

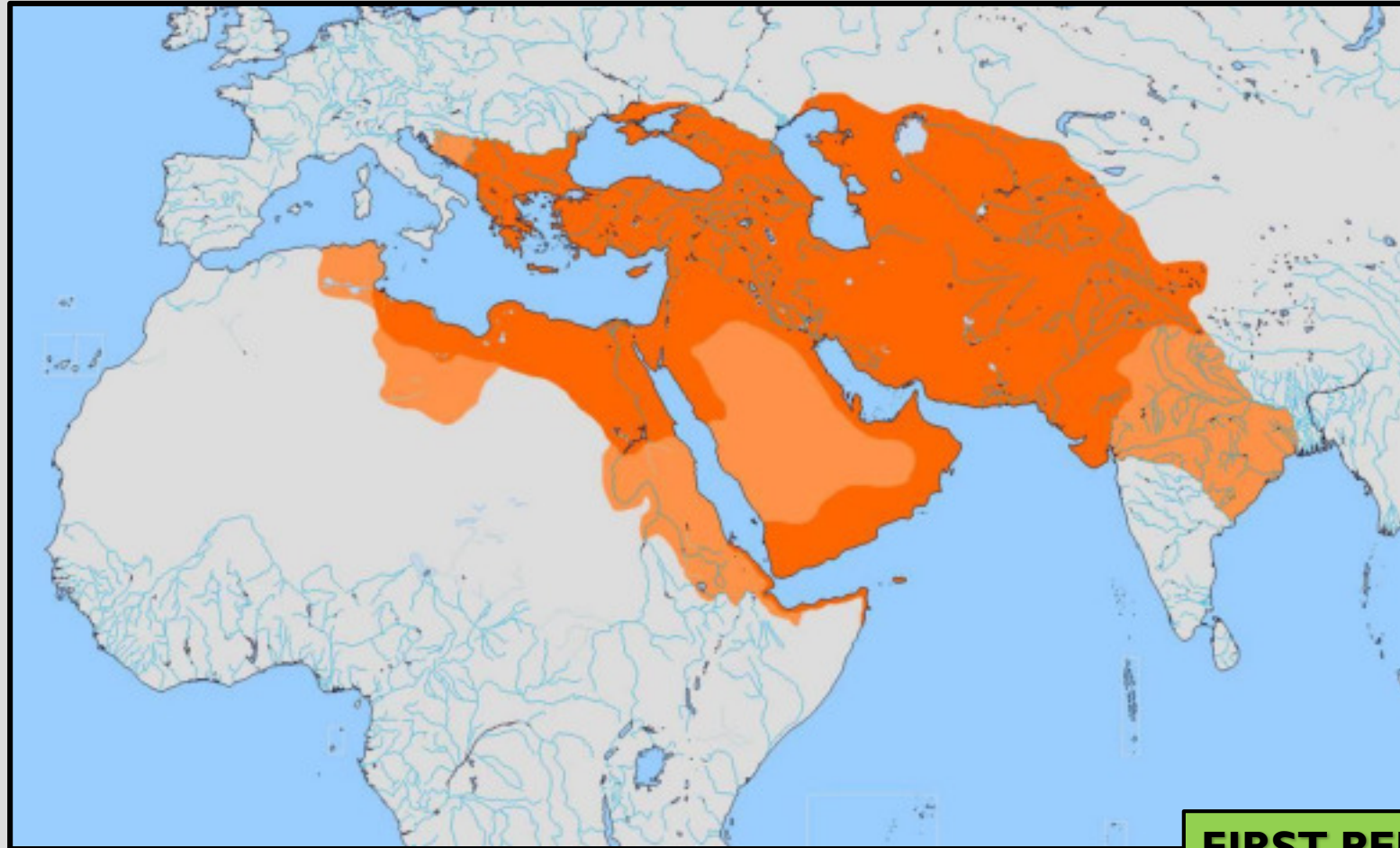
ESTHER

Old Testament Workshop
Morrison Heights Baptist Church
November 24, 2019

ANCIENT PERSIA

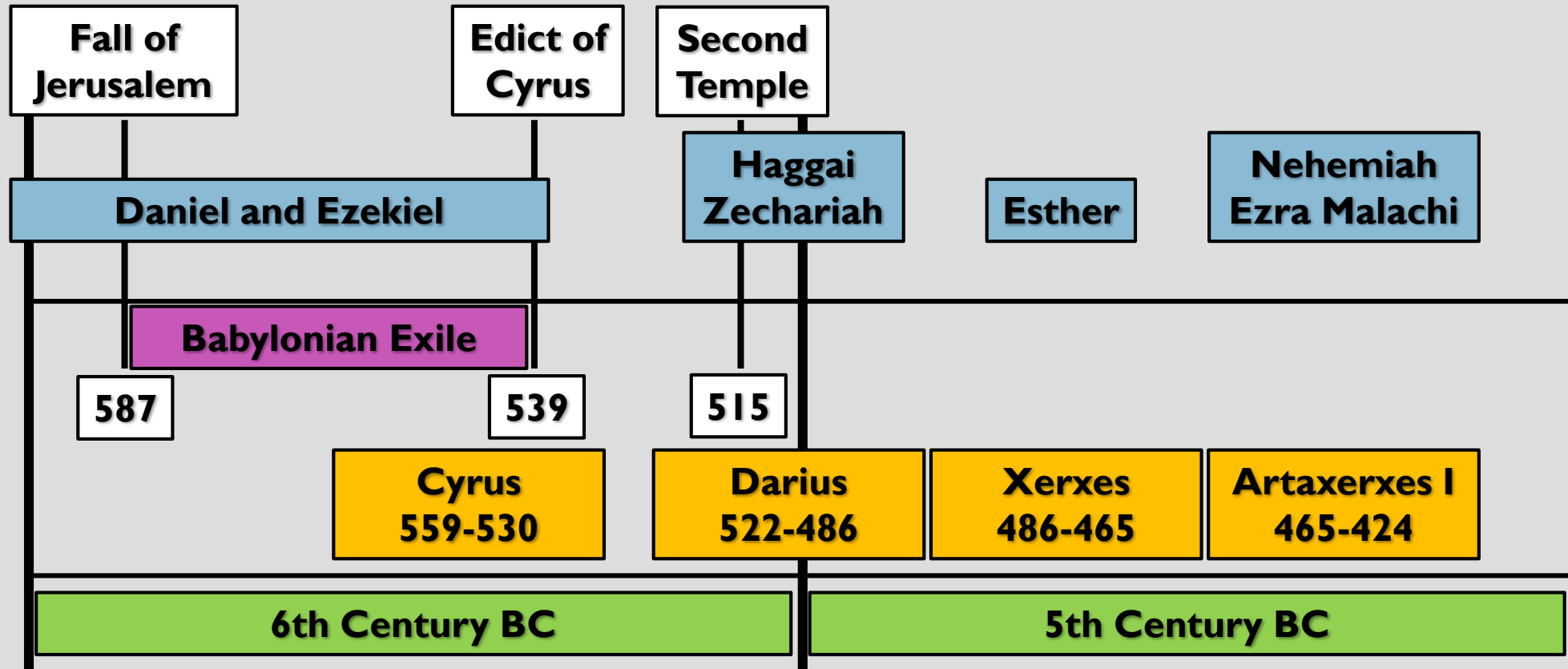
“From India
to Ethiopia
over 127
provinces”

Esther 1:1



FIRST PERSIAN EMPIRE

ACHAEMENID DYNASTY



MAIN CHARACTERS

AHASUERUS

member of the Achaemenid Dynasty
also called Xerxes (NIV—Greek rendering of his Persian name)
selected Esther as his queen (2:17-18)
invaded Greece in 480 BC; succeeded initially, eventually failed

“I am Xerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the king of the provinces with many tongues, the king of this great earth far and near, son of king Darius the Achaemenian.”

Inscription at Van in Eastern Turkey

Ancient History Encyclopedia



1962 Movie

MAIN CHARACTERS

MORDECAI

tribe of Benjamin (2:5-7)

guardian of his first cousin Esther (2:7)

foiled an assassination plot against Ahasuerus (2:21-23; 6:1-3)

refused, because “he was a Jew” (3:4), to bow before Haman;
likely based upon his interpretation of the first commandment
later promoted to second (Grand Vizier) in the kingdom (8:1-10:3)

“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.” (4:14)

FAMOUS QUOTE

CONFLICT!

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

MAIN CHARACTERS

ESTHER

tribe of Benjamin (2:5-7)

also called Hadassah (2:7)

“beautiful of form and face” (2:7; SEE also Gen. 29:17)

selected as queen by Ahasuerus (2:17-18)

According to the Rabbis ...
The four most beautiful women in history were Sarah,
Rahab, Abigail, and Esther.

