

# *Touring the Old Testament*

*I Kings - Esther*



## *History II*

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## Touring the Old Testament - History 2

### 1 Kings through Esther

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## PREFACE

This section of 7 historical books is designed to aid in teaching the subject matter. It is a broad scope summary of the major themes of the books. It is an overview of the following Old Testament books:

- 1 Kings (971 BC—852 BC)
- 2 Kings (852 BC---587 BC)
- 1 Chronicles (4000 BC---971 BC)
- 2 Chronicles (971 BC---587 BC)
- Ezra (539 BC---457 BC)
- Nehemiah (445 BC---425 BC)
- Esther (483 BC---473 BC)

The period of Kings and Chronicles dates from Solomon (971 BC) through the fall of Judah to the Babylonians (587 BC), when Jerusalem was destroyed. During this period, the kingdom was divided into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah (931 BC), and the northern kingdom was taken captive to Assyria (722 BC). The books of 1 and 2 Kings originally were one book, as were the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, but Chronicles deals largely with the kingdom of Judah from Saul's death to the Babylonian captivity. The books of Chronicles were written from a priestly perspective. The book of 1 Chronicles has the most extensive genealogical records contained in the Bible, from Adam to David.

In order to enhance the tracking of the kings, the following chart is offered: All the dates are BC. (Mostly taken from the New Schofield Study Bible, 1967, Oxford University Press, p.408)

### UNITED KINGDOM

Saul	1051---1011
David	1011---971
Solomon	971---931

### KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

Jeroboam I	931---910
Nadab	910---909
Baasha	909---886
Elah	886---885
Zimri	885
Omri	885---874
Ahab	874---853
Ahaziah	853---852
Joram	852---841
Jehu	841---814
Jehoahaz	814---798
Jehoash	798---782
Jeroboam II	782---753
Zechariah	753---752
Shallum	752
Menahem	752---742
Pekahiah	742---740
Pekah	740---732
Hoshea	732---722

### ASSYRIAN CAPTIVITY

### KINGDOM OF JUDAH

Rehoboam	931---913
Abijah	913---911
Asa	911---870
Jehoshaphat	870---848
Jehoram	848---841
Ahaziah	841
Athaliah	841---835
Joash	835---796
Amaziah	796---767
Azariah	767---740
Jotham	740---732
Ahaz	732---716
Hezekiah	716---687
Manasseh	687---642
Amon	642---640
Josiah	640---608
Jehoahaz	608
Jehoiakim	608---597
Jehoiakin	597
Zedekiah	597---587

### BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

It should be noted that the kingdom of Israel consisted of 9 different dynasties, and all 19 of its kings were bad, whereas the kingdom of Judah consisted of only one dynasty (David's heirs) and 8 of its 20 kings were good. These 8 were: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah (Uzziah), Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

In order to help the reader to track the prophets whose names were given to the books of the Old Testament, the following chart is offered. All the dates are BC. The data were taken from Talk Thru the Bible, by Wilkinson & Boa, 1983, Thomas Nelson Publishers, pp 227-228. All of the dates are approximate for the times of ministry.

<u>PROPHET</u>	<u>DATES</u>	<u>AUDIENCE</u>	<u>THEME</u>
Isaiah	740---680	Judah	Salvation is of the Lord
Jeremiah	627---580	Judah	Warning of coming judgment
Ezekiel	593---571	Exiled Judah	Glory of the Lord
Daniel	605---535	Exiled Judah	Sovereignty of God over men & nations
Hosea	755---715	Israel	Loyal love of God
Joel	. 835	Judah	Day of the Lord
Amos	760---753	Israel	Judgment on Israel
Obadiah	848---841	Edom	Doom on Edom
Jonah	782---753	Assyria	Salvation to the Gentiles
Micah	735---700	Judah	Injustice of Judah and justice of God
Nahum	664---654	Assyria	Destruction of Nineveh
Habakkuk	609---605	Judah	Just shall live by faith
Zephaniah	632---628	Judah	Judgment & blessing in the Day of the Lord
Haggai	520	Post-exile Judah	Rebuilding the Temple
Zechariah	520---480	Post-exile Judah	Future blessing for Israel
Malachi	432---424	Post-exile Judah	Appeal to backsliders

It is very helpful in the study of the period of the Kings of the Old Testament and the Post-exile Period, to have a working knowledge of the rulers of the nations around Israel and Judah. Consequently, the charts of the rulers who affected Israel from about 1000 BC to 400 BC are presented below. The nations of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Media, Persia, and Greece have been considered. All times are BC.

