

Esther Series

Revised – August 2010

Good News Bible Studies

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The Lord's Provision

Esther 10

Evidenced in the Life of King Ahasuerus, Mordecai & Esther (Esther 10:1-3)

1. “Now King Ahasuerus laid a tribute on the land and on the coastlands of the sea” (Esther 10:1)
 - King Ahasuerus ruled Persia from 486 – 465 BC and was not thought of as the most popular king of the Medo-Persian Empire. He left his final mark on Persian history by imposing a _____ on the citizens of the kingdom.
 - 1) Although King Ahasuerus never appeared to fully submit to the Lord, **he was clearly used as an instrument of the Lord to preserve the Jewish people.**
 - 2) The king’s religion was **Zoroastrianism** (a dualistic teaching that believes in one god who created all that is good – the spirit, and a lesser god that created all that is bad – the flesh) and as such he would have most likely viewed the God of the Jews differently than they did. He may have had a fear of the Lord but there is no significant evidence that he came to believe in the Lord.
 - 3) The king was known to have behaved like a spoiled brat who loved the spotlight and all the pomp and display that went along with his position.
 - 4) He was considered to be a powerful ruler and feared by many, but this tax was probably not a popular move for him.
 - 5) History confirms that King Ahasuerus was assassinated by Artabanus (the captain of his bodyguard) who ruled for a brief 7 months. Artabanus was killed by Ahasuerus’ (Xerxes) third son and legitimate heir to the throne whose name was Artaxerxes and you can read about him in the books of _____ and _____.

- Nothing is said about Esther in this closing chapter but her role was important
- 1) What stands out to me the most about Esther was her bold statement to Mordecai when confronted with the need to use her influence with the king to help save her people from extinction; “Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, Go, assemble all the Jews who are assembled in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go into the king, which is not according to the law; and **if I perish, I perish**. So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther commanded him” (Esther 4:15-17)
 - 2) The role that Esther played was clearly stated by Mordecai when he explained the edict to her in which Haman planned to kill all the Jews throughout Persia; “They related Esther’s words to Mordecai. Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. **And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?**” (Ether 4:12-14)
 - 3) **Esther did her part by putting her life on the line to be an instrument of God’s will** and although she didn’t know the outcome at the time she was prepared to trust the Lord to do His will and that is what faith is all about!!!
 - 4) The final mentioning of Esther is her efforts to establish the customs for the celebration of the Feast of Purim. (Esther 9:32)
 - 5) Esther was clearly **chosen for an unexpected calling** which was to be used by the Lord to gain the attention of a pagan king and turn his heart in favor of the Jews because of his love for Esther.
 - 6) Unlike Mordecai, the final chapter of this book closes with no mention of Esther so we are left to draw our own conclusions. What are your thoughts about Esther and how would you rate her accomplishments and life?

2. “And all the accomplishments of his authority and strength and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia?” (Esther 10:2)

- It is rather ironic and interesting to me that King Ahasuerus is remembered for imposing a tax on the people and yet even the Persian record books show the greatness of Mordecai (A Jew) and seem to favor him over the king.
- We are not told why Mordecai received such publicity in the Persian record books but we do know from what is recorded in the book of Esther that his character and actions appeared to be fair, disciplined and obedient to the Lord.
 - 1) Some commentators are not favorably disposed towards Mordecai and conclude that there is not enough evidence that Mordecai was a righteous man or that he followed the Law.
 - 2) Personally I think that based on the information that we have (contained here in the book of Esther) that Mordecai was a righteous man who obediently followed the Lord with his whole heart.
 - 3) **Whatever the spiritual condition of Mordecai was – he clearly was used by the Lord to save the Jews and he was well loved by the people.**

