

***“The World Passeth Away”***  
***Esther 1:1-9***

**Introduction:**

1. Please Head With Me This Morning To The First Chapter:
    - Of The Book Of Esther!
      - Esther Chapter 1 - Where We Will Begin Our Study Together:
        - Of This Book Of Hope!
          - Hope That Is Based On God’s Providence & Even On God’s Presence With His People!
    - And Even Though We Do Not Find:
      - The Name Of God Anywhere In This Book:
        - The “Fingerprints” Of God Can Be Found All Over It!
  2. Last Sunday:
    - We Looked At Some Of Those “Fingerprints!”
      - The Fingerprint Of God’s People!
      - The Fingerprint Of God’s Enemies!
      - And The Fingerprint Of God’s Law!
    - And Wherever You Find These Fingerprints:
      - There You Find Evidence:
        - Of The Presence Of God Himself!
          - And That Gives God’s People Hope!
            - Even When It Feels Like Or Even Seems Like God Is Missing!
  3. Well - This Evidence Is Important:
    - Especially When We Come To The First Chapter:
      - Of Esther - Because It Is All About Another King:
        - A Persian King By The Name:
          - Ahasuerus!
      - Most Likely - King Ahasuerus Was:
        - One Of Persia’s Most Powerful Rulers:
          - Known As Xerxes The Great!
        - And The First 9 Verses Of The Book Of Esther:
          - Describe His Greatness:
            - In The Eyes Of Men!
  4. Let’s Read These Verses Together:
    - Esther 1:1-9 - “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:)/ 2 That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, / 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: / 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. / 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; / 6 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. / 7 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. / 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. / 9 Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus!”
      - These Verses – All About The Greatness Of King Ahasuerus:
        - Were Meant To Impress!
          - Its As If The Inspired Writer Of This Book Wants Us To “Feel” The Same Way The Persians Would Have Felt When They Met The King!
- \* We Learn About:
1. ***His Great Power – As King: (1:1)***
    - In Verse 1 - We Are Told That He “Reigned!”
      - He Reigned - “From India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:!)!”
        - We See From This:
    - The Scope Of His Reign!
      - His Kingdom Was Vast!
        - An Area That Covered Most Of The Middle East:

- And Made Its Way Into Two Continents!
  - And He Was Setting His Sights On A Third Continent - Europe
  - And The Prize At That Time - Greece!
- His Kingdom Was Also Growing!
  - In Daniel 6:1 - We Learn That A Previous King:
    - Darius The Mede - The Empire Was Made Up Of Only 120 Provinces!
  - And Now - Under Ahasuerus - Or Xerxes The Great:
    - It Consisted Of 127 Provinces!
- And Millions Of People Were Under The Reign Of This King:
  - Including The People Of God & Their Homeland, The Land Of Israel! Also:
- The Strength Of His Reign!
  - Ahasuerus Was The Sole Emperor:
    - And Was Likely The One Mentioned To Daniel In Daniel 11:2 - "Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia!"
  - This Lines Up Very Well With What We Know:
    - About Xerxes The Great:
      - Who Was "Far Richer" Than Any Of The Previous Kings & Emperors!
      - And Who "By His Strength Through His Riches" Attempted To Extend His Reign Into Greece:
        - But Failed - And Was Driven Back At Thermopylae!
  - He Took Upon Himself The Titles:
    - "Great King, King of Kings and King of Nations!"
- His Power Was Meant To Impress!
  - And It Is Easy For Us:
    - To Be Impressed By Such Great Power:
      - Isn't It?
  - **IE:** We've Even Seen This Going On In New York - Where Scores Of People Have Taken The Opportunity To Meet With The President-Elect! Why? Because Of His New Power!

