

Chapter Three

The First Lady

Esther 1:2-22

(As we begin this new chapter, may I point out to the reader that we are *still in the same sentence* that began in verse one of Esther chapter one. This *sentence* continues all the way *through* verse four!)

“That in those days...” [remember we are reading REAL history here, NOT a fairytale or made-up story] **“... when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace....”** Esther 1:2

A second glance at verse two (above) brings to light six words that address the issue of authority. Those words are: “...The king...sat on the throne...” King Ahasuerus was *sitting* on his royal throne, and **THE KING** was *telling others what to do*.

Since the beginning of time, men (and angels for that matter-Jude 6 and II Peter 2:4) have spurned TRUE authority seeking it for themselves; by *stealing* it away from God-“...the blessed and *only* POTENTATE, the King of kings...” (I Timothy 6:15) This truth is as old as Isaiah chapter fourteen.

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how are thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I WILL ASCEND into heaven, I WILL EXALT my throne...” [It’s all about The *Throne*, folks!-*who will rule over who?!*] **“...above the stars of God: I WILL SIT**

also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I WILL ASCEND above the heights of the clouds; I WILL BE LIKE the most High.” Isaiah 14:12-14

Discontented with his *own* eminence; Lucifer (also called “son of the morning”; Isaiah 14:12. See, Job 38:7.) became consumed with envy over The Most High’s Supremacy and Power. His twisted mind presumed that *theft* could gain him the ascendancy, so he set sail to *steal* it. I wonder; could this be when Lucifer invented the doctrine of stealing? It must have been *him*, right?!!! If he didn’t invent it, who did? NOT God-Deuteronomy 5:19! We know better than that!! If it wasn’t God, then it *must have been* the “...king over all the children of *pride*...” (Job 41:34) Don’t forget *his* children are said to be “...INVENTORS of *evil* things....” (Romans 1:30-notice pride in the context!)

The Egyptians of old *thought* they could follow Moses *across* the Red Sea. Moses had power with God; they did not. I wonder who was behind the scenes, coaxing them to cross over, *anyway*? *Wasn’t it someone who tried it before*? Could that be *why* “...the *face* of the deep is frozen...”? (Job 38:30; See, Genesis 1:2) Isn’t it frozen, to keep someone that doesn’t really belong on the other side of the “SEA” (Revelation 4:6) out? Scripture tells us, “By faith they...” [the Hebrews] “...passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians ASSAYING [attempting] to do were drowned....” (Hebrews 11:29) Like their Predecessor-who attempted to go where he didn’t belong, to seize The Throne [See Isaiah 14:12-14 again]; these Egyptians attempted to steal the power Moses had with God. This was the blunder that sealed *their* fate, as it also did *his*.

Spiritual pedigree became the subject of John chapter eight; whenever the Pharisees began to interrogate Jesus with the rudimentary question, “Where is thy father?” (Vs. 19) His response, *both* implicated the Pharisees *AND* their Ancient Ancestor; by insisting, “Ye are of *YOUR* father the

devil...He was a murderer from *the beginning*, and abode not in truth, because there is no truth in him...*he is a liar*, and *the father* of it....” (John 8:44) We may conclude then, that sometime in the BEGINNING, THE Father of Lies (THE False Prophet of II Peter 2:1) allured a third of the angels to attempt Godhood, by *lying* to them. [Notice the context of II Peter 2:3 and 4: “...*Covetousness*...”! They wanted something that wasn’t theirs to have, and tried to get it, by using *feigned* (*false*) words or LIES!]

In Genesis 3:5, we have the *record* of The Father of Lies, *lying* to Adam’s helpmeet. When the Serpent said to Eve, “...ye SHALL BE *as gods*...”; he was actually calling God a liar! (Compare Genesis 2:17 with 3:15) *He knew it couldn’t be done*-remember, he was the first one to attempt it, and was cast down BECAUSE of it (Luke 10:18), *so he invented a lie*. This lie, not only sealed the fate of one-third of the angels, but also all (all but *One*-that is) of Eve’s offspring. ONE lie resulted in the eternal DAMNATION of billions of people. No wonder The Lord Jesus declared this *Liar*, “A MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING”!

