:10**

 10 Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it.

* We must not forget that the Jewish people were still captives in a foreign land that was very anti-Semitic.

* Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of Jerusalem was an example of how much Jews were hated
* Even though Nebuchadnezzar is long-gone by now, the anti-Se-mitic feeling still remains
* Mordecai being sensitive to this reality encourages Esther to not reveal her true nationality.

Q = What position did this put Esther in?

Q = What separates Christianity from other religions?

Q = Was Mordecai and Esther in the will of God?

**Esther 2:11**

 11 And every day Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women’s quarters, to learn of Esther’s welfare and what was happening to her.

* Mordecai’s soul was not at peace because he was out of the will of God.
* He is pacing up and down worrying about Esther—he is worried-sick
* He was probably having second thoughts about entering Esther into this heathen contest

 There are three (3) major things that happens when a believer is out of God’s will:

* **1. Your lifestyle becomes a lie**—**Proverbs 10:9** Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.
* **2. The Spirit of God disturbs your soul**—you become restless. **Deuteronomy 28:67** “Each morning you will wake up to such terrible sights that you will say, “I wish it were night!” But at night you will be terrified and say, “I wish it were day!”

 **(Contemporary English Version)**

* **3. The Spirit of God convict your soul**—**2 Corinthians 7:9a** “As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting…”

**Esther 2:12**

 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.

 12 Now when it was each young woman’s turn to go before King Ahasuerus, after the end of her twelve months under the regulations for the women—for the days of their beautification were completed as follows: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with [sweet] spices and perfumes and the beauty preparations for women

* Men should not be too impatient when their wives spin a little extra time in preparation—notice the regulations for these women:
* Six months with all types of oil and another six months bathing in sweet perfumes

Q = What beauty treatment would you recommend for a woman’s character?

**1 Peter 3:3-4**

 3 Don’t be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes.

 4 You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.