

ESTHER – THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

I. Introduction

- A. An allegory
 - 1. A story, poem or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning
 - 2. An extended metaphor
- B. The Bible is true on multiple levels at the same time – literally, historically, prophetically, and allegorically.
- C. Allegorical examples in Scriptures
 - 1. Galatians 4:21-27 – Hagar and Sarah as Two Covenants
 - 2. Ezekiel 16 – An Allegory of Unfaithful Jerusalem
 - 3. The Parables
- D. Esther is true literally and historically and prophetically, but there are also many truths that can be discovered by studying this book allegorically.

II. A Grand Party and A Grand Parting – Esther 1:1-12

- A. Xerxes, King of Persia, in the third year of his reign gave a banquet for all his nobles.
- B. Xerxes gave another banquet for all the people from the least to the greatest.
 - 1. Wine served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other.
 - 2. Served each man what he wished.
- C. Queen Vashti also gave a banquet.
 - 1. She was off doing her own thing.
 - 2. She refused to come when the King called.
- D. Allegorical Interpretation
 - 1. Xerxes represents our King Jesus.
 - 2. In Jesus' third year, He said, "It is finished," and He returned to His Father.
 - 3. There is now a wedding banquet being prepared for the least to the greatest (Matthew 22:1-10)
 - 4. The Lord says we have value to Him, enough value that He was willing to die for us while we were yet sinners.

5. Not only do we have value, we are also uniquely made, each different from the other.
6. He has poured out the wine of His blood for us, but graciously refuses to force Himself upon us.
7. He has also poured out His Spirit upon us, but does not force us to partake.
8. Queen Vashti represented the Israelite nation and those who refused to come to the wedding banquet.
 - a. God had chosen them as a people through whom He could display His splendor, but they prostituted themselves with other nations and foreign gods, and they were sent into captivity. (Ezekiel 16)
 - b. Jesus came to His own, but His own did not receive Him.
 - c. Therefore, even though they are the natural branches, God has set them aside for a season while the Gentiles (the wild olive shoots) are grafted in.
 - d. God has a plan for all Israel, but they have been hardened in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in. (Romans 11:25-27; Zechariah 12:10)

III. The Preparation of the Bride – Esther 2:1-18

- A. A new queen is sought to replace Vashti.
- B. Esther, a beautiful young Jewish girl who has been adopted by her cousin Mordecai, is taken to the King's palace and entrusted to Hegai.
 1. She is given beauty treatments and special food.
 2. She has seven maids and is moved to the best part of the palace.
- C. Mordecai walks back and forth near the courtyard
- D. Esther completes 12 months of beauty treatments
 1. Six months with oil of myrrh
 2. Six months with perfumes and cosmetics
- E. When Esther went to the King, she took with her only what Hegai suggested.
- F. Esther won the favor of all who saw her, including the King.
 1. He set a royal crown on her head.
 2. He gave a banquet throughout the provinces and distributed gifts with royal liberality.
- G. Interpretation

1. Mordecai (one who is concerned) represents the Holy Spirit, the spirit of adoption. (Romans 8:15-16)
2. Esther (star, hidden, myrtle – an evergreen shrub that has glossy aromatic foliage with white flowers followed by dark purple berries)) represents a true believer, with the spirit of adoption, being prepared to go deeper with the Lord.
3. Hegai (means meditation) represents the Word of God, who fed Esther special food that allowed her to move from the milk of God's word to the meat of God's word.
4. The Holy Spirit (Mordecai) watches over Esther at all times and continues to instruct her with wisdom.
5. Esther's beauty treatments
 - a. Myrrh – bitter to the taste but releases a fragrant aroma – this represents a season of dying to self, allowing the fragrance of the Lord to be released.
 - b. Perfumes and cosmetics – the aroma of Christ flows from every pore as our flesh is crucified – less of us, more of Him.
6. Having feasted on the Word of God, Esther knew what pleased the King, and she entered His Presence with what she knew would please Him most – an empty vessel, a submitted vessel, loving Him more than anything else, her own flesh crucified – releasing a fragrance with which He was familiar – Himself.
7. The King recognized that aroma, and He was enthralled by her beauty. (Ps 45:11) "You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes... How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride!" (S of S 4:9)
8. The King now places on Esther's head a royal crown, representing His authority in the Kingdom. We are a chosen people, a royal priesthood. (1 Peter 2:9)
9. The wedding banquet, a wine banquet, where Esther received His wine and drank in His very identity. And the King gave gifts with liberality.

IV. Guardians at the Threshold – Esther 2:19-23

- A. Esther continues to keep her nationality secret and continues to follow Mordecai's instructions.
- B. Two of the King's officers, Bigthana and Teresh, who guarded the doorway, conspired to assassinate the King.

