

“The Wisdom Of This World”
Esther 1:10-22

Introduction:

1. Please Head Back With Me To The Old Testament Book:
 - Of Esther - Esther Chapter 1:
 - Where We Began Our Series Through This Book:
 - Last Sunday Morning!
 - In Chapter 1 - We Are Introduced:
 - To One Of The Major Characters Of This Book:
 - The Mighty King Of Persia:
 - King Ahasuerus – Who Is Likely:
 - The Fourth Major Leader Of The Persian Empire - Xerxes The Great!
 2. And “Great” Is Exactly How He Would Have:
 - Wanted Us To See Him!
 - He Was Great In His Power!
 - With An Empire Extending From India To Ethiopia!
 - He Was Great In His Prosperity!
 - And Able To Throw A Six-Month Party For All Of The Officials Of His Realm!
 - And He Was Great In His Pleasure!
 - And Wanted His Subjects To Feel Like & Live Like Kings:
 - Even If It Was Just For A Week!
 3. And As We Read Through The First 9 Verses Of This Chapter:
 - It Was Easy For Us To Feel “Impressed” At:
 - The Greatness Of This King!
 - But - As We Will See This Morning:
 - As Great As He Was In His Power & His Prosperity & His Pleasure:
 - He Was **Not** That Great In His Perception & In His Wisdom!
 - And Even His Power Was Not As Great:
 - As He Thought It Was!
 - Because - When He Attempted To:
 - “Show Off” His Greatest Possession:
 - His Queen - The Beautiful & Incomparable Vashti:
 - He Met His Match!
 4. And We Read Of This In:
 - Esther 1:10-12 - “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, / 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. / 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!”
 - What A Change:
 - From All Of The Pomp & Pleasure Of The Last Six Months In The Palace Of Shushan!
 - It Was All Suddenly Brought To A Halt!
 - All Because Of The King’s Foolish Desire To Further Display His Greatness Through The Person Of The Queen!
 5. Now - At The Time - The King Probably Thought:
 - This Was A Good Idea!
 - He Was Still Trying To Impress His Own People:
 - With His Own Greatness!
 - Yet - “Professing Himself To Be Wise, He Became A Fool!”
- * The King Thought He Was Making A Wise Choice!
 - But Instead - He Was Showing:
1. ***His Foolish Desires:***
 - In 1:10-12 – The Foolish Desires Of The King!
 - As Great As He Was:
 - His Desire Was To Show Himself Even Greater:
 - By Showing Off His Queen:

- As His Greatest Possession & Pleasure!
- Not Only Was King Ahasuerus:
 - Great In His Power:
 - He Was Also Great In His Pride!
- And What We See In These Verses:
 - Is A “Perfect Storm” Of Foolishness!
 - We See:
- The Foolish Cause:
 - 1:10 - “When The Heart Of The King Was Merry With Wine!”
 - In Other Words - The King Was:
 - “Under The Influence” Of His Wine!
 - He Was Drunk!
 - And Even Though The Rule Was:
 - That Noone Was To Be Compelled & Forced To Drink:
 - That Wasn’t A Problem For The King!
 - “Wine . . . Transformed Him From A King To A Clown!” (George Lawson)
 - And This Continues To Happen!
 - Now - Even Though His Judgment Was Definitely Impaired By His Drinking:
 - It Really Wasn’t The Main Cause Of His Foolishness!
 - The Main Cause Was His Own Heart Of Sin & Pride!
 - And That Is What Caused Him To Issue:
- The Foolish Command:
 - 1:11 - “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!”
 - This Was Meant To Be A Very Prominent & Very Public Display Of The Queen:
 - Before Him & All Of The Rest Of The People At The Feast:
 - Who Were All Men! (1:9)
 - His Command Was Not Meant:
 - To Bring Her Honor:
 - But To Bring Him More Honor & Likely To Provoke The Men There To Lust & Jealousy!
 - But Then - It Happened!
 - An Event That Brought The Feast & Celebrations To An End, And The King To His Knees!
 - The Foolish Consequences:
 - 1:12 - “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!”
 - Neither The King – Nor The Queen:
 - Really Pondered The Consequences Of Their Desires & Actions!
 - Now - We Can Only Speculate As To The Reason:
 - Why Vashti “Refused” The “King’s Commandment!”
 - But It Seems Like There Was As Much Pride In Her Heart As There Was In The Kings!
 - And - Even Though - “The King’s Command Was Foolish; Her Disobedience Was Not Wise” Either! (George Lawson)
 - And The End Result Was:
 - The Anger & Wrath Of The King!
 - Here Was A Drunken Ruler In A Drunken Rage!
 - **IE:** If This Ruler Was, In Fact, Xerxes The Great - His Rage Was Well Known! When Trying To Invade Greece A Few Years Later - The Waters Of The Hellespont Were Not Cooperating With His Attempt To Build A Pontoon Bridge - So He Ordered The Sea To Be Whipped 300 Times & Fetters Thrown In!
 - And As We Are Told In Proverbs 12:16 - “A fool’s wrath is presently known!”
 - Through His Desire & Decisions:
 - King Ahasuerus Showed Himself To Be:
 - A Fool!
 - He Did Not Make Wise Choices!
 - If Only He Had Known True Wisdom:
 - The Wisdom Of God!
 - And The Wisdom Of God’s Will!

