

TYPES & PICTURES IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Part 1 of 2: The Doctrinal Application

Theme: Understand where we are in God's "time line" and prepare yourself to be "removed" like Vashti!

Do you remember the story of Elisha and his servant when they were surrounded by the Syrian army?

- (2Kings 6.8-14) Elisha saved the king of Israel a couple times from Syrian ambushes, and so the king of Syria sent his army to take care of Elisha.
- (2Kings 6.15) When Elisha's servant went out in the early morning, he saw the army and reacted!
- (2Kings 6.16-17) But there was something that the servant could not see, and Elisha prayed that God would open his eyes and allow him to see the spiritual reality all around him.
 - ✓ This is exactly what we need! It's exactly what Paul prayed for the Ephesians (Eph 1.17-18), that God would enlighten (open!) their eyes of understanding!
 - ✓ There is so much more to Scripture than what meets the eye on first reading.
 - ✓ And that is what we want to see this morning: We want to go beyond just a superficial understanding of the Book of Esther...

Remember what we've seen thus far in our study of Esther (two messages):

1. God is not mentioned (not even one time) in the entire Book of Esther: "*Intentional Silence.*"
 - The Jews should have returned to the land after the 70 years of captivity... but they refused.
 - So it appears that God did not associate His name with them because they were in rebellion. But...
2. God's providential preservation of the Jews: *God's Provision based on God's Foreknowledge.*
 - We don't see God doing great, grand, visible signs and wonders in the Book of Esther.
 - We see God "behind the scenes" moving and molding the normal circumstances of the lives of normal people to accomplish His plan (His plan to preserve Israel).
 - This is a great illustration of how God works in our lives today: No grand "signs," but rather His providence in the normal circumstances of our normal, everyday lives.

And right here (with God's providence) is where the majority of teachers and commentators stop.

- They don't go beyond the surface of the book. They never get beyond the providence of God (which, clearly, is a central theme of the book).
- But, there is so much more to it! Remember: God is infinite, and He is the Author of this Book!
- If we don't go beyond the mere surface of the Book of Esther, we'll lose out on the majority of what God has for us... And that is why I would like to start a study on "pictures and types" in Esther this morning...

I. Pictures and Types in the Bible: They are biblical!

- Let's talk for just a minute about the biblical basis for the use of pictures and types (this is something we covered more in depth during our *How to Study the Bible* series on Wednesday nights).

A. Teaching for the Christian in the Old Testament

1. (Rom 15.4) The Old Testament writings are given to us for our *learning* and to give us *hope*.
2. (1Cor 10.11) "These things" of the Old Testament are given to us as *examples*, to admonish us.
3. Obviously there is not one book in the entire Old Testament that is written directly *to* Christians. Where does this teaching and these examples come from, then? In part, from pictures and types...

B. Types and Pictures in the Old Testament

1. (Col 2.16-17) When we talk about “pictures and types,” we are talking about things in the Old Testament “foreshadowing” things in the New Testament.
 - a) In the Old Testament we see the “shadow” (the type, the picture); in the New Testament we see the “body” (the truth pictured in the Old Testament).
 - b) In the Old Testament we see the “prefiguration”; In the New Testament we see the “figure.”
 - c) Example: (Gal 4.22-31) Paul uses Hagar as a picture and type of the Law (the Old Covenant); and he uses Sarah as a picture and type of the Promise (the New Covenant).
2. Caution: We need to be careful in our use of pictures and types...
 - a) **New Doctrines**: We should never use pictures and types to teach new (and usually weird) doctrines. We use pictures and types to illustration, clarify, and “color” doctrine taught in other passages of Scripture.
 - b) **Arbitrary Allegorization**: Pictures and types are allegories, but that does not mean that we get to just make up whatever we want. We compare Scripture with Scripture, and allow the Bible to define the elements of pictures and types we are studying.
3. All this will become more and more clear as we get farther into our study of Esther.

II. Pictures and Types in the Book of Esther: The Doctrinal (Prophetic) Application

- Mention the difference between the three applications: Historical, Doctrinal, and Personal.

