

*The Book of Esther:
This Is Our Time*

**A Collection of Sermons
on the book of Esther by
Dr. Cecil A. Fayard, Jr.**

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DEDICATION

This book is affectionately dedicated to Dr. I. D. Riddick, faithful preacher of the Gospel and defender of church truth, and long-time pastor of the Twinbrook Hills Baptist Church, Hamilton, Ohio.

Fayard Preface – the Book of Esther

Grab your Bible and get ready. Dr. Fayard, through this book, will lead you on a wonderful and practical journey of discovery in his “Studies in Esther.” Whether you are studying alone or with a group you will be encouraged and benefitted through each lesson. Whether you are an experienced Bible student or new beginner you will enjoy the spirit and substance of this book and be blessed.

The research throughout is evident and enlightening but not overwhelming and burdensome. He brings out the living scriptures and allows us to see the truths as God has presented them. Every note displayed drives us back into the word of God and compels us to become familiar with the entire book, the subject and all of its parts.

How refreshing to read and study with Dr. Fayard, a man who holds to the inspired and preserved word of God. He brings out the truth rather than inserting man’s philosophy where possible. He reaches into the words, the phrases, the meanings and the motives of God’s word. He challenges us to stand up and be counted. He presents Christ and our responsibilities as contemporary Christians in an ungodly society. He causes us to see our guide to God, the golden scepter of God’s grace, God’s guiding hand of providence and the justice of a supreme and sovereign God.

The order and display of the information in each lesson is easy to follow and instructive. If you are a teacher the outline is brief and easy to teach. If you are a student you’ll follow the story from the beginning and never get lost along the way. This book is a worthy companion to your Bible and we have an excellent teacher and advocate of truth. Enjoyment and education can be the only result of an investment of your time and energy in the use of this book.

William L. Brown

December 1st, 2009

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The Queen Who Refused Esther 1

INTRO: The book of Esther is an unusual book of the Bible. There is no mention of God, of prayer, or of religion. At the time the book of Esther was written, there was a strong anti-Semitic feeling in Persia.

Although God is not mentioned by name, He is in the wings directing all that is going on (Rm 8:28). The providential working of God is seen throughout this book of the Bible. At the very time when God needs people of faith to be used in His hands to save the Jewish race, Mordecai and Esther are in the right place at the right time (4:14).

Our story begins with a feast and a problem. The feast, as you shall see, could be called the Mother of all Feasts! It lasted 180 days plus. It was a big feast. Not only do we have a big feast in chapter one of Esther, we have a big problem: a marital problem that had international impact.

I. VSS. 1-8, THE SPREAD

A. Verse 1: ***Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)*** Ahasuerus is a title and not a name. This title means “high father,” “ruler,” or “venerable king worthy of reverence.”

1. When we hear the term Caesar, it is a title for a man, but not the man’s real name. There are other titles that illustrate this: Darius— “maintainer;” Artaxerxes— “great king, great.” A ruler of a great empire.
2. The vastness of the Persian Empire mentioned here has been confirmed by the excavation of the foundation stone of one Xerxes’ capital cities Persepolis.

B. Verse 2: ***That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,*** Because of the vastness of the kingdom that Ahasuerus ruled over, I

believe that he was Xerxes the Great of Persia.

1. Xerxes brought the Medo-Persian Empire to its zenith.
2. Xerxes made a great effort to wrest power from the west. He wanted the East to dominate the West.
3. He wanted to get the military leaders of the East lined up. That is the history of the feast we read about in verses 3-8.

C. Verse 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:***

Ahasuerus had been ruling for three years when he really put on the dog. Here it is the mother of all feasts.

1. He made this feast for all his princes and servants. There were 127 provinces. Each province brought a delegation.
2. Possibly two thousand people went

to this banquet. This was not a private supper party.

- D. Verse 4: ***When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.*** For six months, Ahasuerus showed off the riches and majesty of his glorious kingdom.
1. He did this to influence his princes.
 2. Louis XV talked to his exchequer about this banquet saying that he did not see how Ahasuerus had the patience for such a banquet. The exchequer, who handled the finances of Louis XV, said he did not know how he financed it.
 3. Influence buying is big business. In September of 1863, the Russian Atlantic fleet visited New York. Northerners rejoiced at this visit because the U.S. Navy was hard pressed and feared that Britain and

France would intervene for the South. In an effort to buy the favor of the Czar, many banquets were held. The most elaborate was held at the New York Academy of Music. “Hundreds of guests feasted on 12,000 oysters, 1,000 pounds of tenderloin, 300 pounds of salmon and 250 turkeys. All of it was washed down with 3,500 bottles of wine and champagne” (The Civil War, ed. Simons, 136).