Whether they know it or not, those who are “...against *the knowledge of God*...” (II Corinthians 10:5), have joined in *Lucifer’s Rebellion*. This bunch of thieves; are a battalion of renegades, whose profession is, “...*not...to retain God in their knowledge*...” (Romans 1:28) Could that be why they seek to *steal* His Authority?! When the time is right, this reckless band ofimps will find out that all their efforts were ineffectual and all in vain!

We Bible believers, on the other hand, receive God’s command to *obey* authority. Circulating around the same time [60 A.D.] Saint Peter’s dictate to “...Honour the king...” (I Peter 2:17) was written; Saint Paul commanded “...every soul...” to “...be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God...” (Romans 13:1) All true authority BEGINS with “...the *incorruptable* God...” (Romans 1:23), and ENDS with our *willingness* to capitulate.

Even though Lucifer today has been granted a *temporary* rule as “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4), and “...the prince of the power of the air...” (Ephesians 2:2), the Lord ultimately continues to rule from “...the throne of the Majesty in the heavens...” (Hebrews 8:1) The Psalmist confirmed this truth; when he said, “THE LORD reigneth, he is clothed with MAJESTY...” (Psalms 93:1) In other words, *His Majesty* is ruling from the third Heaven (coined, in Evangelical circles: “God is still on The Throne!”). And when the thing we call time unwinds itself completely, “...The MIGHTY GOD, The EVERLASTING FATHER, The PRINCE OF PEACE...” (Isaiah 9:6), will then assuredly be triumphant at last! (Please read Ephesians 1:9-12 to see His *final* plan!)

A Real Show-off

His Majesty Ahasuerus is on the throne (Please read verse 3 and 4), and his grandeur and magnificence are at optimum. Now that two full years (as king) have passed, pomp and circumstance was well in order. It was time to show off “...the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty...” (Esther 1:4)

Let me ask you a question. If it took this *earthly* King “...an hundred and fourscore days...” to show off his bank account, how long do you suppose it will take The King of the *Universe* to show off His? Truly, our God is an AWESOME God!! This story reminds me of King Solomon “...in all his glory...” (Matthew 6:29), right down to the *golden vessels*! (Esther 1:7; see I Kings 10:21)

Let me ask you a second question. If *you* went down to the bank today, to check on *your* personal holdings, how long do you think it would take you to find out *your* worth? [Mine, might take a while, NOT for what I have, but for what I *owe*!] Since most of us are (let's just say) poor; most of us would be embarrassed to see how *quickly* they could count it. These days, it can be done *over the phone*, in seconds! Now, add a vehicle to your holdings; add a home; add some stocks. Your portfolio is getting BIGGER. It might even consist of a few pages by now. Continue adding some; land, cattle, businesses, and a government with a big army to protect it, and you'll see what took this King SO LONG to show off "the RICHES of his *glorious kingdom*"! I Kings chapter ten will help you understand *why* this kind of wealth cannot be measured *in a day*. [In this computer age, if we tried to measure the wealth of America, it couldn't be done. We have an *idea* of what we're *worth* (like the GNP), but our holdings are too vast and complicated to be exact!]

If Ahasuerus, who is ruling "...over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces...", is a type of The King, ruling from the third Heaven; think of all the wealth our God actually *does* possess. The Lord declares that "...every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills...for the world is mine..."! (Psalms 50:10 and 12) When we consider the vastness of His Empire, and the minutest detail of His Creation, can you imagine the glorious riches of His Kingdom? Now *THAT*, will be a presentation! And, may I remind you, someday, you and I will PERSONALLY be privileged to witness *our* King's wealth and holdings for ourselves-with our very own eyes. WELLLLL GLOOORY!!!!!! Take a few moments to ponder *that*!!

Let me ask you another question. Why *do we* have holdings, in the first place? Don't we have them, to SHOW THEM OFF?!