- One Of The Great Comforts That We Have:
 - As The People Of God:
 - Is That We Have A King “In Whom Are Hid All The Treasures Of Wisdom And Knowledge!” (Colossians 2:3)
- And When The Lord:
 - Calls Upon Us Or Commands Us:
 - To Do Something - We Can:
 - Listen & Obey - Without Reservation!
- 1 John 5:3 - “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous!”
 - If The King & Queen Of Persia:
 - Had A Right Relationship With God & A Right Relationship With Each Other - There Would Have Been No Reason For Any Of This To Take Place!
- So - If You Have Jesus Christ:
 - As Your Savior & Lord & King:
 - You Can Trust In The Absolute Wisdom Of His Will & His Desires:
 - For Your Life!
- Because - “The Wisdom Of This World Is Foolishness With God!”

* However - Back In Esther - The King Thought He Was Getting Wise Counsel!

- But Instead - He Was Showing:

2. ***His Foolish Deliberations!***

- In 1:13-18 – The Foolish Deliberations Of The King!

- What’s The First Thing The King Does:

- After Being Refused By His Wife – The Queen?

- Try To Work Things Out Privately?

- No - Instead - He Makes It A Matter For A Very Public Royal Conference!

- Ahasuerus Calls His Seven Wise Men:

- To Figure Out What To Do!

- Now - Normally - As The Proverb Teaches - “In The Multitude Of Counselors There Is Safety!”

- But That’s Only If & When Those Counselors Offer Wise Counsel!

- But In Persia - It Was Common For These Men:

- Who Were Considered To Be The Wisest Men In All Of The Empire:

- To Give Their Advice In A Certain Order!

- From The Youngest To The Eldest! (Gill)

- And - As We Will See - Memucan - The Last Mentioned - Was The First To Speak Up!

- He Was Likely The Youngest & Least Experienced - But He Ended Up Speaking For Them All!

- And In A Minute, I Think We’ll See Why!

- But - After Calling His Royal Counselors Together:

- We Find The:

- Real Purpose:

- For His Meeting - In 1:15:

- “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?”

- The Great & Powerful King:

- Found Himself Powerless - But His Real Desire:

- Was To Get Back At The Queen!

- **IE:** Just Like A Child Trying To Get Back At His Brother / Sister - Trying To Get The Last Word In!

- It Wasn’t About Justice – It Was About Revenge!

- But Then - Memucan Speaks Up:

- With What Sounds Like:

- Real Perception:

- 1:16-17 - “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!”
- Notice The Word “All” In These Two Verses!
 - “All” The Princes!
 - “All” The People!
 - “All” The Provinces!
 - “All” The Women!
 - Quite An Exaggeration!
 - Memucan Wanted The King To See:
 - How This One Event Was A Threat To The Family & Social Order Of The Empire As They Knew It!
 - And Notice The “Report” That He Brings Up To The King!
 - He Leaves Quite A Bit Out – Doesn’t He?
 - Like The Part Of The King Wanting His Queen To Appear Before All The Men At This Party - Just To Look At Her Beauty!
 - And So - Instead Of Bringing Calm:
 - He Just Added More Fuel To The Fire Of The King’s Wrath!
 - Memucan Was Wise In His Own Eyes!
 - But - Proverbs 29:8 - Real “Wise Men Turn Away Wrath!”
 - Not Inflamm Wrath!
 - But - I Think When We Come To 1:18 - We Find The:
 - Real Problem:
 - That Memucan - And The Rest Of The Princes:
 - Was Concerned About!
 - “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!”
 - Memucan Wasn’t So Concerned About The Empire:
 - Or Even The King!
 - He Was Concerned About His Own Home!
 - He Was Concerned About His Own “Lady” Showing Disrespect & Contempt To Him!
 - And This Is Probably Why The Rest Of Those Wise Princes Didn’t Speak Up!
 - They Thought About Their Own Wives & Their Own Homes – And Knew That They Would Never Hear The End Of It If They Didn’t Do Something!
 - And So - Even Through These Deliberations:
 - King Ahasuerus Shows Himself To Be:
 - A Fool! Even As We Are Told In:
 - 1 Corinthians 3:18-20 - “Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. / For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. / And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain!”
 - We Need To Remember That - “The Wisdom Of This World Is Foolishness With God!”
 - So - What Are We To Do:
 - When We Face A Problem Or A Dilemma:
 - Or A Decision We Need To Make?
 - Turn To The “Only Wise God” - The Lord Jesus Christ!
 - Who - In Matthew 11:29 - Tells Us - “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls!”
 - “Learn Of Me” - Jesus Says!
 - And You Will Find Wisdom!
 - His Entire Life:
 - Teaches Us The Infinite Wisdom:
 - Of God’s Will / Work / Word!
 - It Is Entirely Different Than:
 - The “Wisdom Of This World!” In Fact:
 - How Different Will The Relationship Be:
 - Between A Husband & A Wife:

