

Sunday July 27th 2008
Esther – Part Five

1). Es 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). We had seen last week that Vashti's refusal to appear in Ahasuerus's presence on the 7th day wearing her royal crown pictured for us centuries of unfaithfulness and disobedience on the part of Israel which denoted the nations refusal to embrace its calling, thereby also refusing to assume its regal position with regards to the 7th Day.

b). We had seen that the picture given to us through Vashti can be seen beginning for Israel at Sinai, with the first generation coming out of Egypt, and continued throughout the nation's history, although, of course, there were always individuals within the nation who did remain faithful, and that Israel's national unfaithfulness was looked upon by God as harlotry -

c). Isa 1:21 ¶ *How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers.*

d). Eze 23:17 *"Then the Babylonians came to her, into the bed of love, And they defiled her with their immorality; So she was defiled by them, and alienated herself from them. 18 She revealed her harlotry and uncovered her nakedness. Then I alienated Myself from her, As I had alienated Myself from her sister. 19 "Yet she multiplied her harlotry.*

e). The nation's harlotry reached an unprecedented level at the time of Christ's first coming, when the nation declared that recorded in - Joh 19:15 *But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"*

f). And the harlotry will reach its zenith during the opening years of Daniel's 70th week when Israel, after a similar fashion seen 2000 years ago with respect to Rome, will be completely enmeshed with the most corrupt Gentile world power that the world has ever known – that presented by the fourth part of Daniel's image – the final form of the Babylonian Kingdom under Antichrist - Re 17:1 ¶ *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." 3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations*

and the filthiness of her fornication. 5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

2). And as a result of Israel's harlotry the nation now finds itself rejected by God and in the place of death, as pictured by the experience of Jonah and that of Lazarus –

a). Heb 3:18 *And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

b). Jer 3:8 *"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;*

c). Mt 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.*

3). Now Israel's refusal to fulfill her calling has had a detrimental effect, not only on the nation itself, but also on all other nations of the earth because of what God promised Abraham in - Ge 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."*

a). Instead of receiving the blessings of God through Israel, with Israel at the head of the nations, the Gentile nations find themselves 'lording it over' Israel, during the times of the Gentiles, completely alienated from the promised blessings, in a state of chaos. Exactly what is presented to us in the picture given through Vashti - Es 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.*

b). The rulership over the earth is out of place, both on the earth and in the heavens.

c). And God will of course use the Gentile nations to bring persecution on Israel to bring the nation to repentance, and then will punish those same Gentile nations for doing so completely in accord with the first part of Genesis 12:3.

4). Now, what is particularly interesting for us this morning, is not so much the action taken by Ahasuerus in response to Vashti's refusal to appear, but the reason given for taking the action - Es 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. 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. 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.

a). But please note, that the action taken by King Ahasuerus, stated very simply as, ‘Vashti shall come no more before king Ahasuerus’, is in reality far from simple. And although it is not the focus of our study today, I think we can remember the intensity of Israel’s persecution amongst the Gentile nations that we read in Leviticus Chapter 26 last week. This is a very serious business.

b). So back to our scripture, note v 17 - *For the queen's behavior will become known to all women, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes,*

c). Vashti’s behavior is seen as presenting a model to all women in Ahasuerus’s kingdom that would lead them to treat their own husbands in the same way. And continuing in v18 - *"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.*

d). I am sure we can understand the picture – if the queen is able to refuse the king’s command with impunity, then no wife need be subject to her husband as there would be no consequence.

e). The action suggested by Memucan and acted upon by the king was to ensure that the correct roles be maintained within the marriage relationship.

f). Which can take us back to the first marriage, that of Adam and the Woman - Ge 3:16 ¶ *To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."*

g). And of course the marriage relationship between Adam and the Woman, the foundation for all, is inextricably linked to regality. And it is quite impossible to view marriage then or now or anywhere in between apart from a regal context.

h). And as we consider these things we will see that what is dealt with here in the king’s decree can be seen on a variety of levels.

