

THE QUEEN'S DISOBEDIENCE

Esther 1.12: The Queen's Fatal Decision

Theme: Don't take advantage of the King's grace and live for yourself; strive to know His Word and obey it!

Remember that the Book of Esther breaks down into three sections according to the three main characters.

1. Esther: (chs 1-2) The Great Change in the Kingdom
 - (1) Vashti's Demise
 - (2) Esther's Rise
2. Haman: (chs 3-7) The Great Enemy of the Jews
 - (3) The Plot of Haman
 - (4) The Plan of Haman
 - (5) The Petition of Haman
 - (6) The Praise of Mordecai
 - (7) The Pronouncement Against Haman
3. Mordecai: (chs 8-10) The Great Victory at Last!
 - (8) The Vindication of the Jews
 - (9) The Victory of the Jews
 - (10) The Vantage of Mordecai (his position—vantage point-- of superiority)

The main lessons in Esther:

1. The “intentional silence” of God (God is not mentioned in Esther... not one miracle...)
 - But, God's *providence* is seen throughout the book (God protects and provides for His people).
 - Even when we don't see God working in the daily circumstances of our lives, we can know He is there and He is providentially caring for us (we're His children, He loves us and cares for us).
2. The pictures and types: Here is where we started looking at the details of the content of Esther...

We are currently working our way through Chapter 1: Vashti's Demise

1. (v1-9) Three Feasts: They show us some problems in the kingdom...
 - (v1-4) Feast #1: Peace in the Kingdom
 - (v5-8) Feast #2: Prosperity in the Kingdom (and with that comes also great *comfort*)
 - (v9) Feast #3: Problems in the Kingdom (Vashti wants to do her own thing)
2. (v10-12) Vashti's Failure
 - (v10-11) ***The Desires of the King***
 - ✓ He wanted Vashti in his presence (like Christ, our King, wants His Bride, us / the Church, to be in His presence—to know Him, love Him, and walk with Him).
 - ✓ He wanted Vashti to wear the royal crown (like Christ wants to give His Bride a full inheritance as joint-heir with Him in His kingdom).
 - ✓ He wanted Vashti to show her beauty to the people (like Christ has give us the Great Commission to show to the world the beauty of holiness in the Gospel)
 - ✓ But... what does Vashti decide to do...? What has the Church decided to do today...?
 - (v12) ***The Disobedience of the Queen***
 - ✓ Here is where we continue our study of the story of Esther. Here is where we begin this morning.

I. **Historical Application: A very practical lesson for couples**

A. History Book: The Bible is, for the most part, a history book. And I think there is a very important lesson to learn in the history of Vashti and Ahasuerus as a married couple...

B. This verse starts with a very important (and often fatal) word: “But.” It’s a word of contrast...

1. The king (husband) has expressed certain desires... “*but*” the queen (his wife) has another idea.
2. In all honesty (sad to say), this is the word that often characterizes most marriages today: “...*but*...”
3. We’ll be looking at this topic of marriage a little more when we get to verse 17, but let’s just take a minute today to mention a couple things and hopefully learn from them.

C. The will of God with regard to married couples is clear in both Testaments:

1. (Gen 2.18) From the beginning God established order in the marriage relationship: He gave the man (Adam) the mission and then He gave him a wife to help meet his needs in that mission.
 - a) It wasn’t a “pecking order” of superiority (the man and the woman were both equal).
 - b) But it was an order in the sense that Adam had primary responsibility to lead in the mission to be fruitful and multiply, and Eve was to help meet his needs in that mission.
2. (Gen 3.16) That order is clarified even more after the Fall: The man is to rule; the wife is to submit.
3. (1Cor 11.3) That same order in marriage and the family is seen in the New Testament.

D. “But”: In spite of God’s clear expectations for husbands and wives, there are always problems.

1. Marital problems usually start where we see them start in the Book of Esther: Vashti.
 - a) Honestly, who wants to submit to anyone? We’re sinners, and (even worse) we’re *American* sinners. Sinners are *rebellious* by nature and Americans are fiercely *independent*. Bad combo.
 - b) And when a woman has to submit to a man in marriage relationship... It’s a struggle.
2. How are we doing in our church?
 - a) We know what the Bible says:
 - (1) The man is to be the head of his household and lead his family in the mission that God has given us (to be fruitful through evangelism and multiply through edification).
 - (2) The woman is to submit to the man, the head of the family; she is to *help meet his needs* so he can continue in the mission and not get distracted, discouraged, or disqualified.
 - b) Are we doing what the Bible says?
 - (1) Men: Are you leading your family in the mission (evangelism and edification)?
 - Ahasuerus gave his wife *clear instructions* (clear leadership). Are you?
 - (2) Ladies: Are you living in submission to your husbands regardless?
 - (a) The Bible never says that a woman is to submit to her husband *if* her husband is a super-spiritual, holy, evangelizing machine.
 - (b) The Bible simply states that the wife is to submit to her husband as his help-meet.
3. And here’s a principle we’ll talk about later in verse 17: Women have more power over the marriage relationship than men.
 - a) Why? Because they are in the submissive role, just like Jesus Christ took on the form of a servant in order to provide salvation for all mankind. The greater is always the servant.
 - b) Vashti had all the power in her hands to either create or avoid “marital strife” with her husband. *She* had the power, not him... The same holds true today: *1Peter 3.1-7*.