My family and I just got a new(er) van. Even though the bank owns it till it's paid off-*tomorrow*, I get to show it off-*TODAY*!! A few weeks after we bought our van, my dealership held a small car show. (They were giving away free hot dogs, and all the "bug juice" anyone with a good thirst could drink. With six hungry children in tow, AND a new monthly van payment, I thought, the least I could do was attend.) This *show* consisted of about a hundred *proud* owners of mostly older classic cars. After conversing for a while (with a hot dog in one hand and a Gospel tract in the other) with quite a few of these men and women, I began to realize how much time, money, and effort it takes to restore these vehicles back to their original condition. All this painstaking work was/is done for ONE REASON. To *show them off*! This show put me in mind of a day yet to come, in which a pure and perfect Creator will *recreate* (II Peter 3:13) His original creation back to its *original* condition. He then will populate it with *recreated* beings, called, "the Sons of God." Let me ask you, won't it be *Heaven* in all its splendor and beauty, when The King, in ETERNITY, *shows-off* His boundless wealth and infinite holdings?! Now *THAT*, will be a *presentation*! And *THAT*, will be A SHOW!! May I say, "We *ain't* seen nothing yet!"

"...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the THINGS..." [tangible-you CAN touch them!]
"...that God HATH prepared..." I Corinthians 2:9

"...The breadth; the length, and the depth, and the height..." [all tangible] **"...world WITHOUT end..."** Ephesians 3:18 and 21b

“That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one ALL THINGS...” [tangible] **“...in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth...”** Ephesians 1:10

It's a King's *right* to be a show-off. And, what greater thing to show-off to the kingdom, than his Queen!

“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.” Esther 1:11

By the way, there's another King waiting to show off His wife, too. What's his name? King *JESUS!*

“...Come hither, I will SHEW thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.” Revelation 21:9b
“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may PRESENT you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” II Corinthians 11:2

Why does the Apostle Paul want to present us as a chaste virgin to Christ? So He (*Christ*) can SHOW US OFF!! Like the people in the car show, Paul didn't build these vehicles himself, but he sure learned from *The Manufacturer* how to restore them back to their original condition, and clean them up as good as new!

After showing-off his kingdom for six full months (vs. 4), this great King was still in a show-off mood. He decided to throw a party in the palace that would last for “...seven days...” “Both...great and small¹...were present in Shushan the palace...And they gave them drink in vessels of gold...and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king.” (Esther 1:7)

What's in the Bottle?
or
Drunk? I Trow Not!

When answering His own supposition to the Disciples about a servant's *place* of service, Jesus used the term “I trow not”. (Luke 17:9b) And with *His* permission, I too would like to use that term, after raising, and then answering my *own* question. When reading verses five to ten, of Esther chapter one, we find that the King and many of the guests were drinking “...royal wine in abundance...” (Here's the question...) *Did this King get drunk?* Listening to most commentators and preachers on this subject, one would think that the Gospel according to Esther is: “The King got *drunk*. Then in a drunken stupor, he *forced* Vashti to come before him and his buddies to *dance a lewd dance*.” They believe that Vashti was justified; when she refused to come to this “churlish” (their thoughts, *not* mine-I Samuel 25:3) King. *My* answer to the above allegations will be a *direct* quote from our Wonderful Saviour. “I trow not”-“I think

¹ Esther 1:5-This expression is *reversed* in Revelation 20:12. One *group*, stood before the King for *feasting*, and the other *group*, will stand before Him for *judgment!*

NOT; I don't believe so; you got it wrong!" Whatever expression you choose to use, it's clear, someone did NOT *read* the story that God *wrote* in Esther chapter one!

In order to get the record straight; I would like to take a few moments to refute what *some* are saying:

1. The Bible does NOT *say* that the King served or drank *fermented* drink.

2. The Bible does NOT *say* that anyone got *drunk*. It says, "...the heart of the king was *merry* with wine...." (Esther 1:10) In Psalms 104:14 and 15, the psalmist says, "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth FOOD out of the earth; And WINE that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." What I hope you see here, is, that God said wine is for food and enjoyment that leads to making man's heart glad. The verse says, "...wine that maketh *glad the heart...*", NOT, "wine that maketh him *DRUNKEN*"!