\* We Also Learn About:

2. ***His Great Prosperity – As King: (1:2-4)***

- In Verse 4 - We Are Told That He "Shewed the Riches Of His Glorious Kingdom And The Honor Of His Excellent Majesty Many Days!"
  - He Wanted To "Show Off" His Greatness:
    - And All That He Had To His People!
      - There Are Some Historians That Trace This Back To The Time When Xerxes The Great Was Just About To Begin His Military Campaign Into Greece - And He Wanted To Impress His People & Convince Them That He Could Wage Such A Difficult & Dangerous War!
  - Where Did He Show Off?
    - 1:2 - In "Shushan The Palace" – Also Known As "Susa!"
      - This Was Known As The "Winter Palace" Of The Persian Kings!
        - Which Meant That The King Had Other Homes & Palaces!
        - And Each Home Was Designed For The Exclusive Comfort Of The King!
  - How Did He Show Off?
    - 1:3 - "He Made A Feast!"
      - A Large & Very Long-Lasting Banquet:
        - With, What Would Be Described Today As, An "Open Bar!"
    - People Could Eat & Drink The Very Best Of What The King Had:
      - And Could Eat & Drink As Much As They Wanted To!
        - Imagine The Cost Of All Of This!
        - Imagine The Waste Of All Of This!
        - And It Went On For 180 Days!
  - To Whom Did He Show Off
    - 1:3 - "Unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him!"
      - Everybody Who Was Anybody In The Kingdom:
        - Was Invited To This Great Feast!
      - This List Seems To Include:
        - Noble Leaders!

- Political Leaders!
- And Military Leaders!
- And Even Later - He Invited The Common Folk:
  - For A 7 Day Feast - In Verse 5!
- What Did He Show Off?
  - 1:4 - "He shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days!"
    - He Wanted To Show Off:
      - The Wealth Of The Land:
        - And The Greatness Of Persia!
        - The "Riches Of His Glorious Kingdom!"
    - But Even More:
      - He Wanted To Show Off:
        - The Wealth Of Their Leader:
          - And His Personal Greatness!
          - "Look At Me!"
    - And So For 6 Months:
      - There Was A Perpetual Party In Persia!
  - And His Prosperity Was Meant to Impress!
    - That There Was Noone As Great As Their King!
      - Isn't It Easy For Us As Well:
        - To Be Impressed By Such Great Prosperity?
    - **IE:** Look At That Persons Home / Look At That Other Persons Car / Look At How Much They Have - Seems Like They Don't Have A Care In The World!

\* We Also Learn About:

**3. His Great Pleasure – As King: (1:5-8)**

- In Verses 5-8 - At The Final Feast Held For All Of His People:
  - We See That The King Offered Them:
    - Only The Best!
  - The Best In Dignities!
    - 1:5 - "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!"
      - The King Wanted All Of His People In Shushan:
        - To Know What It Felt Like To Be A King:
          - Even If It Was Just For A Few Days!
      - They Ate Like Kings!
        - They Drank Like Kings!
          - They Were Served Like Kings!
          - And They Would Have Loved Every Minute Of It!
    - The Best In Decorations!
      - Imagine The Color & The Beauty:
        - Of The King's Garden!
          - 1:6 - "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!"
      - Everything Was Designed To Bring:
        - The Highest Pleasure For The People!
          - A Feast For Their Tongues!
          - A Feast For Their Eyes!
    - The Best In Delights!
      - At Least As They Would Define Delight!
        - 1:7 - "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!"
    - And All Of This Pleasure Was Meant To Impress!
      - And It Did!
        - As The People Relaxed Under The Shade Of Those Curtains Made Of The Royal Colors!
        - As They Reclined On Soft, Plush Couches, Made Of Gold & Silver!
        - As They Drank To Their Heart's Content From Specially Designed Golden Goblets!
      - 1:8 - "That they should do according to every man's pleasure!"

- They Would Have Thought – “What A Life!”
  - And, If We’re Honest, We Probably Have Thought Like That A Time Or Two As Well!
  - What A Great Life That Would Be!
- What An Impression This King Made On His People!
  - With His Great Power!
  - With His Great Prosperity!
  - With His Great Pleasure!
  - Are *We* Impressed?

