

THE END OF A QUEEN

Esther 1.19-22: The Grand Finale of Vashti's Disobedience (Part 2)

Theme: In light of what you know about your future rapture and replacement, how do you want to live today?

This morning we are going finish Esther chapter 1: We are going to see “the end of a queen.”

- By now we know the story well: Ahasuerus wanted Vashti to be in his presence during the feast and queen Vashti refused (she simply did not want to submit to the word of the king, and she rebelled).
- And so from verse 13 to the end of the chapter we are seeing the “grand finale” of her disobedience.
 - ✓ (v13-18) The end of a marriage: Vashti's decision to not submit and obey ruined her marriage.
 - ✓ (v19-22) The end of a queen: Vashti's decision cost her the throne...

I. (v19-20) The Consequences of Vashti's Disobedience

A. **Historical Application: How to destroy your marriage in one easy step...**

1. Vashti: (v17-18) Contempt
 - a) Remember what we saw in our last message (Est 1.13-18): Vashti destroyed her marriage.
 - b) In the history of Esther 1 there is a great practical lesson for couples, especially for wives.
 - c) One of the quickest ways that a wife can drive her husband away is to hold him in contempt (v18) and despise him (v17), rather than admiring him, honoring him, and following him.
2. Esther: (v19b) “Better”
 - a) The Bible gives us a hint of what Esther will be in the life of Ahasuerus: Better than Vashti.
 - b) Esther is different: She is portrayed as submissive, quiet, and sweet. She honors Ahasuerus.
3. Wives: The choice is yours.
 - a) (v22) Yes, the man “should bear rule in his own house” (he should be a leader).
 - b) But, regardless of his behavior, you will choose to either be like Vashti or like Esther.

B. **Doctrinal Application: The failure of the Church results in her rapture and replacement...**

1. The Church Age Ends: Pictured in Esther 1
 - a) Remember that in Esther 1 we can see a doctrinal/prophetic picture of the end of our dispensation, the end of the Church Age when the Gentile Bride has prominence in the world.
 - b) King Ahasuerus: The sovereign king of a vast kingdom is a picture of God.
 - c) Vashti: The rebellious, independent Gentile queen that refuses to submit to and obey the word of the king is a picture of Christendom (the Church) at the end of the Church Age (most churches do what is right in their own eyes, refusing to submit to and obey Scripture).
 - d) Esther: The Jewish Bride who replaces the Gentile Bride is a picture and type of Israel restored as the wife of God.
 - e) Vashti Dethroned and Replaced: The Rapture & Replacement of the Church
 - (1) **Rapture**: (Rom 11.25) The Gentile Bride is removed from a position of prominence in the world (“raptured off the throne”) in judgment of her refusal to obey the King's Word.
 - (2) **Replacement**: (Rom 11.26a) After the “rapture” (removal) of the Gentile Bride, she is replaced by someone better: the Jewish bride (Israel restored).
 - (3) So let's take this opportunity to think a little more on the events that await us...

2. The Church Age Ends in the Rapture: Comforting or Concerning?

- a) (1Thes 4.13-17) At the end of our dispensation, the Church Age, Christ will return to rapture His Bride from the earth and take her to be with Him forever.
- b) (1Thes 4.18) Paul says that this doctrine can comfort the saints (and it should).
 - (1) But does it...? Does the thought of the Rapture comfort you... or does it concern you?
 - (2) The Rapture, since it marks the end of our dispensation, is the end of our stewardship...