E. Summary: In the historical application of Esther 1.12, we can see a very practical application.

II. Doctrinal Application: A very good picture of the Church today

A. In the history recorded in the Bible, we can often see a doctrinal/prophetic picture of God's plan for His kingdom and His people.

1. Vashti is a Gentile queen that does not want to obey the king's word.
2. She is a picture of another Gentile Bride who also refuses to obey the Word of the King: She is a doctrinal and prophetic picture of the Church of the last days right before the Rapture.

B. Think, first, about Vashti's *attitude* that we see come out in her disobedience to the king.

1. Vashti knows she's the queen, the wife of the king. She has a certain level of *confidence* in her position and privileges because of her relationship to Ahasuerus.
2. She has a *security* in her relationship with him... and *she takes advantage of it*.

C. Our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, has also expressed His desires for His Bride, the Church.

1. But most people who call themselves Christians today are like Vashti: They refuse to submit to and obey the King. Why is that...?
2. I think the answer is simple: Just like Vashti, the Church today feels a certain amount of "security" in her relationship to Christ... and they take advantage of that.
 - a) Today, during the Church Age (the "Age of Grace"), we enjoy a security with the King that others in biblical history do not. We call it "eternal security."
 - Once we are born again, we cannot be unborn. When we're saved, we're eternally secure.
 - b) And though it's sad to say, it's true: We have become like Vashti.
 - (1) Because we feel confidence in our relationship to the King ("*I have liberty in Christ... I can never lose my salvation...*"), we take advantage of it.
 - (2) There are Christians today who think they can live the way they want to (like Vashti: according to their own whims and preferences, obeying or disobeying the King and His Word). And they think they can do that without consequence.
 - c) Vashti took advantage of her relationship to her husband the king (a man who is depicted as a decent and generous leader in Esther 1).
 - (1) And it appears she did so thinking that there would be no consequences.
 - (2) Or at least she didn't care about the consequences.
 - d) And today the vast majority of people who go to church on Sundays do the very same thing.
 - (1) They think nothing of the Word of the King. They disobey that Word simply because they don't want to submit—simply because it doesn't fit in with what they want to do.
 - (2) And they think that because they have "eternal security" with their King, that there will be no consequences.
 - (3) (v19) But there are consequences... Our decisions, our actions, our mouths, our lifestyles, our commitment or lack thereof... all of it... our submission to the Word of the King or our decisions to not submit... it all has lasting consequences.

D. What is sad and pathetic in this: The king (and our King) doesn't ask anything difficult.

1. The king (King) wants his queen to be with him (in his presence); he wants her to wear the royal crown (reign with him); and he wants her to show her beauty as queen to the world.
2. What is there in those three things that is wrong or difficult? Nothing.
3. But Vashti, like the Church of these last days, simply *refused* to obey the word of the king. And that decision to not obey the Word will have some pretty harsh consequences very soon.

E. There is one more application of this passage we need to mention: Historical, Doctrinal, and...

III. Personal Application: A very important step for a lost person

A. Remember that there is another set of pictures and types in the story of Esther.

1. The king, *Ahasuerus*, is the person in charge of the kingdom: He is a picture of the *soul* (the part of a person that is uniquely “him”—mind, will, and emotions). The soul makes the decisions.
2. *Vashti* is a picture of man's *natural spirit*, before salvation (before converting to Christ).
3. And Vashti's disobedience is very important: It let's the king know that he has some serious problems in his kingdom...

B. Vashti: As a picture of the natural spirit of sinful man...

1. She is proud, haughty, arrogant, rebellious, self-centered, and disobedient.
2. She wants to follow her own desires and whatever is right in her own eyes *in spite of* the desires of the king (you; your soul).
3. (Eph 2.1-3) Before Christ, we were “children of disobedience.” That is man's natural spirit!

C. Ahasuerus: As a picture of our soul (of “us” living inside these bodies)...

1. The king has certain desires (we saw three in our passage). His desires are nothing bad or difficult.
2. But, when he makes his desires known, Vashti has other ideas that are the complete opposite of the king's desires.
3. (1Cor 14.32) And remember that God's plan and design is that the *spirit* be subject unto the person, that the spirit be subject unto the soul (not the other way around!).