A. The Doctrinal Picture in the Placement of the Book of Esther in Scripture

1. To begin a study on the doctrinal typology in Esther, we need first understand its placement in the order of the books of the Bible.
 - a) Understand this: We are *not* talking about the chronological order of events (like we did in the last message). We are talking about the order of the *books* in the Bible.
 - b) If the Bible is a divinely inspired Book, then we ought to be able to see the hand of God even in the order of the individual books of the Bible.
2. Our purpose in this teaching:
 - a) We are *not* trying to pull out *all* the details we could about everything there is to learn from the order of the books surrounding Esther.
 - b) We are going to simply attempt to get a general understanding of the doctrinal teaching there is behind the order of the books leading up to, and after, Esther.
3. Esther, in the order of Scripture:
 - a) **2Chronicles**: A picture of the global dispersion of Israel in AD 70.
 - (1) (2Chron 36.17-21) In 606 BC Jerusalem was destroyed and Israel went into captivity.
 - (2) This pictures, doctrinally, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 when the Roman General Titus destroyed Jerusalem and sent the Jews into a global dispersion until 1948.
 - b) **Ezra**: A picture of the preparation of the land for the Jews in 1917.
 - (1) (Ezra 1.1-4) In the Book of Ezra, the Jews return to the land to re-build the temple; they return to prepare the land for the Jews (the temple is center of Jewish life and law).
 - (2) This is a doctrinal picture of what happened after World War I:
 - (a) The Balfour Declaration of 1917 (error last week: I said 1918) established a “national home” (*not* a “national state”) for the Jews—it set out land and borders Palestine.
 - (b) Just like in Ezra, we see the land prepared for the Jews' return...

- c) **Nehemiah:** A picture of the the return of the Jews to their land in 1948.
- (1) (Neh 2.17) In Nehemiah, the Jews rebuild Jerusalem and the walls around the city. With this separation from the Gentile nations, Israel became an independent nation again.
 - (2) In 1948, after World War II, Israel became a sovereign *nation* again.
 - (a) World War I prepared the land for the Jew (with the Balfour Declaration of 1917).
 - (b) World War II, with the Holocaust, prepared the Jew for the land (the return in 1948).
 - (3) What's the next event on God's prophetic calendar...?
- d) **Esther:** A picture of the rapture of the Church and the Tribulation.
- (1) (Est 1.10-12, 19) In Esther we see a Gentile queen removed from the throne because she refused to obey her husband and display her beauty to the world (the desire of the king).
 - (2) This is a doctrinal picture of the rapture of the Church at the end of the Church Age.
 - (a) (Eph 5.26-27) The Bride of Christ is beautiful when she is growing in Christ-likeness.
 - (b) And God's desire is that the Bride would display her beauty to the world: *Evangelism* (putting on display the beauty of redemption, regeneration, etc.).
 - (c) But the Bride of today has said... “No.” And so the Lord will return one day and remove the Gentile Bride in judgment for her rebellion and disobedience.
 - (3) And then the king turns his attention toward Esther, a Jew... And Haman starts a time of tribulation for Israel (more on this later).
- e) **Job:** A picture of the Jews during the 42 months of the Great Tribulation.
- (1) After Esther (and the rapture of the disobedient, rebellious Gentile queen), we have the Book of Job, which is a picture of the Great Tribulation.
 - (2) Some elements of the typology in Job:
 - (a) Job has 42 chapters, just like the 42 months (3 ½ years) of the Great Tribulation.
 - (b) Job suffered in the land of Uz (which is Edom). God will preserve His faithful remnant of Jews in that same land of Edom during the Tribulation (the desert; near Petra).
 - (c) Job was persecuted by Satan himself, just like the Jews will be persecuted by Satan (and also through the Antichrist).
 - (d) At the end, God lifts the affliction of Job and restores him double what he lost at the beginning (just like Israel after the Tribulation: Isa 61.7; Zech 9.12).
- f) **Psalms:** The prayers of the saints during the Tribulation, and the Second Coming.
- (1) The Psalms show us a doctrinal picture of what the saints will be praying during the Tribulation period.
 - (a) For example: The Psalms David wrote when he was being persecuted by Saul.
 - (b) David is a picture and type of Israel being persecuted by the Antichrist (Saul).
 - (2) Psalm 2 gives us an idea what the Jews will ultimately be praying for: They are praying for the Messiah to come and save them! And that He will do, in the Second Coming.
- g) **Proverbs:** A picture of the Millennium.
- (1) Proverbs could be called the “Sermon on the Mount” of the Old Testament.
 - (a) The Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5-7) is the Constitution of the Kingdom that the Lord was offering to Israel (we call that Messianic kingdom the “Millennium”).
 - (b) Just like the Sermon on the Mount show us the “*laws*” by which that Kingdom will be governed...

- (c) Proverbs shows us the *principles* by which that Kingdom will operate.
 - i) In Proverbs we have the “results of obedience to God in a perfect world”.
 - ii) They do apply today in a general sense (but sometimes they don't “work” all the time, in every situation; we don't live in a perfect world, yet).
 - iii) In the Millennium, they will “work” every time.

(2) Summary & Review

- (a) In the Psalms we see the Tribulation saints praying for deliverance, and getting that deliverance in the Second Coming of Christ.
- (b) Then Proverbs shows us (in picture and type) the Millennium that Christ establishes when He comes back.
- (c) What's the next event on the prophetic calendar...? Judgment.

h) ***Ecclesiastes***: A picture of the Great White Throne Judgment.