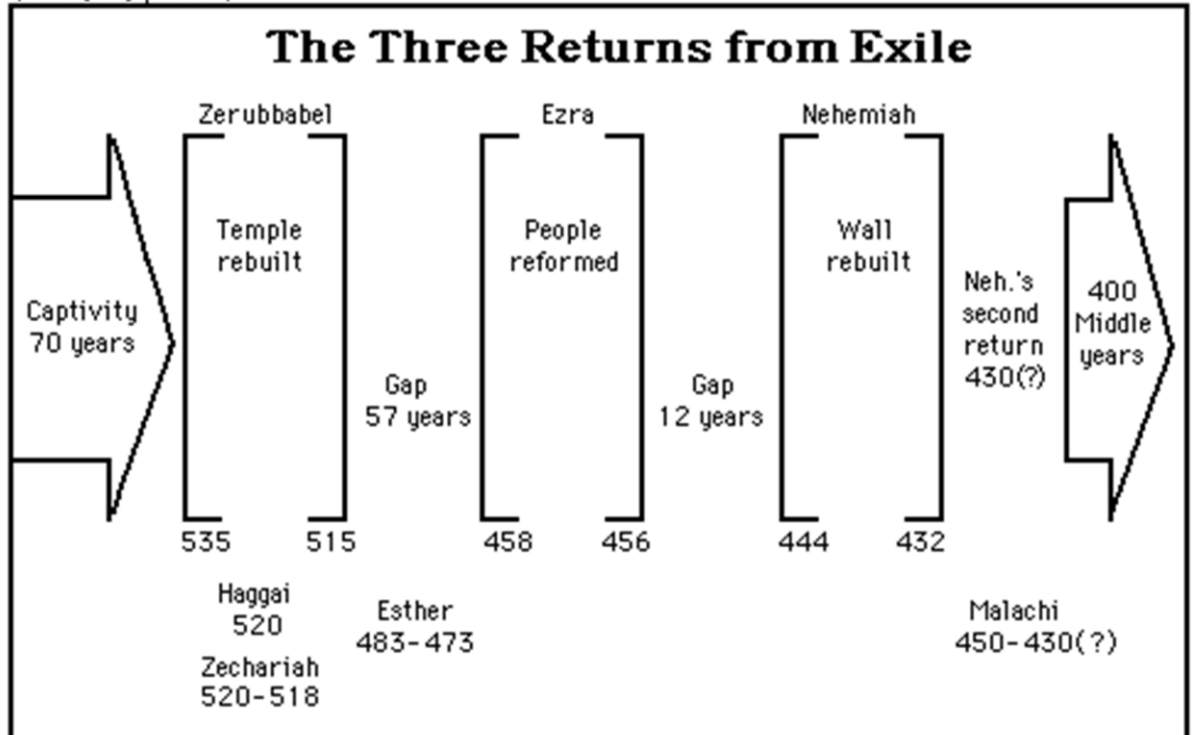
3. “For Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and in favor with his many kinsmen, one who sought the good of his people and one who spoke for the welfare of his whole nation” Esther 10:3)

- Mordecai held a very _____ position in the Persian government and no doubt was used by the Lord to influence these around him.
- Mordecai was well _____ by the Jews and was considered a great leader because he worked hard for them and spoke up for them to King Ahasuerus.
- He sought _____ and _____ for all of his countrymen
- **In my mind he was placed in this position by the Lord (like *Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Ruth, Daniel*) and he accomplished what he Lord had for him to do.**

Evidenced in the Life of the Jews

1. Many of the Jews will continue to return to Jerusalem to live among their brothers, to re-build homes there, to worship in the newly constructed temple under the leadership of Ezra (Ezra 7-10) and to continue with the rebuilding of the city under the direction of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1-13)

(BKC [OT] p. 652)



- The events recorded in the book of Esther reveal how that Esther and Mordecai were instrumental in helping to save the Jews from extinction and that provide the means for the Jews to fully return to Jerusalem and rebuild as the prophet Jeremiah said would take place. (Jeremiah 25:9-11, see also Daniel 9:1-18)
- As the Jews fully returned to their land under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, they would face continued persecutions and battles due to the fact that the people of the land once occupied by the Jews did not want them there.
- Although the Jews will re-occupy Jerusalem and will once again live there, they will continue to do so under foreign dominance and oppression.

2. The Greeks will later go on to defeat the Persians (331 B.C.) and will conquer most of the modern world – which was prophesied by Daniel. (Daniel 8)

- A leader by the name of Alexander the Great will rise up and defeat the Persians and will control all of what was once known as the Persian Empire.