- E. Verse 5: ***And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king’s palace;*** For the final seven days of feasting, Ahasuerus brings in many folks from the general public to the court of the garden.
- F. Verses 6-7: ***Where were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds***

were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble. And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king.

Note the wealth, the luxury, and royal character of this feast.

1. Ahasuerus had a reason for all of this finery, influence peddling, and selling his plans.
 2. He wanted to be the supreme world leader and could have, should have, and would have if God had not stopped him providentially.
- G. Verse 8: ***And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.*** We see here that even these pagan Oriental rulers who had absolute sovereignty did not force

anyone to drink. Today in our civilized world, many times, you have to drink or get out, participate or be ridiculed.

II. VSS. 9-12, THE SCRUPLE OF THE QUEEN

A. Vs. 9: ***Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.*** I

want you to take a good look at the name of this Queen for it will soon disappear not to surface again.

1. She made a feast for those wives whose husbands came to the king's feast. It was as J. Vernon McGee said: "...a feast for the woman's auxiliary" (31).

2. In those days, women could not go to the main banquet.

B. Verse 10: ***On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the***

presence of Ahasuerus the king, Ahasuerus is about to do a foolish thing, something he would not have done if he had not been drunk.

1. Here is a ruler who cannot control himself. A man not fit to be a ruler.
 2. Proverbs 16:32: *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*
 3. Robert E. Lee said, "I cannot consent to place in control of others one who cannot control himself" (Wilkins 249).
 4. In a heathen kingdom like that of Ahasuerus, you expect paganism; but that does not make it right. In a Christian nation, you should expect godly leadership.
- C. Verse 11: ***To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on.*** Because of his drunkenness, the king went beyond that which is accepted even in a

pagan nation: the open display of a man's wife. He had shown everything else about the kingdom; now, he goes too far. He wanted her to display her beauty, to display her body. There are things in marriage that are too intimate for public display.

- D. Verse 12: ***But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.*** The Queen refused to obey her husband. This took moral courage.
1. This started a scandal. The king is having trouble with his wife.
 2. According to the etiquette of that day, she did not have to come. She did not belong in such a gathering.
 3. The king had probably built everybody up about the beauty of the Queen; and now, the program has to be changed.

4. The question is asked: "Is he king or not?"

III. VSS. 13-22, THE SURGERY

- A. Verses 13-15: ***Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment: And the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom;) What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?*** Here we have an emergency meeting of the cabinet. A great military campaign was in the works and now this! The queen is not submissive.

1. This bride, Vashti, may have had reason to refuse, but the bride of Christ will never be asked to do

anything that is not right.

2. The bride of Christ, the church, is to be obedient. We are to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

B. Verses 16-18: ***And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath.*** In these verses, we have the reasoning of Memucan. Some say he was henpecked and didn't want his wife

to get anymore ideas. (ILL: A man came into the office boasting: “Last night my wife was down on her knees before me.” One skeptic said what were the circumstances. The man replied, “She was on her knees looking under the bed saying, ‘Come out from under there you coward!’”)

- C. Verse 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.***
- Here is Memucan’s recommendation, and it amounts to radical surgery.
1. I want you to know that what the king did was wrong, and it was unchristian. But remember this was a pagan king and kingdom.
 2. Ahasuerus and his cabinet made a new law, the law of the Medes and

Persians. The law they made is found in this verse.

3. This law reveals a hot headed leader. This is the same Xerxes whose navy was destroyed at Salamis after which in a fit of rage he beat the sea with his belt. Many leaders are abnormal like Hitler, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, etc.

- D. Verses 20-22: ***And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small. And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan: For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published***

according to the language of every people. The law was now established and published. It was as all of the law of the Medes and Persians, irrevocable.

1. We are reminded that God has laws that cannot be broken: they are irrevocable. Ezekiel 18:20: *The soul that sinneth, it shall die....* Romans 3:23: *All have sinned, and come short...* All have sinned, the soul that sins dies. That puts us in a terrible way, for God's law cannot change, and He will not change it. Yes: *The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom 6:23).
2. Friends, here is the answer to the dilemma of God's unchangeable law. Jesus took our place. He became sin for us.....*the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to give his life a ransom for many* (Mark 10:45). *For he [God] hath made him [Jesus] to be sin for us....* (II Cor