

January 12, 2020 - Esther 1:5-22 - “King Ahasuerus is Humiliated”

Introduction

In 2014, a sinkhole opened up under the National Corvette Museum in Kentucky. It swallowed up eight vintage, irreplaceable Chevrolet Corvette sports cars. The automobiles were severely damaged some were beyond repair. There are dangerous sinkholes in life too. Alcohol can cause people to sink so far down and become despondent and so foolish that it is like we don't even know them. Such became the Persian King in chapter one of the book of Esther.

Review: The first four verses that we read last week are actually one sentence in the language of the Old Testament. We find in this passage the backdrop and King Ahasuerus who ruled from the years 486 to 465 B.C. Esther covers the years of 483–473 B.C. of Ahasuerus reign. The events in this book took place almost 500 years before the birth of Christ. The Jews had begun to return home after 70 years in Babylonian captivity. Bruce Wilkinson in his **Through the Bible** books tells us that the story of Esther's life fits between chapters 6 and 7 of Ezra, between the first return led by Zerubbabel and the second return that was led by Ezra.

I King Xerxes Displays His Majesty & Vulgar – Vv. 4-8

1. Ahasuerus means "The Esteemed Father" and was the title for this king. Secular history identifies this man as possibly being Xerxes the Great. It appears he was address by a duel title like your Royal Highness but it was more like Royal Esteemed Father. Interesting how men take a title that only belongs to God. Jesus declared call no man Father except your father in heaven. It shows us the arrogant pride and depravity of a power craving king. ---Matthew 23:9

2. First this king in verse 4 made a feast for all his officials and servants: The first feast was for all the government officials, here he showed off the glory and splendor of the riches of his kingdom. This feast lasted for 180 days. Next, in verse 5 the king made a feast lasting seven days for all the people who were present in Shushan the fortress: The second feast was for the citizens of the capital city, Sushan and it lasted for seven days. Verse six pays attention to the décor and verse seven to the expenses fine gold drinking vessel.

3. The basic reason for these feasts was, of course, pride. The king wanted to impress his subjects with a great display of his own wealth, power, majesty and generosity. This is typical of the way that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over the people. There is little doubt that Xerxes paid for this feast out of the public treasury. We witness an arrogant and pompous King who is full of pride and decadence thinking he is great and mighty but he will learn that God ordains Kings and deposes them too. May we be mindful God hates pride!

4. This party in accordance with the law as we read in verse #8, among some of the ancients, each guest was obliged to have a drink with the current round, or else leave the party. At this second feast, the king command that each man could drink as he pleased. We can only imagine what demoralizing state this took as men gave way to binge drinking alcohol.

II. The Queen is Disgraced vv. 9-11

1. Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women. This is the third feast in this chapter and was for the women in the royal palace, she was the wife of king Xerxes. On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, and the clear implication is that he was drunk and he commanded the seven eunuchs who served in his presence to bring Queen before the king, *wearing* her royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she *was* beautiful women. When the queen was summoned to appear before the king in this wrongful fashion, she refused to do so. Some ancient Jewish Targums reported that the King actually requested her to appear nude just wearing her crown.

2. Bible scholar Albert Barnes reported that this command was contrary to Persian customs. History tells us that King Xerxes was a boisterous man of emotional extremes, sensual, fickle, and a cruel despot whose actions were often strange and contradictory.

It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness. Pro 16:12

The request was not wise or proper or safe, she probably knew that he was drunk and thinking foolishly. The law of the Persians did not allow women to be seen in public; and particularly did not allow their wives to be with them at feasts, only their concubines and harlots. As for their wives, they were kept out of sight, at home.

3. Vashti was by no means a follower of the true God but she had enough wisdom and modesty to know that this was something she should not do. The Bible says that wives have a special responsibility to submit to their husbands--- Ephesians 5:22). Yet it does not mean that a wife must obey her husband if he commands her to sin. Every command to submit on a human level is conditioned by the higher obligation to obey God before man.

