

Bible Snapshots



Esther – For Such a Time As This **Author** – Nehemiah or Mordecai

Connection with Chronicles and other books

- Esther is a step backward in time from Ezra and Nehemiah. Though not written from the perspective of the returning Jews, Esther describes early events that would impact the return, especially the rebuilding of the wall by Nehemiah. Some scholars believe that this book was written by Nehemiah for the people to encourage them during the period of rebuilding and remind them how God works in the kingdoms of men.
- It can also be rightly said that Esther sets the stage for Ezra and Nehemiah. Without this young woman's seizing of the opportunity to stand for her people, life in the years following would have been far more difficult, as enemies would have a legal upper hand in thwarting their efforts.

Facts

- Esther is 10 chapters long and never once uses any name for God. It is written almost like a novelette and may be labeled as a historical narrative. The events take place under the reign of Xerxes 1 (Ahauserus being a title, like Pharaoh), who reigned from 486 to 465BC. The events of Esther take place over a ten-year period (483-473 BC) and fit chronologically with Ezra 6 and 7. Most likely Esther lived in the reign of Artaxerxes, her step son, under whom Nehemiah would rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Her influence may have facilitated much of it.
- Esther, meaning "star" is the Babylonian name for this young woman. Her Hebrew name was Hadassah, meaning "myrtle tree."

Themes

- The providence of God – neither word is used in the book at all, but is clearly seen in the story.
- God's intercession – Esther is one of only a few women that prefigure Christ by acting as intermediary for her people and rising up to save them.
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Key chapters/verse

- 4 – Mordecai's statement to Esther and her decision to intervene in the affairs of her people before the king, her husband / 4:14

Key phrase / thought

- Feast – there are about ten feast/celebration mentioned in the book.
- Deliverance – God's saving power through human agency.

Outline of Esther

1. Part one – The Threat to the Jews' survival (1-4)
 - a. Esther made queen (1-2)
 - b. Haman's plot (2-4)
2. Part two – Triumph and survival of the Jews (5-10)
 - a. Mordecai's triumph over Haman (5-8)
 - b. Israel triumphs over the enemies (6-10)

Summarizing Esther

The ancient palace of Susa, where Esther lived and would make her appeal before Xerxes, has been excavated and confirms the accuracy of the biblical account of Esther (1:2-6; 4:6; 7:7). Esther describes the place in accurate detail, discovered only hundreds of years later.



Ruins of Palace of Susa

Captivity and Return

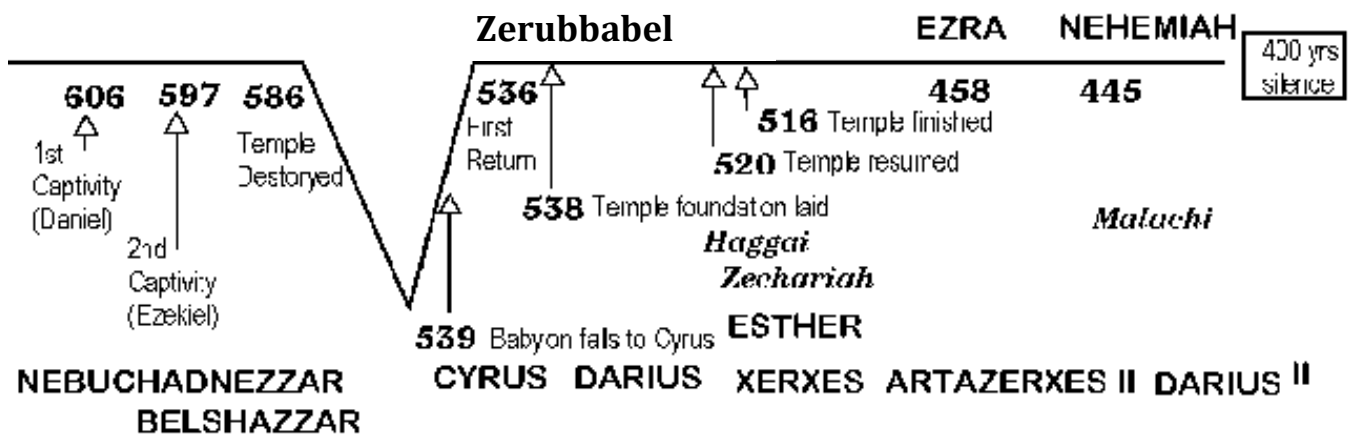


Figure 1: Chronology of the Writing Prophets

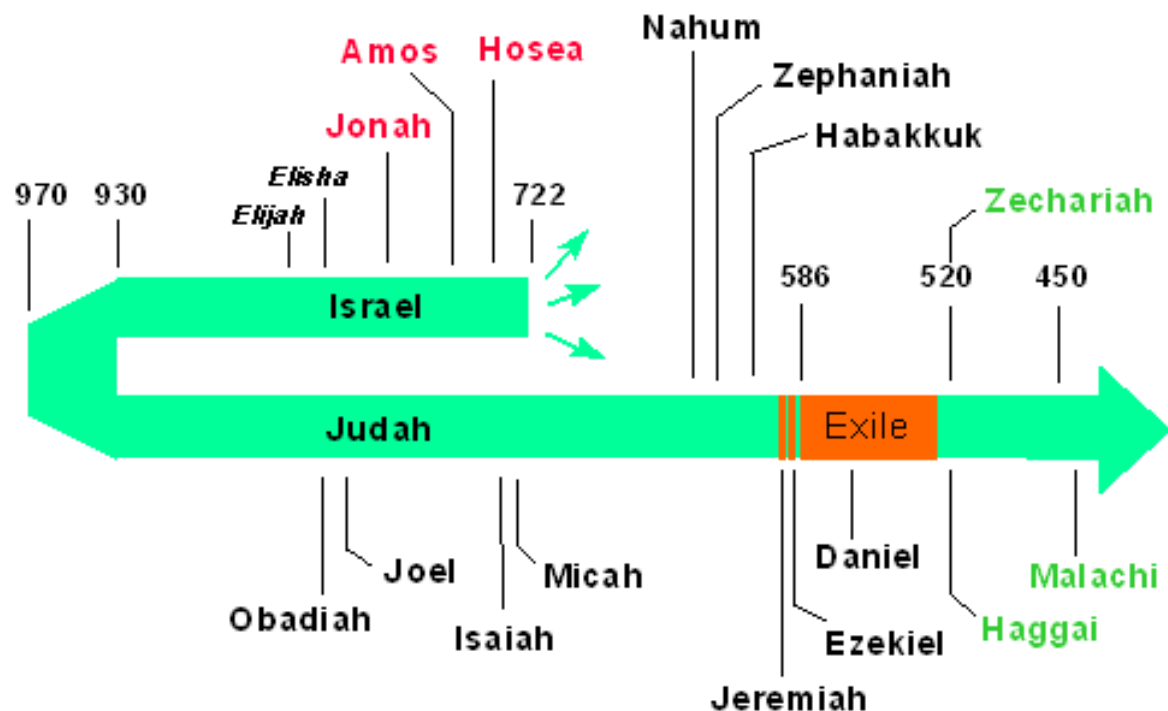


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