3. The King had a *specific reason* for calling Vashti. It was to SHOW OFF her beauty (which I just commented on).

4. *If* this King was drunk, he made some very *sober* decisions when Vashti refused to come. He went to the *wise* men, who knew the times (vs13); CONSCIOUSLY (not drunk), and CONSCIENTIOUSLY (governed by his good conscience), taking the law under advisement, following the recommended precepts of his cabinet. (Vss. 15 and 21)

5. Again, *if this King was drunk*, he did so "...according to the law..." (vs. 8), and like I pointed out in #4, he *upheld* the law in *that* condition.

6. It breaks the type. (See chapter one of this book).

I believe this King was a very considerate King (READ vs. 8); especially since he considered his wife and other women, by letting Vashti have *her* feast in "...the royal house which *belongeth* to..." *him*. (Vs. 9) I also believe this King loved his wife. He loved her so much, that at the feast, when he got to braggin' about all the beautiful *things* in his kingdom, for no apparent reason, he switched topics, and started talking about her! It went something like this: "Hey boys, you see all them 'white, green and blue, hangings' over there, and the 'purple to silver rings and pillars of marble'?" (Vs. 6) "They ain't nothin' like the beauty of *my* Vashti. Her *flesh* is exquisite!"

By the Way...

Like Jehovah, who has seven spirits before *His throne* (Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; and 5:6, also see Isaiah 11:2), this King had *seven* chamberlains that served in *his* "...presence...." (Esther 1:10) He also had *seven* princes "...which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom...." (Vs. 14) As I stated in my opening chapter, there is such a tremendous resemblance between these two Kings, that anyone who is genuinely seeking the truth, cannot, in all good conscience, assign this character any other way! *By the way*, notice that this King gives a feast for *SEVEN* days. That number (the number seven) is so closely connected with Jehovah, this author need not comment on this matter any further. (Read Leviticus 23; Joshua 6; II Kings 5; and The Book of Revelation!)

Vashti in All Her Beauty

"But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment...." Esther 1:12a

Scripture candidly sums up Vashti's *true* character in one word: REFUSED. "Vashti REFUSED"! Do you know, the easiest way to spot *the flesh*, is to watch its reaction, when the King *calls*?! It might not be the King per se; it might be someone in authority, like a husband's authority over a wife. That was not only an example; it was the CRUX of the problem! Read verses 16 to 18, and 22!!!! The problem with Vashti is not so much that she refused the King's commandment, but that she rebelled and refused her HUSBAND'S commandment (in context)! I realize that pointing this out might upset more than just a few. But the truth is, mankind's downfall started *the day* Eve knew *more* than her husband-or *thought so*, anyway. Don't forget that God created Eve with a *slightly* different nature than He did when He made man. (You remember, don't you? She was taken, NOT from the *dirty* ground, like man was, but from his side. Genesis 2:21 and 22. How does that nursery rhyme go again? Oh yeah, now I remember... "What are little girls made of? Sugar, and spice, and everything NICE...." But the "boys", if you remember, are made of "snakes, and snails, and puppy dog tails...") Since she was the "weaker vessel" (I Peter 3:7), she was more susceptible-than the man was-to external manipulation. If you read the first six verses of Genesis chapter three; you'll see that the woman was deceived, and NOT the man.

"And Adam was NOT deceived, but the woman BEING deceived was in the transgression." I Timothy 2:14

It was Eve (NOT Adam) who "...saw that the tree was good for food..." (Genesis 3:6a) She followed her flesh. Vashti's (I mean *EVE'S*) first response, was to follow her flesh OVER the King's (God's) commandment.

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Genesis 2:17

You might object here, by saying that Eve wasn't created when God uttered those faithful words. My response? Read verse twenty-three of chapter two. "And Adam...", Eve's husband, "...said this is now *bone of my bones*, and *flesh of my flesh*: she shall be called Woman..." Do you *honestly* think that Adam FORGOT to tell *his newly created flesh and bone* WIFE the one and *only* commandment that God gave him-that was potentially detrimental to her life? Listen, Eve knew all about this commandment, and said so, in Genesis 3:2 and 3!!! Eve didn't only refuse God's commandment; she refused her HUSBAND'S. Vashti is no different than Eve. When she refused her husband's command, she unwittingly refused the KING'S. (In this case, they were the SAME person. Vashti refused both the King, and her husband, simultaneously.)

