

# Session 14: Esther

## **Video:**

- Overview: Esther (The Bible Project)

## **Recommended Readings from the ESV Study Bible:**

- Introduction to Esther (pp. 849-852)

## **Handout from The Bible Project:**

- Esther Overview Poster

## **Handouts from Dr. Parke:**

- Esther - Slides from Dr. Parke's Teaching

## **Handouts from ESV Study Bible:**

- Map: The Persian Empire at the Time of Esther
- Table: Chronology in Esther



# ESTHER



100 YEARS AFTER BABYLONIAN EXILE



**CURIOUS FACT:**

- GOD IS NEVER MENTIONED
- INVITATION TO LOOK FOR GOD'S ACTIVITY
- "COINCIDENCE" & IRONIC REVERSAL



created by the Bible Project

# HER



**MORAL AMBIGUITY:**

- A LOT OF DRINKING, SEX AND MURDER
- VIOLATION OF **(Torah)** COMMANDS

**THE POINT:**  
 DESPITE EXILE, "GOD'S ABSENCE," AND ISRAEL'S MORAL COMPROMISE, GOD HAS NOT ABANDONED HIS PROMISES

**9-10 MORDECAI'S GREATNESS**

**2 FEAST DAYS PURIM**  
 COMMEMORATES THE JEWS' DELIVERANCE FROM DESTRUCTION.

**QUEEN & MORDECAI SAVE THE JEWS**  
 ENEMIES & HAMAN'S SONS

**8C MORDECAI ELEVATED**

**8B MORDECAI'S DECREE TO SAVE THE JEWS**

**13<sup>th</sup> OF ADAR**  
 ALL JEWS CAN DEFEND THEMSELVES AND DESTROY THEIR ENEMIES!

**KEY PIVOTS**

**8A ESTHER & MORDECAI PLAN TO REVERSE THE DECREE**

**7 ESTHER'S 2<sup>ND</sup> BANQUET**

HAMAN'S PLOTTED TO KILL THE JEWS!

WHAT??

WHAT??

IMMEDIATELY AFTER

**BANQUET**





# Esther

## Slides from Dr. Parke's Teachings

SLIDE 1



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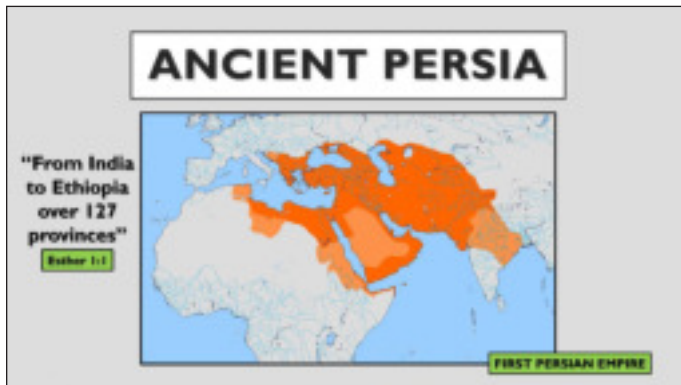
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SLIDE 2



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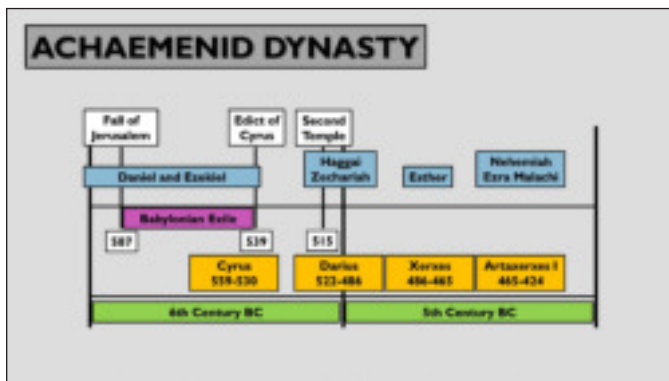
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SLIDE 3