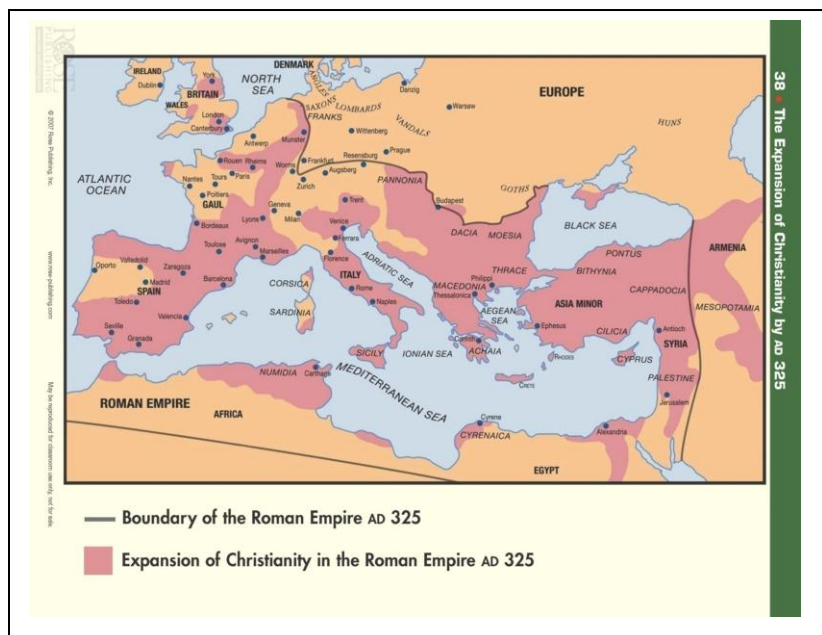
- This will put the Greeks in control of all the land of Israel, the Jews and Jerusalem
- The Greeks (under the rule of Alexander the Great and his four generals) will set out to unite the world under one common language (Koine) and will seek to influence the world with their culture and religious beliefs.
- This Greek way of life will have a negative influence among the Jews as the culture and religious beliefs of the Greeks was vastly different than the Jews.
- During the days of the Greek Empire, the Jews were permitted to remain in the area the Greeks referred to as “Palastina” and they were also allowed to worship freely in their Temple in Jerusalem.
- Eventually this freedom of worship and Jewish way of life changed for the Jews as they would later face persecution and warfare by the Greeks. You can read about this from various Jewish historians who wrote about the Maccabean revolts that took place between the Biblical history of the Old and New Testament period.

3. The Romans will completely conquer the Greeks by 30 B.C. and will be the dominant Empire of the world for the next nine centuries.

- During the days of the Roman Empire the Jews will be permitted to live in the land of Palestine.

- 1) The land of Israel (referred to as Palestina) is now a Roman province
- 2) During the days of Caesar Augustus the Messiah (Jesus Christ) will be born and during the reign of Tiberius Jesus will be crucified and rise from the dead.
- 3) The Jews will be able to worship in the Temple in Jerusalem (which will be remodeled by Herod the Great) through the time of Christ and the Apostles.
- 4) The Jewish Temple will be destroyed by the Roman General Titus in A.D. 70 and the Jews will be dispersed throughout the Roman Empire.

- This map represents the territorial expansion of the of the Roman Empire



- The Roman Empire will split and the land known as Palestine will fall under the control of the Byzantine Empire with its capital in Constantinople (later called Istanbul) and the Byzantines will rule over the land of Israel for several centuries.

4. Arab-Muslim rule of Palestine

- The Byzantine Empire lost control of Palestine to the Arab-Muslims in 638 and during this time many in the region converted to Islam
- The area of Palestine (pronounced by them as Falasin) was predominately ruled from Syria and then later from Baghdad.
- No independent nation or state was ever developed by the Arabs in the area known as Palestine and the land remained undeveloped and predominately barren.
- Some Jews still remained in the land of Palestine during the Arab-Muslim rule

5. The Christian Crusades

- Due to the continued cries of help from the Christians and Jews in Jerusalem and the region of Palestine who were under continued attack and persecution from the Arab-Muslims, the European Crusades began and resulted in Palestine being conquered by the Crusaders in 1099 and never again under Arab rule.
- The “Crusaders” (somewhat of a military mercenary group originating from Europe) were not a “politically independent group” and they never developed any sort of national identity but they did bring protection to the Jews and Christians living in the region of Palestine.
- The Palestine area (predominately Jerusalem) became a military outpost for Christian Europe and their control lasted for a little less than 100 years.