Talmud: Megillah 15a



2006 Movie

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

MAIN CHARACTERS

HAMAN

Agagite (3:1)

NAME OF A PLACE

District in Persia (Inscription of Sargon)

The Expositor's Bible Commentary

NAME OF A PERSON

“by birth an Amalekite” (SEE 1 Sam. 15:1-33)

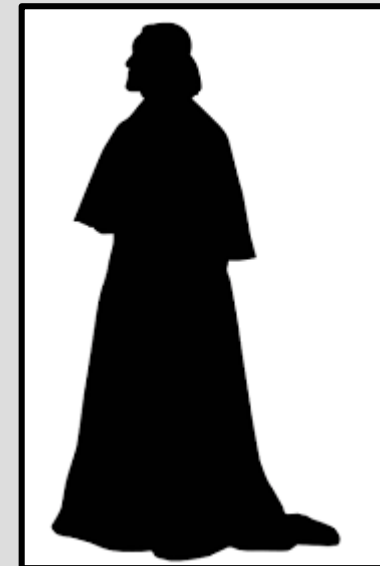
Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*

promoted to Grand Vizier (3:1-2a)

genocidal anti-Semite (3:2b-15; 5:9-14)



THE Villain!



BOOK OF ESTHER

DISTINCTIVES

① ONE of the *Megilloth* (Hb. “scrolls”)

Ruth	Feast of Weeks/Pentecost
Esther	Purim
Ecclesiastes	Feast of Tabernacles
Song of Solomon	Passover
Lamentations	Ninth of Ab

② NEVER mentions God

The divine names יהוה, יה, אלוה, אלהים, אל, אדון, and שדי do not appear in the book.

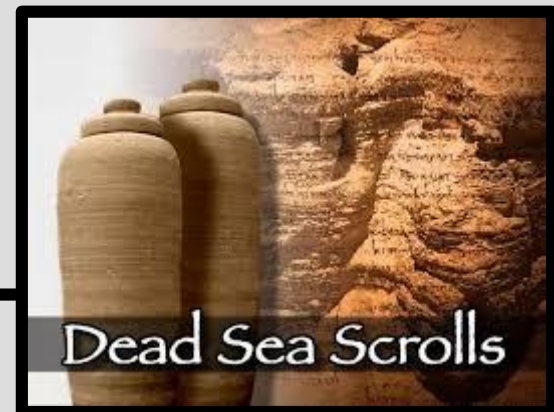
BOOK OF ESTHER

DISTINCTIVES

③ **ONLY** Old Testament book, besides the Torah, to establish an annual religious observance

PURIM 14th day OR 15th day (walled cities) of Adar, compares to our February or March

④ **ONLY** Old Testament book **NOT** found in the caves at Qumran



BOOK OF ESTHER

a **GREAT** story told **WELL**

PROVIDENCE, NOT COINCEDENCE

① Esther's Rise to Power (1:3-2:18)

Unknown Jewish Maiden

Favored Queen



② Mordecai's Recognition (2:21-23; 6:1-11)

precipitated by “royal” insomnia and the reading of a random court record by an unnamed civil servant



God's Unseen Hand

BOOK OF ESTHER

a **GREAT** story told **WELL**

IRONY

discrepancy between reality
and expectation; some degree
of unawareness

Definition

- ① Mordecai refused to honor Haman (3:1-5). Later, Ahasuerus asked Haman, “What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?” (3:6) Haman, convinced that the king referred to him, answered, recommending pomp and circumstance (3:7-9). The king replied, “as you have said . . . do so for Mordecai the Jew.” (3:10) Thus, Haman honored the man who refused to honor him!



Example

BOOK OF ESTHER

TRUTH IS
STRANGER
THAN
FICTION

IRONY

- ② Haman built a gallows to execute Mordecai (5:14), but Ahasuerus used it to execute Haman (7:7-10) and his ten sons (9:13-15).
- ③ Mordecai had refused to honor Haman, the Grand Vizier. After Haman's death, Ahasuerus promoted Mordecai to Grand Vizier (8:1-10:13).
- ④ The king, by edict, had scheduled a day, the 13th of Adar, for Jewish genocide (3:7-15), but that day *as well as the next* would become, by a subsequent edict, opportunity for Jews to defend themselves, ridding the empire of their enemies (8:1-9:19).