

Introduction to the Book of Esther

Introduction

- Discuss background leading up to Book of Esther
 - Throughout the Old Testament God has laid down a path for the Israelites to perform His Will
 - Even when they faltered He gave them a path to come back
 - We are in the same situation God has given us a path to perform His Will, it may not be what we envisioned or the most comfortable but this path will lead us to a blessed life
 - Along the way God has given us tools and opportunities to perform His Will, are biggest problem is we ignore them
 - We struggle to see the will of God because we ignore what He has placed right in front of us
 - In this introduction and course we will see how God give His children different tools and opportunities to do His Will
 - Before we discuss the Book of Esther we have to discuss how the Jews got to a situation where they were “second-class” citizens in foreign land
 - After the Exodus from Egypt was complete the Jews had their own nation, Israel (**Joshsua 21:43-end**)
 - So how did the Jews who had their own land given to them by God end up living in a foreign land?

Objective:

- **Solomon - God gave him wisdom & power**
- **Israelites after Solomon’s reign - God gave them prophets and a few righteous kings**

Lesson

- Solomon - God gave him wisdom & power
 - Working for someone else
 - How do we begin to not see the will of God?
 - By working for other gods
 - Solomon brought wives -
 - *‘from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away*

your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. '1 Kings 11:2

- Old does not always mean wise
 - *'For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. '1 Kings 11:4*
 - What is wisdom
 - *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.' Proverbs 9:10*
 - What is fear of the Lord?
 - It's not fear in a sense of being afraid or pushed away from God but this fear of the Lord is the same way someone would fear to disappoint a good parent who has provided them with everything and knows what's best for them
 - That is why Solomon said:
 - *'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.' Proverbs 8:13*
 - Since God is good, walking with Him is to walk away from evil
- That is why Solomon's actions in **1 King 11** were so significant
 - Solomon began to ignore his fear of God and couldn't see that God gave him wisdom and power to lead his kingdom not dwell in a luxurious life
 - Example:
 - We stay in comfort rather than do what is required
- Solomon built a temple to worship God but didn't build a temple for his heart
 - How much do you protect your phone?
 - You put a case, screen protector, lock screen passcode, warranty
 - All this to protect what's inside your phone
 - In **1 Kings 11:4** it deeply describes how Solomon's heart changed
 - That is why Solomon said:
 - *'Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. ' Proverbs 4:23*
 - If we don't protect what comes into our heart then we can become anything the world wants us to become
 - Even if we are in God's house like Solomon, we still have to be on guard
 - Being in church doesn't mean your heart is in church
 - This change in heart set the course of Israel future

- *'Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. 'I*

Kings 11:11

- After Solomon's reign, the Kingdom of Israel was split and from then on it was never stable

- **Israelites after King Solomon's reign - God sent them prophets & a few righteous kings**

- After the Jews went through many different kings, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacks Jerusalem
 - Babylon mean confusion
 - Jerusaelm means city of peace
 - When we don't listen to the messengers that God sent us chaos will enter our lives
- He destroys the temple and takes the people of Judah as captives (**II Kings 25**)
 - They received many warnings from the prophets but they still didn't listen to God
 - They forgot how God lead their forefathers out of Egypt and into Israel
 - Looking back is required to move forward in our lives
 - It's easy for us try to push forward without looking back because society has taught that our past is something that is bad and needs to be erased
 - History is two things:
 - A reminder of God's benevolence
 - God's guidance of the Jews during the Exodus, He led them out of slavery into the land of milk and honey
 - A learning experience
 - The paralytic man
 - Christ told him to carry his bed and walk
 - Not remember how he got into the bed but how Christ set him free
 - The bed has no power over him
 - Being in the wrong lane requires you to look back to change lane you don't stare at the mirror when you drive forward you just glance and change lanes
 - You don't dwell in the past
 - After some time the Babylonian Empire was destroyed by King Cyrus of Persia

- Even though King Cyrus was a Gentile he was still used by God to set the Jews free and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (**Ezra 1**)
 - God used a Gentile to do His work
 - Just like He used Ruth the Gentile
- Zerubbabel lead the Jews in their return to Jerusalem and rebuilding the temple
 - They were given redemption and a second opportunity to restore the temple in Jerusalem
 - All the Jews didn't go with Zerubbabel even though they had the opportunity
 - This is where the Book of Esther takes place
 - during the period between the first return of the Jews from captivity, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, and the second return under the leadership of Ezra

Homework

Readings:

- **Review for this week**
 - **The Jews arrive to the promised land: Joshua 21:43-end**
 - **Solomon's Heart Turns from the Lord: 1 Kings 11**
 - **The Fall and Captivity of Judah: II Kings 25**
 - **End of The Babylonian Captivity: Ezra 1**
- **Preview for next week:**
 - **The King Dethrones Queen Vashti: Esther 1**

Prayer:

- **A Psalm of Wisdom: Psalm 49**