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# Esther

## Slides from Dr. Parke's Teachings

SLIDE 4

**IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE**


### MAIN CHARACTERS

**AHASUERUS**

member of the Achaemenid Dynasty  
also called Xerxes (NIY—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 Achaemenidae."  
Inscription at Van in Eastern Turkey

Ancient History Encyclopedia



1962 Movie

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SLIDE 5

**IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE**

### 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?" (4:1-4)

FAVORITE QUOTE

1962 Movie

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SLIDE 6


**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 Rabbinic ...  
The four most beautiful women in history were Sarah, Rahab, Abigail, and Esther.  
Talmud Megillah 15a



1962 Movie

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# Esther

## Slides from Dr. Parke's Teachings

SLIDE 7

**IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE**

**MAIN CHARACTERS**

**HAMAN**  
 Agagite (3:1)  
 NAME OF A PLACE  
 District in Persia (Description of Sargos)  
*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*

NAME OF A PERSON  
 "by birth an Amalekite" (108 l. Sarg. 10:1-11)  
*Josephus, The Antiquities of the Jews*

promoted to Grand Vizier (3:1-2a)  
 genocidal anti-Semite (3:2b-15; 5:9-14)

**THE VILAIN**

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SLIDE 8

**BOOK OF ESTHER**

**DISTINCTIVES**

- ① ONE of the Megilloth (Hb. "scrolls")
 

Ruth	Feast of Weeks/Pentecost
<b>Esther</b>	<b>Purim</b>
Ecclesiastes	Feast of Tabernacles
Song of Solomon	Passover
Lamentations	Ninth of Ab
- ② NEVER mentions God  
 The divine names יהוה, אל, אלוה, אלהים, and ידעו do not appear in the book.

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SLIDE 9

**BOOK OF ESTHER**

**DISTINCTIVES**

- ① ONLY Old Testament book, besides the Torah, to establish an annual religious observance  
**PURIM** 14<sup>th</sup> day OR 15<sup>th</sup> day (walled cities) of Adar, compares to our February or March
- ② ONLY Old Testament book NOT found in the caves at Qumran

*Dead Sea Scrolls*

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# Esther

## Slides from Dr. Parke's Teachings

SLIDE 10



**BOOK OF ESTHER**

a GREAT story told WELL

**PROVIDENCE, NOT CONCOEDENCE**

- ① Esther's Rise to Power (1:3-2:18)  
Unknown Jewish Maiden
- 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

Favored Queen



God's Unknown Hand

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SLIDE 11

**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?" (3:4) 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**



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SLIDE 12

**BOOK OF ESTHER**

**TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION**

**IRONY**

- ① 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).
- ② Mordecai had refused to honor Haman, the Grand Vizier. After Haman's death, Ahasuerus promoted Mordecai to Grand Vizier (8:1-10:13).
- ③ The king, by edict, had scheduled a day, the 13<sup>th</sup> 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).

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# The Persian Empire at the Time of Esther

## From the ESV Study Bible

c. 479 B.C.

Long before Esther's time, the people of Israel and Judah (later called Jews) had been dispersed throughout the Near East by the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Eventually the Persians absorbed nearly all of these lands into their empire, which reached its greatest extent during the time of Esther. Thus Haman's plot to exterminate all Jews throughout the Persian Empire would have annihilated virtually all of the Jewish people, and Esther's daring actions saved them from complete destruction.



# Chronology in Esther

## From the ESV Study Bible

The events of Esther unfold over a period of 10 years.

Reference	Event	Month	Day	Year of Ahasuerus's Reign	Year
1:3	Ahasuerus holds his banquets			3	483 B.C.
2:16	Esther goes to Ahasuerus	10		7	479
3:7	Haman casts his lots	1		12	474
3:12	Haman issues his decree	1	13	12	474
3:13	Date planned for annihilation of the Jews	12	13	13	473
8:9	Mordecai issues his decree	3	23	13	473
8:12; 9:1	Day upon which Jews could defend themselves from attack	12	13	13	473
9:6–10, 20–22	Ten sons of Haman executed; Feast of Purim celebrated	12	14, 15	13	473