

"A Queen Chosen"

Esther 2

Part 1

Introduction: Last week in our study of Esther we looked at the response of Xerxes when Queen Vashti refused to answer his call. There was an alarmist in the king's court, and he projected what was going to happen if there were not drastic measures taken.

Notice Esther 1:15-22

Memucan used fear to push the king to make a hasty decision.

Application:

Let us learn to think through and pray before we make decisions because many times the situation is irreversible. Let us notice another example of what hasty decisions can do.

Joshua 9:3-15

³ *And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,*

⁴ *They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;*

⁵ *And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.*

⁶ *And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.*

⁷ *And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?*

⁸ *And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?*

⁹ *And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt,*

¹⁰ *And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth.*

¹¹ Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us.

¹² This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:

¹³ And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.

¹⁴ And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.

¹⁵ And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

Now let us move 400 years into the future.

2 Samuel 21:1-7

Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David enquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.

² And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)

³ Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?

⁴ And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you.

⁵ And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel,

⁶ Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give them.

⁷ But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

Seven innocent men died because of the decision that was made 400 years earlier by Joshua and the leaders of Israel.

Let us now get to chapter 2.

Notice Esther 2:1

The words "After these things" need to be considered. This certainly refers to all the events of chapter 1 but there is more here. This chapter takes place years after the events of chapter 1.

Esther 1:3

³ *In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him:*

Chapter 1 takes place in the third year of the reign of Xerxes.

Notice Esther 2:16

Here we see that Esther is taken to the king in the seventh year of his reign. But there is more.

Notice Esther 2:12

Each lady had to go through a year of spa treatment before they met the king, so this means that when this chapter opens it is in the sixth year of Xerxes reign. So, chapter 2 opens three years after the events of chapter 1.

There is more, however. Notice the words of Henry Morris:

"Although the text does not tell us what transpired between Vashti's removal and the pivotal events of Esther 2, history records that the Persian forces (reported as numbering 100,000 or more) under Xerxes were held off for seven days by only approximately 7000 Greek soldiers, before the Grecian rear-guard was annihilated in one of history's most famous last stands. It was the Battle of Thermopylae. As noted below, during this same time period, Ahasuerus' navy suffered a major defeat at the Battle of Salamis.

The king and all his officers embarked on their projected invasion of Greece immediately following the great assemblage (the feast of chapter 1). As history shows, however, the great fleet of King Xerxes suffered a bitter defeat at the naval Battle of Salamis where the Greek navy defeated the Persian navy in late 480BC, and returned home sadder and wiser. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the king went back to comfort himself with his harem. At this time, he "remembered Vashti" and proceeded with his comforting

mission of examining many "young virgins" from all parts of his kingdom to find a new queen."

Notice Esther 2:1 again.

The king remembered three things concerning Vashti.

1. Her beauty.
2. Her disobedience.
3. The decree against her.

There was no doubt remorse as he thought back to the days when she was queen.

Notice the words of Lawson:

"He thought upon the happy days he had enjoyed in her society; upon the proofs she had formerly given him of her affection and obedience; upon the folly of his own conduct, which had tempted her, for once, to dispute his orders; upon the cruel punishment inflicted on her; upon the impracticability of reversing the sentence passed against her; upon a thousand circumstances which added to the disgust of his mind. Remorse now punished him almost as severely as his imperious device had punished the unhappy queen."

Application:

This is another reason why we must be very careful about being forced into a decision. Be careful of your emotions and your own personal desires.

Now, let us consider a hypothetical question for a few minutes, "What if the decree would have been reversible?" With the king's remembrance of her there would have been a good probability that he would have reinstated her as the queen.

Esther 1:19

*¹⁹ If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, **that it be not altered**, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.*

I underlined and bolded that "little detail" in 1:19. If it were not for this small detail of the decree being unalterable, the events of chapter 2 would have never transpired. If it were not for this little detail the Jews would have all perished under the death sentence of Haman.

Application:

I point this out because we need to understand that our God even cares about and is sovereign over the details of life. He works even the "little details" of our lives out to accomplish His will. Notice the words of an unnamed writer:

"What little details or circumstances are or are not transpiring in your life that might have a significant impact on your future? The point is that God is the God of details and is sovereign over every circumstance of our lives which should give us cause for an inner sense of calm and peace in knowing that the One Who holds all things together, holds the events of our life in His hand and is able to bring about good not only from evil but from the seemingly meaningless events of our life!"

These thoughts take my mind to a familiar verse in Romans.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Colossians 1:16-17

¹⁶ For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

¹⁷ And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

God is in everything in our lives. He is even in the smallest of details working His will for us. Things which we often see as unimportant are really controlled by the hand of God as He works all things together for our good. Let us consider a few examples:

1. A young girl coming to the Nile River to bathe is something we would see as insignificant, but she would be used by God to preserve the life of Moses. She was part of the details of the plan of God to deliver Israel from the slavery.
2. Two convicts in prison would seem insignificant to us, but they would be used by God to promote Joseph to the position of Prime Minister. They were both part of the details of the plan of God.
3. A young boy carrying five small loaves of bread and two fish would seem insignificant, but God would use him to feed the five thousand. He was part of the details.

This list could go on and on. God is in control of even the details of our lives and therefore we can rest in the Lord and trust Him to bring about His will.

Hebrews 4:1-2, 9-10

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

⁹ There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

¹⁰ For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

When we come to understand that God is in control of everything in our lives, including the details, and we walk by faith in that Truth, then we can enter into His rest for us. It is when we cease from our own works, in other words, it is when we stop trying in our own power to control the events of our lives, and just surrender it all over to our Lord. It is then that we can enjoy the rest which God has for us.

Conclusion:

God gives to us the free will to make choices and He uses the choices we make to bring about His will. Let us be sure our choices are godly choices and once they are made let us trust the Lord to carry out His plan. Let us be careful not to try in our own power to bring about what we think should happen.

Matthew 11:28-29

²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.