3. The Church Age and the End of Our Stewardship: The Grand Finale of a Dispensation

- a) We talk a lot about *dispensations* in our church because without an understanding of dispensations, you'll never be able to understand how the Bible "fits together."
- b) Remember that a dispensation, according to the Bible, consists of four primary elements:
 - (1) **Steward**: A dispensation begins when God separates a man or a people and places them in charge of a responsibility.
 - (2) **Stewardship**: The responsibility of the steward is his stewardship (he is to manage his charge/responsibility as the Lord wants him to).
 - (3) **Failure of the Steward in his Stewardship**: The steward fails to manage his stewardship as the Lord desires (consistent in every one of the seven major dispensations in the Bible).
 - (4) **Remove of the Steward in Judgment**: Because of his failure, the steward is removed from the stewardship (and thus begins another dispensation with another steward, stewardship, etc.).
- c) The Church Age (our dispensation) is a stewardship and the Church is the steward.
 - (1) **Steward**: Paul was the first and principal steward, and the stewardship given to him has passed on to us, the member of the Church, the Body and Bride of Christ.
 - (2) **Stewardship**: The responsibility given to Paul has passed on to each one of us (we call that our "Mission": *to be and make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ*).
 - (a) Paul was given the stewardship first: (Eph 3.7-9) He was called to be a disciple (a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ) and to make disciples (by evangelizing the lost and edifying the saved).
 - (b) That stewardship has passed on to each and every one of us, members of the Church:
 - i) We too have been given the Mission to "be and make disciples of the Lord."
 - ii) We have been given the responsibility to **be disciples**.
 - (Luke 6.40) A disciple is one who follows the Master (Jesus Christ) in order to be *like Him* (to be Christ-like; to be what the Bible calls **perfect**).
 - (Rom 8.29) Paul said the very same thing: The ultimate goal in our lives is to be conformed to the image of Christ (to be like Him).
 - (Eph 4.12-15) That means we are to be like the "perfect man" (v13) Jesus Christ. We are to grow spiritually until we are like Him in all things (v15). We are to be "perfected" (v12).
 - (2Tim 3.15-17) That requires that we learn the Bible and live according to it.
 - ii) We have been given the responsibility to **make disciples**.
 - (2Cor 5.18-20) God has committed to each and every one of us the "ministry of reconciliation" (the ministry of *evangelizing* the lost; 2Cor 4.3-6).
 - ◊ We are all stewards of gospel and responsible to make (create) disciples through evangelism.

- (Eph 4.16 cf. 4.12) God expects each member of the Body of Christ (the Church) to labor in the ministry for the *edification* of other believers.
 - ◊ We are all stewards of the Word of God and responsible to make (mold) disciples (into the image of Christ) by teaching them Scripture (by “speaking the truth in love”; v15).
 - ii) Therefore, just like Vashti clearly understood the desires of the king because she received the word of the king, so we (the Bride of Christ) understand our King's desires because we can clearly read them in His Word.
- (3) ***Failure of the Steward in his Stewardship:*** The steward fails to manage his stewardship as the Lord desires.
- (a) Paul was faithful in his stewardship: (2Tim 4.6-8) Therefore the thought of the Rapture (or death) was comforting to him. He knew that reward awaited him.
 - (b) We need to ask ourselves (living in the last days of the Church Age): Are we faithful?
 - i) Are we faithful in our stewardship to *be disciples* (are we growing in Christ-likeness by learning the Scriptures and doing what the Scriptures say)?
 - ii) Are we faithful in our stewardship to *make disciples* (are we evangelizing the lost and edifying the saved)?
 - iii) Or are we like Vashti (like the Church of the last days)?
 - Vashti received word of the king's desires and she simply refused to obey.
 - (Rev 3.14-21) The last church mentioned in the Bible, Laodicea, is a picture of the last church of our dispensation:
 - ◊ (v20) She does not want to be in the presence of the King (He's outside).
 - ◊ (v17a) She thinks she is doing just fine by herself. (v17b) But she's not.
 - ◊ (v16) Her disobedience will result in her judgment.
- (4) ***Remove of the Steward in Judgment:*** The steward is removed from the stewardship in judgment for her failure.
- (a) We call this removal the “rapture”: The Lord returns and removes the steward (the Church) from her stewardship.
 - (b) Just like Vashti was “raptured” off the throne, so will the Gentile Bride of Christ be raptured off the earth, out of her position of prominence, in judgment for her refusal to submit to and obey the King.
 - (c) That judgment that we will face is called the Judgment Seat of Christ...