5). Firstly, let us consider the nation of Israel in the past – the complete nation was looked by God as His wife and yet with the divided kingdom that came into existence after Solomon’s death, we see the nation looked upon as two sisters.

a). God's action taken against the one sister because of her refusal with regards to regality, pictured in the issuing of the decree, should have served as a warning for the other – but such was not the case.

b). Jer 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.*

c). The refusal of Israel to participate in God's plans for the nation's calling was seen by Judah and copied – despite God's rejection of her sister Israel.

d). And as we saw again today, God's total rejection of an unrepentant nation results in the entire nation being in the place of death – God's actions have been are being and will yet be abundantly clear to all who will have eyes to see.

6). Then if we go to Israel yet future, during the time of Jacob's trouble as recorded in the Book of Revelation we find this - Re 14:3 *They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

a). The 144000, 12000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, who are saved during the ministry of the two witnesses in Jerusalem during the first 3 ½ years of Daniel's 70th week, are seen here completely apart from the nation's harlotry, which is why they are described as virgins. And they are the first fruit of the nation with respect to the nation's calling, awaiting the repentance of the nation as a whole.

b). Once Israel's harlotry is done away with [as a result of the unprecedented gentile persecution bringing them to repentance] and they are devoted to God in the same way as the 144000, then they will appear in God's presence in a regal capacity on the 7th Day, within a correctly organized marriage relationship, no longer despising their Husband.

c). And this of course will have been brought to pass as a direct result of the action taken by God because of His wife's previous refusal.

d). In this respect the decree issued by Ahasuerus, depicting the action taken by God, has the desired effect.

7). Now, when we are talking about regality within a marriage relationship and the tension between faithfulness and unfaithfulness, it would be hard not to see application here for ourselves, as we see another woman called to regality in the 7th Day - the Bride of Christ.

a). The decree given, 'that Vashti shall come no more before king Ahasuerus' must be seen as a direct warning to those who would be the Bride and subsequently the wife of Christ not to despise their Husband as Vashti did.

b). Implicit in the decree itself is that a similar action would produce a similar consequence.

c). And such is the express teaching of scripture.

8). Now, so that we have no confusion, let us remember that Esther is a Book that concerns Israel alone and the church does not enter into that depicted in the Book.

a). Although Vashti's royal position is to be , 'given to another better than she', this is not a reference to those who will be the Bride of Christ, but to a repentant and restored Israel – a subject we shall deal with in a subsequent study.

b). In this respect please note that Esther is a Jew, whereas the Bride pictured for us in Ruth is a Gentile.

c). Although, as we have said, the church does not appear within Esther, that depicted by Ahasuerus's decree and the implicit warning of its consequence can be brought over to the Bride of Christ. And would, I suggest, need to be.

9). So what does the scripture say in respect of this?

a). 1Co 10:1 ¶ *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 6 ¶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed*

by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

b). Our scripture here in 1 Corinthians is pretty clear – all that happened to Israel with respect to their refusal to embrace their regal calling are examples/types for us and are written to bring correction to us, upon whom the end of the ages have come.

c). Again the implication is abundantly obvious – if we follow the example set by Israel, if we follow Vashti despising her husband – the same outcome awaits us – we shall come no more into the King’s presence during the 7th Day.

d). According to the scripture we should ‘not lust after evil things as they also lusted’, thereby becoming idolaters and the quotation given takes us back to the golden calf incident at Sinai where a molded image was created that they called ‘God’ and worshipped as ‘God’, but was not God.

c). Now look at what we find in - 2Pe 2:1 ¶ *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 ¶ By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;*

d). Deceptive = Greek – ‘plastos’ = from 4111; molded, i.e. (by implication) artificial or (figuratively) fictitious (false):--feigned.

i/ Col 3:5 ¶ *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

e). What we see at Sinai is exactly what we see as a result of the work of the false teachers – they, through the ‘molding’ of words have created something called ‘God’, and worshipped as ‘God’, but is not God – the way of truth is blasphemed. And the result is idolatry.

