

# EXILIC & POST-EXILIC PROPHETS OF THE BIBLE

Senior Adults & Friends Bible Study — Summit View Church of Christ  
Fall 2023

## PART 8, SECTION 1 — ESTHER, PART 1

### ESTHER 1-4

Date: 483-474 BC — Most of the Jews, apparently including Esther's ancestors, had been exiled from their homeland by the Babylonians almost a century earlier, in 605-586 BC. The Persians had conquered the Babylonians in 530 BC. Now the Persian king Xerxes I (also called Ahasuerus) held the throne (he ruled 486-464 BC).

Intro: This book tells of the events that resulted in the creation of the Jewish holiday of Purim: how an attempt to destroy the Jewish people resulted in the destruction of their enemies instead through the intervention of Esther, Mordecai, and (remaining in the background) God. *Esther is one of only two books in the Bible that do not mention God (the other is Song of Songs)—but God is there!*

#### Esther 1 (483 BC)

1:1 — King of Persia at this time: \_\_\_\_\_

1:9 — His queen: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***backgrounds***

In 480 BC, King Xerxes attempted to take control of Greece (he eventually failed). At this time (483 BC), he was making preparations for that invasion. This banquet was likely intended to persuade his nobles, officials, and military leaders (1:3) that they could accomplish this lofty goal.

1:10-12 — How did Queen Vashti offend the king?

1:15-22 — What did the king decree concerning Vashti?

#### Esther 2:1-18 (480-479 BC)

2:7 — How were Esther and Mordecai related?

2:8-18 — What steps did Esther have to go through to become queen?

#### ***for class discussion***

How do you feel about the way women are treated in Esther 1-2? What would Christian ethics say about the king's treatment of his nation's best and brightest young virgins?

#### Esther 2:19-23

2:20 — What did Esther keep secret, as Mordecai had instructed her?

2:21-23 — What did Mordecai do to help the king?

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## **Esther 3 (March/April 474 BC)**

*Esther had now been Xerxes's queen for about 5 years (compare 2:16 and 3:7).*

3:1-2 — The king honored \_\_\_\_\_ the Agagite. But Mordecai the Jew refused to \_\_\_\_\_.

### ***for class discussion***

- What was an Agagite? And why might a Jew like Mordecai have refused to honor an Agagite? (Hint: See 1 Samuel 15:1-33. Mordecai's genealogy in Esther 2:5 links him to Israel's King Saul some 550 years earlier.)

3:7 — Haman, planning to do harm to the Jews, cast a \_\_\_\_\_ to select the date on which to carry out his plan.

3:8-9, 13 — What was Haman's plan?

3:12 — The king's order was written on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of the \_\_\_\_\_ month. *This was the day before Passover!*

## **Esther 4 (between March & June 474)**

4:1 — How did Mordecai respond to the king's edict?

4:3 — How did the other Jews in the empire respond to the king's edict?

4:8 — What did Mordecai want Esther to do for the Jewish people?

4:10-11 — Why did Esther hesitate?

4:13-14 — Mordecai told Esther, "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will \_\_\_\_\_. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another \_\_\_\_\_, but you and your father's family will \_\_\_\_\_. And who knows but that you have \_\_\_\_\_?"

- *What do Mordecai's words to Esther hint about Mordecai's faith?*

4:15-16 — How did Esther respond to Mordecai?

- she asked him to have the Jews in their city...
- she said she would...

- From Esther 1-4, what do you think might be 2 or 3 challenges the Jews faced as a minority ethnic and religious group in Esther's time?