4. The Church Age Ends with the Judgment Seat of Christ: Consequences of our Decisions

- a) (Rom 14.10, 12) Every one of us born-again believers (Christians) will give an account of himself before the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - (1) It's not a judgment of your salvation; that was decided on the cross when God judged sin.
 - (2) (2Cor 5.10) It will be a judgment of your works—what you have *done* (good or bad).
 - (3) (Col 3.23-25) It will be a judgment for reward—the reward of your inheritance.
- b) (Rom 8.16-17) We have been born again as sons of God in Jesus Christ, and God has chosen to make us “joint heirs with Christ” so that we might receive the inheritance He has received.
 - (1) But notice the conditional aspect of receiving that inheritance: “...if so be that we suffer with him...” We must be *faithful* in suffering with Christ in the mission *today*.
 - (2) (2Tim 2.12) If we suffer with Him in the mission of making disciples of all nations, we will reign with Him (we will receive a full reward of inheritance); if we choose to deny Him that suffering today, He will deny us the reigning with Him in the Millennium.

- c) (1Cor 3.8) The rapture of the Church is the removal of a steward in order to judge her.
 - (1) (1Cor 3.9-11) We will not be judged for our salvation (the foundation; Jesus Christ) but rather for our works in building on that foundation (the “temple” we build or not).
 - (2) (1Cor 3.12-13) Every Christian's works will be made manifest on *the day* of our judgment.
 - (3) (1Cor 3.14) The abiding works (the works of eternal value: being and making disciples) will result in reward—the reward of the inheritance.
 - (4) (1Cor 3.15) The temporal works (of the flesh, in the world) will result in loss (not loss of salvation, but rather loss of rewards—loss of your inheritance... removed from the throne).
- 5. [Review] Doctrinal Application: The failure of the Church results in her rapture and replacement.
 - a) In Esther 1 we can see a doctrinal/prophetic picture of the end of our dispensation, the end of the Church Age when the Gentile Bride loses her prominence in the world.
 - b) Vashti is dethroned and replaced...
 - (1) Soon the Church will be dethroned in judgment for her disobedience (she will lose her place of prominence in the world, and many will lose their reward of inheritance, their opportunity to reign with Christ as joint-heirs with Him in the Millennium).
 - (2) After the “rapture” (removal) of the Gentile Bride, she is replaced by someone better: the Jewish bride (Esther: a picture of Israel restored).
 - c) The Church Age ends in the rapture: Is that comforting or concerning?
 - (1) I think that depends on our faithfulness (as individuals and as a local church) in the stewardship that has been entrusted to us.
 - (2) Vashti's disobedience carried with it some very difficult and lasting consequences. There is a very good lesson in there for us, as we approach the day of our rapture.

C. Summary and Review: (v19-20) The Consequences of Vashti's Disobedience

- 1. Historical Application: How to destroy your marriage in one easy step.
- 2. Doctrinal Application: The failure of the Church results in her rapture and replacement.
- 3. Personal Application: We see this in the following passage...

II. (v21-22) The Change because of Vashti's Disobedience

A. (v21) The King's Decision: Dethrone the Queen

- 1. Doctrinal Application: [Quick Review]
 - a) One day our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, will make a similar decision about His rebellious Gentile wife.
 - b) He will decide to remove the Church from her position of privilege, prominence, and responsibility in the kingdoms of the world.
 - c) He will rapture us off the earth in judgment.
 - d) (Rom 11.11, 15, 25-26) And then, just like we see in Esther chapter 2, the King will turn his attention to His Jewish Bride—the restoration of the nation of Israel.
- 2. Personal Application: The soul decides to repent of Vashti.
 - a) Remember that in addition to the historical and doctrinal pictures we can see in Esther 1, we also have a set of personal pictures and types.
 - (1) King Ahasuerus, the sovereign of the land who makes the decisions, pictures our *soul*.
 - (2) Queen Vashti, the disobedient and rebellious queen, pictures *lost man's natural spirit*.
 - (3) Good things are happening in this set of personal pictures and types, because the king now understands the problem in his kingdom and he's choosing to do something about it...

b) Remember the King's Authority: He (just like every soul) gets to choose.