6. The Ottoman Empire

- Also known as “Ottoman Turks”
- This Empire took over the region in 1516 after Syria and the Mongol Empire controlled it for a brief period and the Ottoman Turks ruled Palestine until they lost in WWI and the land was then given to the British.
- Many Jews (called Zionists) immigrated to Palestine during this time

7. British Rule of Palestine

- After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and shortly after WWI the League of Nations assigned the region of Palestine to the British.
- Here are a couple of interesting quotes about the land of Palestine that are worth mentioning:
 - 1) “The country is in a considerable degree empty of inhabitants and therefore its greatest need is a body of population” (British consul 1857)
 - 2) “There is not a solitary village throughout its whole extent (valley of Jezreel), not for 30 miles in either direction....one may ride for 30 miles hereabouts and not see 10 human beings. A desolate country whose soil is rich enough but is given wholly to weeds....Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes...desolate and unlovely” (Mark Twain)
- The restoration of the region began when the League of Nations adopted the Balfour Declaration of 1917 which committed the British government to create an **independent Jewish National home** still referred at that time as Palestine.
 - 1) The parcel of land that was dedicated for this Jewish State originally included what we know of as present day Israel and it also included all of what is present day Jordan.
 - 2) The Arabs were not pleased with this division of land and in response to this opposition the British government awarded what was referred to then as the “Trans-Jordan” region (now called Jordan) to Emir Abdullah and immediately the decision was made that no Jew was permitted to reside in the Trans-Jordan region. This change was a violation of the Balfour Declaration.
 - 3) Even in the land awarded to the Jews there were a number of restrictions placed on them especially where they could settle, farm or build.
 - 4) The Jews (also called Zionists) began to migrate from Europe and other places throughout the world back to their homeland and then WWII began and this put a halt on the Jewish State of Israel.

- During WWII the Jews were encouraged to assist the British in defeating the Germans (since the Germans threatened that region) with the promise of a secured and recognized homeland for the Jews and the ability for them to migrate there.
- 1) Due to pressure from other countries and local pressure from the Arabs, the British actually curtailed/slowed the immigration of the Jews back to their newly promised homeland which was most unfortunate due to the what was taking place by the German leaders of the time in relation to the Holocaust.
 - 2) It is commonly believed that many Jews died unnecessarily and the Holocaust may well have been avoided had these restrictions not have been imposed.
 - 3) The argument that existed during WWI, WWII from the Arab point of view is the same argument that exists today which is that the region was filled with Arabs and the Jews displaced them.
 - 4) The argument from the Jewish point of view is this land has always been their land and their claims to a national homeland are just as valid especially in light of the international promises made to them to have it.
8. The Nation of Israel in our present day:
- They were established as a Nation/State in 1948 and recognized internationally by the United Nations at that time.
 - Modern Israel has fought several wars (1948, 1967, and 1972) with those countries (Syria, Jordan and Egypt) that border their land since their establishment as a State.
 - Israel currently maintains peace agreements with its Egyptian and Jordanian neighbors and has yet to establish a formal peace agreement with Syria.
 - The current conflict with the Palestinians (i.e. the PLO, PA) is masked in the belief that the land belongs to the Arab Palestinians and the bloodshed continues.
9. Lord Balfour once said; *“He hoped that when the Arabs had been given so much that they would not begrudge the Jews the little notch promised them”*

Concluding Remarks

1. The Jews who lived through the events that were recorded in the book of Esther would have understood the way in which the Lord _____ them:
 - The way in which Queen Vashti was deposed from her throne to make room for an unknown Jewish girl to become Queen and save God's people was clearly _____ by the Lord.
 - The way in which Mordecai (once a hated man and of low position in Persia) was exalted above Haman (a man of high influence in Persia) in order to help direct the affairs of the Jews in the Persian Empire is evidence of the _____ hand of the Lord over the Jewish people in order to _____ a way of redemption that would come later through Jesus Christ.
 - The way on which the original decree that was intended to completely destroy the Jews was overruled with a decree that actually led to the destruction of 76,000 enemies of the Jews could only be attributed to the _____ and _____ work of the Lord.
2. The fact that the Festival of Purim has continued to remain an annual celebration from within the Jewish community is a testimony to their acknowledgement and understanding that the Lord is in _____ and _____ of our worship!
3. The ultimate _____ that came as a result of all of the events recorded in the book of Esther was the work of Jesus Christ through His death on the cross which provided _____ for all who believe in Him:
 - “But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law so that He might redeem those who are under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5)
 - “For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11)