King Ahasuerus loved his first wife; just like Jehovah God loved His. Israel's loving Husband repeatedly warned her of the futility and impending danger she would experience, if she refused His words. This was Jehovah's weaker vessel. He knew, when she was far away from His side-like Eve was, in relation to Adam²-she could easily be distracted by a few whispering words. With the whisper (in *her* ear) of every new

² And by the way, where was Adam, when Eve was "having dialogue" (Expression-circa 1980's) with A SNAKE?

temptation, *Israel* needed a *reminder* not to fall away, too. Listen to what her loving Husband gently says to her...

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye REFUSE...” [there’s *that* word again] **“...and REBEL, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”** Isaiah 1:18 to 20

Any *fair-minded* individual, reading the above account, should conclude that Jehovah wanted what was best for His bride. If *she refused* to listen though, then the only other alternative, from a *loving* Husband, would *have to* be (His) chastening.³

“But they REFUSED to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should NOT HEAR. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should HEAR the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a GREAT WRATH from the LORD of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts: But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all nations....” Zechariah 7:11-14a. Also see, Ezekiel chapter five.

The above documentation fits exactly with Esther chapter one. The King’s *first* wife rebelled and refused him (vs. 11), making his only recourse, wrath (vs. 12) and BANISHMENT. (Vs. 14)

“If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him...That Vashti COME NO MORE before king Ahasuerus....” Esther 1:19a

You see the *ONLY* remedy for the flesh, is to get rid of it. Banishment! Circumcision!!

“...And let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.” Esther 1:19b

Once the flesh has been *dethroned*, it will make room for someone “...that is *better* than she...” That someone is “...the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness....” (Ephesians 4:24) According to the Apostle Paul, before someone can put *on* the new man, they must *first* “...put *off*...the old man...”, because it “...is corrupt according to the deceitful LUSTS....” (Ephesians 4:22)

We, who are Born Again Christians, would be wise to keep Vashti, *who has been banished from the kingdom*, at a distance. Though banished, she still likes to hang around and stir up trouble (especially when no one is looking)! In Romans 7:18 to 25, Saint Paul refers to this situation as a battle that is “warring” in our members. When no one is looking; the flesh wants to take its former position again on the throne, *next to the King*.

³ Men; don’t start beating up your wives! Remember; Jehovah was *both* Husband and *Father* to Israel. As her loving Father, He had a *right* to chasten her.

Every Christian struggling with the flesh should memorize the above portion of Scripture, to help them understand this battle.

Anger

Before I close this chapter, I would like to address an important subject mentioned many times in Esther's first chapter. That subject is anger. A few pages back (in this book), do you remember me quoting, Zechariah chapter seven? It said, "...therefore came a great WRATH *from* the LORD of hosts..." A companion verse might be verse twelve of Esther chapter one. That verse says, "...therefore was the king VERY WROTH, and his ANGER *burned* in him."

With all the emphasis these days on *the love of God*, most people *think* that LOVE is His ONLY attribute. Also included in His repertoire, is HATRED, ANGER, and WRATH. Can a *Holy* God get angry you ask? Well yes, if you believe what Scripture says on this subject.

"Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies; thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine ANGER: the LORD shall swallow them up in HIS WRATH, and the fire shall devour them."

Psalms 21:7 and 8

The truth is, Jehovah gets angry; His Son gets angry (Mark 3:5 for example), and He tells *us* to get angry! (Ephesians 4:26) WHEN A *HOLY* GOD GETS ANGRY: He gets angry at the right *thing*, at the right *time*, and His anger endures for the proper *duration of time*. *If God gets angry, so should we!* We should get angry at THE SAME THINGS that make Him angry.

Since God is Holy, He hides His face from unrighteousness and sin. (Jeremiah 33:5) He won't tolerate it, anymore than Ahasuerus accepted Vashti's sin. Remember, her refusal to do right, was the catalyst that brought on the King's anger to begin with. But more importantly, *that* anger did two good things that day. It stopped sin in its tracks, and banished THE *FIRST*LADY from the kingdom (making *room* for righteousness-Esther to step in).

THINK ABOUT IT: Without the King's anger, there would have been no Book of Esther-The *SECOND* Queen.