(1) (v19a) Memucan recognizes the king's authority: "If it please the king..."

(a) Remember that Memucan and the seven wise counselors of the king (v13-16) picture the wise counselors we have in the Scriptures, the Word of God.

(b) However, just as King Ahasuerus can choose to follow their counsel or not, so we (the soul of man) can choose to follow Scripture or not.

- (Prov 14.12; 16.25) God said this twice for a reason: It will go well with anyone who follows God's wise counsel in Scripture rather than doing what he sees fit.

(c) And that's what we see Ahasuerus do: He follows the wise (biblical) counsel of Memucan.

(2) The lost man that follows the Word of God (the preaching of the Gospel) will find himself like Ahasuerus: Enjoying the provision of God (Esther)!

c) The Queen's Consequences: Severe and Permanent

(1) (v19) The queen's disobedience resulted in a law of the Medes and Persians, a law that cannot be changed or altered once approved by the king.

(a) Once the king removes Vashti from his life and kingdom, he never turns back to her.

(b) We never see Vashti return to Ahasuerus's life after chapter 1.

(2) (v21) The king's choice to permanently (once and for all) remove Vashti from his life and kingdom is a picture of repentance unto salvation.

(a) Lost men, like Ahasuerus, need to recognize that because of their sinful human nature (Vashti), they cannot do the good they want. There is rebellion in their kingdom because of Vashti.

(b) (Acts 17.30-31) So God calls all men everywhere to repent—to recognize their sins for what they are and to turn from them.

i) And just like Ahasuerus removed Vashti *permanently*, so the sinner that truly repents of his sins will never return to them.

ii) A true Christian will fall, yes; but he will never go back to living in sin—he will never bring Vashti back to the throne as his queen.

(c) But, repentance in and of itself is *not* salvation; it's the first essential step in that direction.

- Remove Vashti from your life and kingdom! Because then, and only then, will you be ready for God's provision (pictured in Esther: a new spirit; salvation).

B. (v22) The King's Declaration: Declared to All

1. We need to make mention of one more thing before we finish Esther chapter 1: The king sends his official word out to all the provinces and peoples in his kingdom, copied and translated so everyone can read it and understand it.

2. Doctrinally: God has done the same with His Word, the Scriptures (the Bible).

a) (2Tim 3.15-17) God has given us a copy of His Word, the Scripture, copied and translated.

(1) Notice that God Himself calls copies and translations of the Scripture "inspired."

(2) Timothy did not have the "original autographs"; he had copies and translations.

(3) The Bible never refers to the originals as "inspired"; it calls copies and translations of the originals "inspired."

b) Just like the peoples of Ahasuerus's kingdom, we also have received the official, unchanging, eternal Word of the Sovereign King.

(1) It is given to us, published in the language we can understand.

(2) It is the final authority that the King expects us to follow.

(a) We have no right or authority to change it (“...*this is an unfortunate translation...*”).

(b) We simply need to read it (in our own language) and obey it.

Conclusion: Good things are happening in the kingdom of Ahasuerus...

He has dethroned the rebellious, Gentile queen Vashti.

- Historically, this providential preparation sets the stage for God's provision of Esther in the next chapter.
- It's a doctrinal picture of the rapture of the Church which prepares the way for Israel's restoration.
- And we also see a personal picture of the lost man (soul) choosing to repent of his sin and of his sins—to “dethrone” that rebellious, natural spirit he inherited from Adam.

So, let's ask ourselves some questions to finish:

1. Personal Picture: Have you, once and for all, repented of your sins? Are you sure of your salvation?
2. Doctrinal Picture: If you are saved, are you living for the Mission of being and making disciples?
3. Application: Just like Ahasuerus, you are the one who has to choose (both salvation and sanctification).
 - God will save you, but you must choose to repent and trust Christ.
 - God will sanctify you, but you must choose to learn of Him and trust Him (follow Him as Savior and Lord).

Handout: Review of...

1. Outline of Esther chapter 1
2. Dates (time line) of Esther