

Sunday August 3rd 2008
Esther – Part Six

1). Es 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). We had seen at the very beginning of our study of Esther that chapters one and two of this book provided us with a complete panoramic picture of the history of Israel past present and future.

b). In previous weeks, as we studied Chapter One, we had seen the king's command to Vashti, his queen, with regards to her appearance before him on the 7th day wearing her royal crown and Vashti's refusal to appear - Es 1:10 ¶ *On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus, 11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king, wearing her royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she was beautiful to behold. 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.*

c). And we had seen how this pictured for us centuries of unfaithfulness and disobedience on the part of Israel resulting in God's rejection of the unrepentant nation and the promise of a continually multiplied judgment upon the nation until it did repent – we will remember Leviticus Chapter 26.

d). We had seen that God's rejection of Israel had additionally been pictured for us in the type of the death of Sarah in Genesis Chapter 23, Jonah being in the belly of the great fish in Jonah Chapter 1 and the death of Lazarus in John Chapter 11.

2). However, God's rejection of and God's judgment upon Israel has always been for the purpose of restoration - Joe 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). 2Ch 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). And the fierceness of God's wrath, that will bring about that spoken of in Joel and 2 Chronicles, still awaits a future time to be fulfilled.

c). In Esther the matter is simply stated as - Es 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, as we have said, this portends God's wrath upon the nation throughout the whole of Israel's history – its main focus, because of the context of Esther, is the final expression of God's wrath which is poured out during the last 3 ½ years of Daniel's seventieth week – that time which is described in - Jer 30:6 *Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale? 7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble,*

e). This same time period is also described in - Mt 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.*

f). Zec 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.'"*

g). The events of the time of Jacob's trouble will make the events of the Holocaust pale by comparison.

h). And yet, in the midst of an unimaginable horror, look what we find at the end of our Zechariah scripture – repentance and restoration in complete accord with 2 Chronicles 7:14.

i). Although the bush burned with fire in Exodus Chapter 3, yet it was not consumed, for God was in its midst.

j). Jer 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 – following Sarah's death in Genesis Chapter 23, and Isaac marrying Rebekah in Chapter 24 we see this in Chapter 25 - Ge 25:1 ¶ *Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. 2 And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.*

a). The name Keturah, we will remember, means a sweet smelling aroma such as would be given as a burnt offering for sin – and here we see Abraham, as a type of God the Father, 'again taking a wife' whose name brings repentance into view, who is then fruitful.

b). And then with Jonah - Jon 1:17 *Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. 2:1 ¶ Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly. 2 And he said: "I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, And He answered me. "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And You heard my voice. 3 For You cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the floods surrounded me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.' 5 The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; The deep closed around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head. 6 I went down to the moorings of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God. 7 "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer went up to You, Into Your holy temple. 8 "Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy. 9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD." 10 ¶ So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.*

c). And of course the resurrection of Lazarus - Joh 11:5 *Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."11:41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 "And I know that You always*

hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." 43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

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

a). Es 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). Within the context of that which awaits Israel in the future 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). Jer 14:19 *Have You utterly rejected Judah? Has Your soul loathed Zion? Why have You stricken us so that there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but there was no good; And for the time of healing, and there was trouble.*

20 We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness And the iniquity of our fathers, For we have sinned against You. 21 Do not abhor us, for Your name's sake; Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory. Remember, do not break Your covenant with us.

22 Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O LORD our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these.

d). Isa 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). Eze 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.*

f). And all of this is most succinctly characterized in this scripture from – Isa 6:1 ¶ *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door*

were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 ¶ So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

g). King Uzziah was a leper who had become leprous as a result of his disobedience and as such presents a picture to us of Israel who also became sick from the top of the head to the sole of the foot through disobedience.

h). The opening of this Chapter in Isaiah marking the king's death thereby bringing to an end his leprous condition points to that future day when Israel's condition will come to an end and healing will ensue.

i). And Israel's healing is further presented through the details in v6-7 – Isaiah, who is writing under inspiration of the Spirit, lived among a nation of unclean people with whom he associates himself, who in this condition could not look properly upon 'the King, the Lord of hosts' – but cleansing for the nation in that day is prophesied as we have seen.

j). And also in that day, in relation to the governance of the earth, the Lord will be 'sitting on a throne, high and lifted up' and the whole earth will be 'full of His glory'.

k). Ho 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 v2, 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 - Jer 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 the epithet used to describe her in this condition, ‘beautiful young virgins’.

c). And in another sense it is the same Israel who is now resurrected from the dead and given life - Eze 37:4 *Again He said to me, "Prophesy 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 within the parameters of the search made on the king’s behalf, Esther is brought into the royal palace and immediately finds favor - Es 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 - Es 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 Mordecai’s family from that time had remained in captivity, which is exactly the situation in the Book of Esther, and exactly the situation for Israel in the world today.

c). Mordecai then we could see as presenting a picture of Israel’s status as a firstborn son, 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.

d). Esther, herself then, would present that facet of the picture of repentant Israel to do with the marriage relationship and regality – and together, she and Mordecai, present the complete picture – the firstborn son and the consort queen.

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 – a feast that points to the day when God will tabernacle with His people once again.

f). And perhaps in Mordecai's actions - Es 2:11 *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.*

We can see the tension that exists between Israel's calling and the fulfillment of that calling and the anticipation that awaits that fulfillment.

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

a). The timing and the nature of the preparations have much significance.

b). We can firstly see that the preparation time is connected to the number 12, '12 months' – 12 of course being the number of government within scripture, thereby making it clear that this preparation time is to make the one chosen ready to rule as the king's consort queen.

c). The preparation time is then further delineated into 2 periods of six months.

d). Now six is the number of man and of course the number of Man's Day – 6 days, 6 thousand years – so from this we can see that the preparation to rule takes place within the boundaries of Man's Day.

e). The two six months relate to the 2 days, or 2 thousand years of God's dealing with Israel, all of which can be seen as His preparation of the nation in readiness for regality in the 3rd day – the 7th day from Adam.

f). The 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 of course speaks to us of Israel being in the place of death throughout its history. From God's perspective this had been true from the nation's origins with Abraham onwards – we will remember that it was on the 3rd day the

Jesus returned to Judea to raise Lazarus from the dead, but this is also recorded on the Lord's arrival there - Joh 11:17 ¶ *So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.*

i). This statement covers Israel's condition not only from Abraham to Christ, but also from Christ to the conclusion of Man's Day encompassing the complete period of time of God's dealing with Israel and the complete period of time of God's dealing with the church once Israel is set aside.

j). But as in Esther Israel alone is in view we see only 2 days spoken of – two days that would include the final 7 years of Daniel's seventy weeks, as a whole period of time without reference, as we have already seen in Daniel, to the 2000 year dispensation of the church that separates the 69th week from the 70th.

k). The second period of six months, still within the context of the 2 days 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). That 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, 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). Es 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.

c). She goes in to the king 'in the tenth month' – denoting a complete period of time – just as Israel will go before the King after a complete period of time – after two days.

d). And in 'the seventh year of his reign' – just as Israel will appear in the 7th Day – that time to which all scripture moves.

e). And as with Esther, so with Israel - Es 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 arrangement of scripture, these events are followed by rest within the kingdom - Es 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’ would of course point 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 - Joh 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 - 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."*

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 - Es 2:19 *When virgins were gathered together a second time, Mordecai sat within the king's gate.*

a). This being something that God had already promised in - Ge 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 consort 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 - Es 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). Chapter 3 and the chapters following then go back to give further commentary on the panoramic picture already presented.

b). And that will be the subject of our next study, if the Lord is willing.