D. The Picture: Vashti's disobedience to King Ahasuerus is a picture of a lost man trying to do good (trying to get his life “straightened out” to do that which is good and right and correct).

1. It's like a lost person trying to stop sinning—trying to straighten out his life and do what is right.
 - a) He may want to change certain behaviors or get rid of certain habits or vices. But, he can't.
 - b) The soul of the lost man (his mind, will, emotions; *he himself*) says: “*I'm going to do this*” or “*I'm going to stop doing that.*”
 - c) And Vashti (his natural spirit)... has a mind of her own! She simply refuses: “*No.*”
2. There is only one thing to do with Vashti (with your natural spirit): (v19) Get her off the throne!
 - a) Divorce her. Separate from her. Throw her off the throne and out of your life!
 - b) We call that “*repentance*”: A change of direction in the kingdom...

Conclusion:

Personal Pictures and Types: This is a good thing!

- Up until now everything has been nice and shiny: Peace, prosperity, and comfort in the kingdom.
- But now Ahasuerus has discovered a major problem in his kingdom, and the problem is Vashti! And now that he knows about it... *he can do something about it!*
- That's exactly what needs to happen in the life of a lost man...
 - ✓ For most lost people we know, their lives are characterized by the same things: Peace, prosperity, and comfort.
 - ✓ But what a blessing when that sinful, rebellious, natural spirit rises up in defiance to their desires!
 - They want to clean things up... They want to do good... And they can't. Vashti says, “No!”
 - And now... the party's over!

- (v12b) And just like the king was wrath and angry, a lost person needs to feel that frustration and hopelessness of not being able to do good (to do what he knows his Creator requires of him).
 - ✓ That's the first step toward salvation because you have to know something is wrong before you look for a solution to make it right.
 - You have to know your sin, your sins, and your sinful nature.
 - You have to know that you cannot do the good you should.
 - ✓ Only then will you repent and get Vashti off the throne and out of your life.
 - ✓ And you have to get Vashti (the rebellious natural spirit) *out* before God can place Esther (a new spirit) on the throne.
- So, in our personal pictures and types in the Book of Esther, good things are happening!

Doctrinal/Prophetic Pictures and Types: A good but sad picture of modern Church...

- The disobedient, self-centered, rebellious Gentile bride, Vashti, is about to be “raptured” out of the story in judgment because she refused to submit to and obey the word of the king. That's us (the Church)!
- And so there is a very important message for us here today (and I'll use Dave's sermon on Jude 3-4):
 - ✓ (Jude 4) Church leaders today are taking advantage of God's grace (His goodness and His provision), and because of that Christendom has been led into apostasy.
 - ✓ (Jude 3) So don't follow them... don't be like them... don't be a Vashti!
 - And don't let this church become another Vashti (there are already too many *me-churches* out there; let's not be another one!).
 - Rather: Contend for the faith!
 - Fight for *sound doctrine* and *holy living*!
 - Strive to *know* the Word of our King and to *obey* it.
 - Read your Bible (know it!) and do what it says (obey it!).
 - Because if we don't... we'll do what's right in our own eyes just like Vashti (and just like so many other “churches” that plague Christianity with their self-centered, apostate ministries).

Theme: Don't take advantage of the King's grace and live for yourself; strive to know His Word and obey it!

AN OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER

God's Providential Care of His People

Chapters 1-2	Chapters 3-7	Chapters 8-10
HISTORICAL APPLICATION		
Esther The Rise of Esther The Feast of Ahasuerus	Haman The Lies of Haman The Feast of Esther	Mordecai The Prize of Faith The Feast of Purim
DOCTRINAL APPLICATION		
The Nation of Israel The Rapture/Translation The Queen of the Jews	The Antichrist The Tribulation The Enemy of the Jews	The Messiah The Second Coming The Victory of the Jews
PERSONAL APPLICATION		
Conversion Our Great Change The Struggle Begins Romans 6	Opposition Our Great Enemy The Struggle Defined Romans 7	Victory Our Great Choices The Struggle Erupts Romans 8

TYPES & PICTURES IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER

	Doctrinal (Revelation 12)	Personal (Romans 6, 7, 8)
1. King Ahasuerus	God	Soul
2. Shushan, Capital		Body
3. The Kingdom	The Kingdoms of this World	Areas of Life/Influence
4. Queen Vashti	Church	Human Spirit (of Man)
5. Esther	Israel	New Spirit (Regenerated)
6. Marriage (with Esther)	Reconciliation (Israel & God)	Conversion to Christ
7. Mordecai	Christ (Spirit of Christ)	Holy Spirit
8. Haman	Antichrist	Flesh / Old Man
9. Jews in the Kingdom	Jews in the World	Points of Light (Mat 5.16)
10. Feast of Purim	Millennium	Fulness in Christ (Spirituality)