**Conclusion:**

1. I Find It Interesting That:
  - The King Used The Same Devices:
    - To Impress His People – As The Devil Uses:
      - To Impress & Distract Us!
  - 1 John 2:15-16 - “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. / For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world!”
    - In Verse 16 - John Lists 3 Kinds Of Pleasure:
      - That The World Uses To Allure Us / Tempt Us / Distract Us From What Really Matters!
  - The “Lust Of The Flesh” Is Like:
    - All The Food & The Wine:
      - That The King Of Persia Offered To His People!
  - The “Lust Of The Eyes” Is Like:
    - All The Beautiful Things:
      - That The King Of Persia Put Before The Eyes Of His People!
  - And The “Pride Of Life” Is Like:
    - When The King Of Persia Made His People:
      - Feel Like Kings – Even Though In Just One Short Week – They Would Be Back To Being His Subjects & Servants!
2. Like The Persians:
  - It Is So Easy For Us To Get Caught Up Into All This:
    - And Become “Impressed” By All The Supposed “Greatness” Of What This World Has To Offer!
      - But What Do We Find In 1 John 2:17 - “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever!”
  - “The World Passeth Away!”
    - And All Of Its “Greatness!”
      - Just Like The Greatness Of This King Of Persia!
        - After All, Where Is He Now? Where Is The Empire Of Persia Now?
    - Even In 1:8-9 - We Find Seeds Of Just How Limited His Greatness Really Was!
      - In Verse 8 - The Extent Of The Emperor’s Control:
        - Was Even To Make A Law To Not Compel Someone To Drink! How Trivial! How Impractical! How Many Would Have Been “Compelled To Drink” Anyways?
      - And In Verse 9 - We Meet Queen Vashti:
        - Who Will Show Just How Limited The Power This Great King Really Was!
  - “The World Passeth Away!”
    - **IE:** In 1971, The Shah Of Iran, Sought To Imitate This Kind Of Great Feast When He Invited Dignitaries From All Over The World To Celebrate With Him The 2500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Of The Founding Of The Great Persian Empire, Under Cyrus The Great! Everything Was Meant To Impress! Even Our Vice President, Spiro Agnew, Was In Attendance! And Yet, The Palace Where They Held Their Celebration Was Just A Ruin! And The King – Cyrus – Was Still In His Tomb!
      - And So It Will Be If We Build Our Lives:
        - On The Things That Impress Us In This World!
3. Because The Greatness Of Ahasuerus:
  - And The So-Called Great Things Of This World:
    - Cannot Compare To The:
      - Greatness & Goodness Of God & Of Our Savior Jesus Christ!
        - Psalm 145:3 - “Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable!”
  - Are You Impressed:

- With The Great Power That We See In This World?
    - Don't Be!
      - Because God's Power Is Greater!
  - After All - Ahasuerus Would Never Have Been King:
    - If God Had Not Put Him In That Position:
      - And For His Own Purpose!
  - And The Reign Of Jesus Christ:
    - Is Incomparable!
      - Even "Xerxes" - Who Was Called The "King Of Kings" Will Bow Before The True "King Of Kings & Lord Of Lords" One Day!
    - Philippians 2:10-11 - "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; / And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!"
  - Remember - "The World Passeth Away!"
    - Don't Be Impressed With All The So-Called Greatness & Power Of This World!
  - Are You Impressed:
    - With The Great Prosperity That We See In This World?
      - Don't Be!
        - Because God's Is Greater!
    - The Riches Of Christ:
      - Do Not Consist Of Money Or The Materials Money Can Buy:
        - But Consists Of True, Heavenly Wealth!
          - Ephesians 1:3 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!"
      - When You Have Jesus Christ In Your Life:
        - As Your Savior - He Is Your Wealth!
          - 2 Corinthians 8:9 - "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich!"
    - Remember - "The World Passeth Away!"
      - Don't Be Impressed With All The So-Called Greatness & Prosperity Of This World!
  - Are You Impressed:
    - With The Great Pleasures That We See In This World?
      - Don't Be!
        - Because God's Is Greater!
    - The Pleasures Of This World Are Temporary!
      - The Pleasures Of God Are Timeless!
        - Psalm 16:11 - "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore!"
    - Because - Through Christ:
      - You Are Not Made To Just "Feel" Like A King For A Week:
        - But You Are Made - "Kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!" (Revelation 1:6)
    - Remember - "The World Passeth Away!"
      - Don't Be Impressed With All The So-Called Greatness & Pleasures Of This World!
4. No Matter How "Great" This World Seems To Be:
- There Is Always Something - Rather Someone Greater!
  - And So - We Must Look To & Live For:
    - Him! The Lord Jesus Christ!
      - "Christ's Kingdom Is, Or Shall Be, Far Larger Than This, When The Kingdoms Of The World Shall All Become His; And It Shall Be Everlasting!" (Matthew Henry)

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