- C. Mordecai found out, told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the King, giving credit to Mordecai.
- D. The report was investigated, found to be true, and the two officers were hung on the gallows.
- E. It was recorded in the book of annals in the presence of the King.
- F. Interpretation
 - 1. The Bride of Christ continues to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Whenever we are crossing the threshold to a new place with God, there will be guardians at the gate to try to block us.
 - a. Beware: whenever we receive a clear instruction from the Lord, there will almost always be another voice that comes alongside that. Example: Peter receiving revelation that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Quickly after, he hears the voice of Satan.
 - b. The guardians at the threshold may look like they are in the Lord's camp, but they are really our enemies and God's enemies.
 - c. These enemies can be our own uncrucified flesh, the world (including family, friends, fellow believers), Satan and his cohorts.
 - d. They will try to discourage us, distract us, scare us. They will do anything to keep us from fulfilling the destiny God has for us.
 - 3. To fight these enemies, we must submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth who reveals truth to us and brings hidden things to light, and make our requests known to the Lord. He is well able to dispose of our enemies, who are actually His enemies.

V. Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews – Esther 3

- A. King Xerxes elevated Haman, the Agagite, to a place of honor higher than the other nobles.
- B. All the royal officials at the King's gate were to kneel down and pay him honor, but Mordecai, the Jew, refused.
- C. This enraged Haman and he devised a plan to destroy all the Jews throughout the kingdom.
 - 1. Haman told the King that the Jews did not obey the King's laws.
 - 2. It was not in the King's best interest to tolerate them.

3. He offered the King 10,000 talents of silver to destroy them.
4. The king gave Haman authority to carry out his evil plan.
5. On the thirteenth day of the first month, the orders were written and dispatched to the King's provinces that all the Jews were to be killed, destroyed, and annihilated on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month.

D. Interpretation

1. Haman represents Satan or the Antichrist, who wants to destroy the seed from whom Messiah would come.
 - a. Other examples: Pharaoh in Egypt, Herod at the time of Christ's birth, Judas
 - b. Haman is an Agagite.
 - (1.) Saul was to kill Agag, the Amalekite King, but he disobeyed God (I Samuel 15)
 - (2.) The Amalekites were the first ones to fight Moses and the Israelites in the desert.
 - (3.) Amalek was the grandson of Esau.
 - (4.) Esau hated his brother Jacob and wanted to kill him. Though he did not, that anger, hatred, bitterness, and murderous spirit carried on through the family line and the hatred grew each succeeding generation.
2. How does Satan get permission to sift God's people?
 - a. We give him permission through disobedience; Satan is the accuser of the brethren and he is a legalist.
 - b. God uses the tool of trouble to teach us total dependence on Him. When Jesus is all we have, we find out Jesus is all we need.
 - c. God wants His people to be worshipping warriors. The Israelites had to fight for every square inch of the promised land.

VI. Help Is On The Way – Esther 4

- A. Mordecai learns of the plot, puts on sackcloth, and goes about weeping loudly and bitterly.
- B. Esther sends him clothes, but he does not accept them. He sends her a message detailing the plot and urges her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him on behalf of her people.

- C. Esther is reluctant because she has not been before the king in 30 days, and she faces certain death if he does not receive her.
- D. Mordecai's response: "Who knows but you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"
- E. Esther calls for a three-day fast and says, "If I perish, I perish."
- F. Interpretation
 - 1. Mordecai, as the Holy Spirit, is grieved.
 - 2. Even so, we are not always in tune with the nature of the problem.
 - 3. We must continue to press in until He reveals it to us.
 - 4. Not only does the Holy Spirit reveal truth to us, the Holy Spirit also is our convictor.
 - 5. Why was Esther reluctant to go before the King?
 - a. Sometimes we get so busy serving the King that we forget to pray. Our service should flow out of prayer.
 - b. The King had not called her in 30 days.
 - (1.) God invented hide and seek. He sometimes removes His felt presence, though He is still as close as our next breath. He wants us to learn to walk by faith, not by feelings, not by sight.
 - (2.) In those times of hiddenness, God gives us the deepest revelation of Himself.
 - 6. The Holy Spirit is also our rememberer. Esther had forgotten her position in Christ.
 - 7. Fasting
 - a. When our bodies do not receive food, the process of death begins.
 - b. Spiritually, our bodies are put to death so our spirits can rise up.
 - c. This helps us get back in the Spirit, so we can see clearly our position in Christ.
 - 8. When Esther said, "If I perish, I perish," she had indeed already died to self by the time she completed her fast.
 - 9. She had begun to see herself as scripture describes in Isaiah 61:1-3, 7, 10

VII. Esther's Request to the King – Esther 5:1-8

- A. Esther puts on her royal robes and stands in the inner court of the palace.