- When They “Learn” From Jesus! And:
 - His Humility!
 - His Honor!
 - His Wisdom!

- Ephesians 5:22-25 - “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. / For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. / Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. / Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it!”

- Jesus Christ Is Our Wise & Most “Wonderful Counselor!”
- And We Must Continue To “Learn Of” & “Learn From” Him!

* But - Instead Of Humility & Honor - King Ahasuerus:

- Thought He Was Making A Wise Commandment - But Instead Was Enacting:

2. ***His Foolish Decree!***

- In 1:19-22 – The Foolish Decree Of The King!

- After Stating His Reasoning, Memucan Gives The King His Advice:

- “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. / 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!”

- It Was To Be A Permanent Decree!

- “That It Be Not Altered!”

- To Depose Vashti The Queen!

- It Is Interesting That Her Title Is No Longer Even Used In 1:19!

- It Was To Be A Published Decree!

- “Throughout All His Empire!”

- And Thus Guarantee That Everyone In His Great & Vast Empire:

- Would, In Fact, Hear About It!

- And So - Without Considering The Consequences Once Again:

- What Does The King Do?

- 1:20-22 - “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!”

- King Ahasuerus Used His Power To Inform Everyone In His Kingdom Of His Powerlessness!

- And The Great Persian Postal System Would Have Spread His Foolish Decree Far & Wide!

- **IE:** Even As Their Motto - “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds!”

- And With This Decree:

- King Ahasuerus Showed To Everyone:

- His Great Foolishness!

- If Only He Had Known True Wisdom:

- The Wisdom Of God!

- And The Wisdom Of God’s Word!

- Even As We Learn From James 3:13-17 - “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. / But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. / This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. / For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. / But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy!”

- What A Difference There Is:

- Between The Wisdom Of This World:

- And The Wisdom Of The Lord!

- What Kind Of “Wisdom” Did King Ahasuerus Display?

- What Kind Of “Wisdom” Do You Pursue?

Conclusion:

1. In The Words Of Iain Duguid:
 - “This World Is A Dangerous Place, Where Power And Wisdom Are Frequently Unconnected!”
 - And Yet - “This Is The World In Which God’s People . . . Still Find Themselves!”
 - This Is The Kind Of World & The Kind Of Foolishness We See All Around Us Today!
 - So - What Are We To Do?
 - Where Can We Turn?
 - We Must Turn To “Christ” Who Is Both “The Power Of God, And The Wisdom Of God!” (1 Corinthians 1:24)
 - In Him – Infinite Power & Infinite Wisdom:
 - Are Connected – Eternally!
2. Because - As We Read In:
 - 1 Corinthians 3:19 - “The Wisdom Of This World Is Foolishness With God!”
 - Yet - Unbeknownst To The King & His Own Counselors:
 - God Would Use Even His “Foolishness!”
 - His Foolish Desires!
 - His Foolish Deliberations!
 - His Foolish Decree!
 - God Would Use His “Foolishness” To:
 - Work Out The Wisdom Of His Own Perfect Will!
 - Proverbs 21:1 Reminds Us That - “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will!
 - The King Thought That He Was Accomplishing His Will – But Instead – God Was Accomplishing His Own Will For His People!
 - And So - Through The King’s Foolishness - God “Set The Stage” For Esther To Enter The Scene!
3. Remember:
 - “The Wisdom Of This World Is Foolishness With God!”
 - So - What Kind Of Wisdom Are You Pursuing After?
 - If Only We Would Seek The:
 - “Wisdom That Is From Above!”
 - The Wisdom Of Christ!
 - Because His Wisdom Is:
 - “Peaceable, Gentle, Easy To Be Intreated, Full Of Mercy And Good Fruits, Without Partiality, And Without Hypocrisy!”

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