- (1) In Ecclesiastes, Solomon puts on display all the vanity of man and his life “under the sun” (his life in this world). That's exactly what will happen at the final judgment.
- (2) (Rev 20.11-15) God will bring all the works of vain men (all that they have done “under the sun”) into judgment.
- (3) (Eccl 12.13-14) In light of the vanity of this world... In light of the Great White Throne Judgment that is to come... How should we then live?
- (4) What's next after the Great White Judgment...?

i) ***Song of Solomon***: A picture of eternity.

- (1) The Song of Solomon shows us a picture of God with His wife, in the joy of love.
- (2) This is a doctrinal picture of God the Father with His bride, Israel; and it is also a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ with His bride, the Church.

4. Summary & Conclusion:

- a) We ran through all these books in their order (before and after Esther) to see this one thing...
- b) The Book of Esther speaks of our days: (Est 1) The rapture of the Gentile Bride...

B. The Doctrinal Pictures of the People and Events in the Book of Esther

1. If Esther is truly a doctrinal picture of the time of transition from the Gentile Church (pictured in Vashti) to the Jews (pictured in Esther), then we should be able to see that picture clearly in the content of the book, and not just its placement in Scripture.
2. (Est 1.1) King Ahasuerus is a picture of God: He reigns as king over the “whole world.”
3. (Est 1.9) He has a wife whose name is Vashti (and she's a Gentile), exactly like today: God has a Bride who is the Church (the majority of which is made up of Gentiles).
4. (Est 1.10-12) Queen Vashti does not want to obey her king. She would rather do as she pleases (what seems right in her own eyes), just like the Church in these last days is in apostasy.
5. (Est 1.19) So the queen is “raptured” off the throne in judgment, just like God will one day soon rapture the Church out of the world to judge us at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
6. (Est 2.17) After this “rapture” of the Gentile queen, we see the king choosing a new bride: Esther, a Jew.
 - a) This is a doctrinal picture of Romans 11.25-26.
 - b) It is a picture of the reconciliation between God the Father and His wife, Israel.

7. (Est 3.1) “After these things” (after the Rapture of the Church and after God turns His attention back to Israel) Haman comes on the scene.
 - (Est 3.5-6) Haman is the enemy of the Jews, just like the Antichrist. They both want the same thing: Kill the Jews.
8. (Est 5.3-4) Because of Esther's petitions to the king (like in the Psalms: the prayers of the Tribulation saints)...
 - (Est 7.10) ...Haman, the enemy of the Jews, is killed.
9. (Est 8.1-2) Mordecai is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Second Coming...
 - (Est 9.1, 5) Under Mordecai, the Jews are victorious over all their Gentile enemies.
10. (Est 9.20-22, 26) The Feast of Purim (a celebration of joy, rest, and peace) is a picture of the Millennium (a 1000-year period of joy, rest, and peace after the Second Coming).

C. Summary & Review

1. The Book of Esther shows us the days in which we live: “*Those days*” of transition!
2. The Church, in her apathy and indifference, is about to be raptured out and judged.
 - a) She is indifferent to the Bridegroom's command to publicly display the beauty given to her by the King, Jesus Christ (a beauty that will bring glory to Him!).
 - b) (Eph 5.26-27) The Church is beautiful when she is Christ-like! Christ made her that way!
 - c) And that beauty is put on display when we evangelize—when we manifest the beauty of Christ's work of redemption and regeneration before the world.
 - d) But Vashti says, “No.” And she is removed and replaced by someone better than she...
3. Israel has been in the land since 1948. All we're waiting for is the rapture of the Church and then God will turn all his attention back to Israel and gain their reconciliation through the Tribulation.

Christian, the message is simple: Understand where we are in God's “time line” and prepare yourself to be “removed” like Vashti!

- The rapture of the Church is nothing more than God removing an unfaithful steward.
- But just because the majority is unfaithful in their obedience to the King's command, that does *not* mean that each individual has to be! We can be different. We do *not* have to be “normal” Christians!
- All we have to do is “return to the place of God's blessing”: Daily and continued obedience to His Word.

That means we need to focus on what the Bridegroom has told us to do!

- (Est 1.10-11) He wants us to show the beauty of the Church to the world!
- He wants us to *be and make disciples*.
 - ✓ *Be* fair to look upon. Be a disciple: Grow in Christ—in Christ-likeness. We call that “edification.”
 - ✓ *Make* disciples by putting that beauty on display for the world to see... (principally through evangelism; but also through edification—helping other believers grow in Christ-likeness).

For the lost: (2Pet 3.9) God is patient/longsuffering... but He will not be patient forever.

- This ought to cause you concern! Read 2Thessalonians 2.7-12...
 - ✓ (v7) The rapture of the Church.
 - ✓ (v8-12) For those who have *heard*... God will be patient no more.
- *Today* is the day of salvation, because if you wait (thinking you'll really get right with God soon), then you may not get another chance.
- Repent and turn to Christ; follow Him and stop following yourself and your sins.