- B. The king is sitting on his royal throne facing the entrance.
- C. He sees Queen Esther standing in the court, and he is pleased with her and holds out to her the golden scepter; she touches its tip.
- D. The King wants to know her request and offers her up to half the kingdom.
- E. Esther invites the king and Haman to a banquet. The king says, "Bring Haman at once."
- F. As they drank wine, the king asks her request. Her request is for them to join her tomorrow and she will answer the king's question.
- G. Interpretation
 - 1. Esther approaches the King, knowing who she is in Christ, clothed in a garment of salvation and a robe of righteousness.
 - 2. Our King faces the entrance of the throne room looking and waiting for us to arrive, and His heart is ravished by one glance of our eyes.
 - 3. He offers us His rod of authority and allows us to touch the cutting edge of what He is doing in the earth.
 - 4. He wastes no time coming to the banquet because He is delighted to spend time with us.
 - 5. The wine reminds us of our wedding night, a night of complete communion. No wonder He is willing to give us half the kingdom. But as his adopted children, we are His favorites, with all the rights and privileges of the first-born, a double portion inheritance, and we can never be disinherited.
 - 6. Our first and most powerful petition should be for the King's presence, not His presents.

VIII. Haman's Dilemma – Esther 5:9-6:1-14

- A. Haman brags to his family about his invitation to Esther's banquet.
- B. However, he has no satisfaction because the first one he saw after the banquet was Mordecai.
- C. He builds a gallows 75 feet high.
- D. That night, the king cannot sleep and orders the book of the record of his reign and discovers that Mordecai has never been honored for exposing Bigthana and Teresh.
- E. Haman is in the court to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai, and the king asks him what should be done for a man the king delights to honor.

- F. Thinking that man is himself, Haman suggests a royal robe the king has worn should be placed on the man, seat him on a horse the king has ridden, and lead him through the city streets proclaiming his honor throughout.
- G. The king tells Haman to do that for Mordecai.
- H. Haman's doom is near.
- I. Interpretation
 - 1. King Jesus never sleeps or slumbers.
 - 2. He has a scroll of remembrance (Malachi 3:16), and He remembers those who have honored His name.
 - 3. Satan has always coveted God's robe and crown, His position. It was pride that was found in him that caused his being expelled from heaven. (Ezekiel 28:17)
 - 4. Satan thought he had won when Jesus hung on the cross (gallows), but it was really the beginning of the victory.

IX. Esther's Second Banquet – Esther 7:1-10

- A. The king and Haman went to dine with Esther on the second day, and as they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther her request, even up to half the kingdom.
- B. Esther asked for her life and the life of her people.
- C. Esther revealed the adversary and enemy was Haman.
- D. Terrified, Haman fell upon Esther, but he was soon hooded and hung on the same gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.
- E. Interpretation
 - 1. Seek His face, receive His favor. Our Lord offers us extravagant favor, extravagant love.
 - 2. When we are seeking Him, our confidence is in Him to handle our enemies, and we can experience complete peace. On the other hand, His favor makes us fearful to our enemies.
 - 3. Unlike the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8), our God brings us justice and quickly. We do not need to seek Him as the widow before the unjust judge. We seek Him from the position of a bride.

X. Redemption – Esther 8-10

- A. King Xerxes gave Esther the estate of Haman.
- B. Mordecai received the King's signet ring.
- C. Once again Esther appeared before the King to intercede for her people.

- D. An order was written overriding Haman's order.
- E. Although Haman's order could not be revoked, the Jews were given the right to protect themselves and destroy any enemy that would come against them.
- F. The ten sons of Haman were killed.
- G. Mordecai worked for the good of His people.
- H. Interpretation
 - 1. Though God gives us the promised land, we still must fight for it.
 - 2. Our King has placed His signet ring on our finger when He gave us the right to use His name.
 - 3. The bride has no worries when the enemy has no sons. Finish the fight, and future generations can celebrate.
 - 4. We win spiritual battles by taking up the weapons of our warfare through passionate praise and indulgent worship.
 - 5. Fall in love with the King!

XI. Conclusion

- A. Esther's character: one of piety and humility; she was submissive, virtuous, unselfish, obedient, teachable; she was a risk taker.
- B. Things we can learn from her:
 - 1. Heed the Holy Spirit as if our lives depend on it.
 - 2. Keep our motives and hearts pure before the Lord.
 - 3. Focus on the King; delight in His presence.
 - 4. Cultivate intimacy with the Lord.
 - 5. Be quick to obey.
 - 6. Receive and accept God's scepter.
 - 7. Impart passion for the Lord to others.