f). And - 8 *Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, - As we have seen in past weeks Israel’s sexual immorality is to be seen in terms of the nations assimilation into the Gentile nations around them. Taking as their own these nations practices within the present world system under Satan.*

g). And of course the same could be true for us if we were to ignore the scriptures - 1Jo 2:15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

i/ 2Ti 2:4 *No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*

h). And again - 9 *nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed by serpents*

i). This takes us to Israel in the wilderness again - Nu 21:5 *And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6 So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.*

j). This whole incident has to do with Israel's rejection of the manna in favor of something they considered more palatable – and from our perspective we would have to see this relating to our attitude to the manna given to us, the Bread of Life; the Living Word through the written word, the word of the Kingdom on which we are to feast - Joh 6:53 *Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.*

i/ Again, we go back to the false teachers who offer cucumbers, leeks and onions rather than that which is necessary to sustain life for the age to come - 2Ti 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;*

ii/ Complacency, carelessness with the Word and presumption would also be a part of this for us - Heb 2:1 ¶ *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,*

k). *10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.*

l). Israel complained almost incessantly from the time of their deliverance from Egypt onwards – there is however, one complaint that we should take particular note of within our present context - Nu 14:2 *And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and 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!*

m). It is the complaining that comes at their refusal to enter the land of promise at Kadesh Barnea – a complaining that denotes their unbelief, unfaithfulness and lack of trust in God – Something that with respect to ourselves we find an explicit warning about in the Book of Hebrews.

n). Heb 3:16 *For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years?*

Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

4:1 ¶ Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

o). What happened to Israel can also happen to Kingdom believing Christians if we should choose to follow Israel's example – God's rejection of unfaithful Israel, as Ahasuerus's rejection of Vashti, is the warning for all those who would be a wife in a regal capacity not to despise their husband.

10). Now let us look in Romans at what is recorded concerning Israel and the church - Ro 11:16 *For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.*

a). This really speaks for itself doesn't it.

b). The parable of the wise and foolish virgins, the wedding guest and the dragnet would all provide us with additional facets of the same picture. And all is underscored by the warnings that we find in the Book of Hebrews.

c). And then if we take this to the very conclusion of the matter, where the final form of the church present on the earth at the time of the rapture appears before Christ at His Judgment Seat with a view to regality and marriage, represented in scripture by the church of Laodicea, we find the same thing again – Re 3:14 ¶ *"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- 18 "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that*

the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.""

d). We see here the church in a general sense in a completely lukewarm condition with respect to its heavenly calling – there is complete indifference to the prophetic word concerning the 7th Day – and as such this would parallel Israel's unfaithfulness, and by extension, Vashti's refusal to appear before the king wearing her royal crown.

e). The only solution to indifference is repentance – to turn away from an attitude of despising the One who would be our Husband and to hear His voice and be obedient to His commands, thus placing ourselves within the correct scriptural perspective for marriage.

f). If the correct perspective is embraced then the promise is given in v21.

g). If not, then that Christian will have been overcome rather than having been an overcomer, and will experience the same outcome as Israel in the past, and like Vashti, will not be allowed before the king and will not wear a royal crown during the 7th Day.

11). And if we bring all this down to our day to day experience within our natural marriage relationships, it may well be, because of that depicted through Vashti's refusal, that in the scriptural commands to husbands and wives it is the command to wives that is always given first - Eph 5:22 *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

a). It is a self evident truth that a wife's attitude to the command of scripture, translated into the way she relates to her husband here and now has a direct correlation to her attitude to the One who calls her to be His wife within a regal capacity in the 7th Day.

b). Just as the husband's love for his wife is to provide a picture of Christ's love for His church, so is the wife's submission to her husband to present a picture of the church's obedience to Christ.

c). Perhaps within a broad Christian context the failure of so many wives to relate to their husbands in a correct scriptural way is indicative of the church's attitude to the commands of Christ with respect to the Kingdom which is to come.

12). As we close for this morning let us read once again from Esther and see if we hear a little more clearly that which is being said - Es 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.* 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.* 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.*