4. As a result of her refusal, in an outburst of anger and pride, the king made a choice from which he could not retreat -- that he would no longer have anything to do with her. Vashti was trying to do the right thing by disobeying the king's drunken request. Sadly, many women today put themselves in dangerous places with drunken men that mean them no good.

Application:

There is a lesson in this story that we all should avoid the dangers of alcohol.

1. 64% of Americans drink alcohol and 50% are 'regular drinkers' according to the CDC. MADD estimates that this year, 10,839 people will die in drunk-driving crashes one every 50 minutes. 64% of murders are associated with alcohol.

An estimated 88,000 people (approximately 62,000 men and 26,000 women⁵) die from alcohol-related causes annually, making alcohol the third leading preventable cause of death in the U. S. Three-quarters of the total cost of alcohol misuse is related to binge drinking.

2. Now having nothing good to report about drinking of alcoholic beverages, why do people indulge in such destructive behavior? Why would a person put a thief in their mouth to steal their brains? The Bible has admonitions for all to heed. Christians need to beware of its deceitful characteristics. There are many warnings in the scriptures. However, there is a gross misunderstanding of what is Biblical wine.

3. The word - wine, has many different Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words, which the majority of them have been indiscriminately translated as wine in our English Bibles. In Genesis 19:32 the word "yayin" is use when Noah drank fermented wine. (Gen. 27:28) This is the first recorded sin of drunkenness. Yayin is the Hebrew for fermented wine and is intoxicating drink, fermented or intoxicating liquor. It almost always presents a negative side of wine.

There are 14 different words in Hebrew and two in Greek translated into our English word "wine". These words describe grape juice, grape syrup, crush grapes, sour grapes the fruit on the vine, wine press, mixed wine fermented or intoxicating wine. Tee- roshe - Hebrew for fresh juice as just squeezed. The wisdom of King Solomon warns of this inclination of kings to abuse wine. Solomon also cautions all who drink wine.

- Proverbs 31:4-7 / Proverbs 21:17 / Proverbs 23:29-35

PR 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

III. The King Banishes the Queen vv. 12-22

1. Ahasuerus heeded this advice from Memucan who presented himself to be unreasonable and wrong. He should have honored the dignity of his Queen. It was the practice of the king in times of making edicts to consulted with his trusted seers, stargazers and astrologers, "those who supposedly understood the times". The king asked them, "What shall we do to the Queen?" The issue was troubling to him and others. But there was a price to pay.

2. Since she defied his royal decree, she was breaking the Law of the Medes and Persians. The world and the crowd will often disapprove when we try to do the right thing. And there can be a high price to pay for doing the right thing. Her royal estate was given to another.

They concluded that she had publicly disgraced the king. Memucan then made a recommendation for the king that he make another binding degree that couldn't be altered. He would give Vashti's royal position to "another who is better than she." God opens the door to place His chosen woman to serve His purposes, unknown to her and to all. The law would be circulated throughout the kingdom.

Conclusion:

I began telling you the story of the sinkhole opened up under the National Corvette Museum. One car was a Corvette, which rolled off the assembly line in 1992 it was the most valuable in the collection. Experts restored the car to mint condition. Although this little beauty was in horrible shape, it now looks as good as it did the day it was built. The old and damaged was made new. So can you, if drugs or alcohol have ruin your life God can make you anew.

--- **II Co. 5;17**

☐ **Pro 8:13**

The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil: **pride**, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

☐ **Pro 11:2**

When **pride** cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly *is* wisdom.

☐ **Pro 13:10**

Only by **pride** cometh contention: but with the well advised *is* wisdom.

☐ **Pro 14:3**

In the mouth of the foolish *is* a rod of **pride**: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

☐ **Pro 16:18**

Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

☐ **Pro 29:23**

A man's **pride** shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.