### EGYPT

<u>KING</u>	<u>REIGN</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
Shishak	945---924	1 Ki 7:8	Solomon married his daughter.
Zerah the Ethiopian	924---?	2 Chron 14:12	Invasion of Judah defeated by God & Asa
Tirhakah	690	2 Ki 19:9	Came to fight with Sennacherib in Judah
Necho II	609---593	2 Ki 23:29	Necho kills Josiah in battle at Megiddo
Hophra	588---569	Jer 46:17	Pharaoh of Egypt when Jerusalem fell, 587

### ASSYRIA

Tiglath-Pileser III	745---727	2 Ki 15:29	Also called Pul. Captured northern Israel
Shalmanezar V	727---722	2 Ki 18:9	Besieged Samaria 3 years
Sargon II (Jareb)	722---705	2 Ki 18:10-11	Took Samaria; took its people to Assyria
Sennacherib	705---681	2 Ki 19:35	His army killed by an angel of the Lord

BABYLONIA (CHALDEA)

<u>KING</u>	<u>REIGN</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
Merodach-Baladan	722---701	Isa 39:1	He brings Hezekiah a gift; sees his wealth
Nabopolassar	625---606		With the Medes he conquered Nineveh, 612
Nebuchadnezzar II	606---562	2 Chron 36:17-20	Destroyed Jerusalem; took people to Babylon
Nabunaid	556---539		Co-regent with Belshazzar
Belshazzar	553---539	Dan 5:1-2, 28-31	Fall of Babylon to Medes & Persians, 539

MEDIA

Cyaxares	625---585		With the Babylonians he conquered Nineveh
Astyages	585---550		Defeated by Cyrus II of Persia
Darius the Mede	? ---538	Dan 5:31	Governor of Babylon under Cyrus II

PERSIA

Cyrus II	559---530	Ezra 1:1-3, Isa 44:28	Conquered Babylon; released Jews
Cambyses II	530---522		Conquered Egypt
Darius I (Hystaspis)	522---486	Ezra 4:24, Hag 1:1	Defeated by Greeks at Marathon, 491
Xerxes I	486---465	Est 1:1	Also called Ahasuerus; Esther's husband, Defeated by Greeks at Salamis, 480
Artaxerxes I	465---424	Neh 2:1, Ezra 4:7	Sent Nehemiah to build the walls of Jerusalem

GREECE

Alexander the Great	334---323	Dan 8:5-8, 21	Conquered Persia, Egypt, & Central Asia. Spread Greek culture everywhere.
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Let us discuss the exile of Judah to Babylon: Nebuchadnezzar made 3 different invasions of Judah in which he took captives back to Babylon with him. The first was 606 BC when he took some of the youths of the leadership as hostages, among whom were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, and changed their names to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The second was in 598 BC after King Jehoiakim rebelled against him, and then Nebuchadnezzar took all the leaders, the mighty warriors, and the craftsmen and smiths, together being 10,000 captives, and brought them to Babylon. The prophet Ezekiel went with this group. The third invasion came in 589 BC after King Zedekiah rebelled against him, and this time Nebuchadnezzar had determined to destroy Jerusalem, the rebellious city. He burned the temple of the Lord and the king's palace, and took only 832 captives back to Babylon. These last captives were the "bad figs" of Jeremiah 24.

There were two prophecies of 70 years of captivity given by Jeremiah, but they were not the same periods. The first was given in Jer 25:11, which dealt with the desolations of Judah. This prophecy was fulfilled from 589 BC to 520 BC. (Remember that the Jews counted both the beginning and ending years of the prophecy). The second was given in Jer 29:10, which dealt with the captivity of Judah. This prophecy was fulfilled from 606 BC to 537 BC when 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, having been released by Cyrus II, the Persian king. Daniel understood these two different periods, see Dan 9:2.

## 1 KINGS

**Author:** Jeremiah was the author, according to Jewish tradition (Talmud). The two books of kings were originally one book in Hebrew, called “Melechim” (Kings). Jeremiah had access to several historical documents: Acts of Solomon (11:41), Chronicles of the kings of Israel (14:19), Chronicles of the kings of Judah (14:29), and Isaiah 36-39.

**Setting:** The book of Kings was compiled by Jeremiah approximately 646-570 BC for the remnant of Judah, both before and after it was led into exile. First Kings covers the period from the beginning of Solomon’s reign, 971 BC, through the end of the reign of Ahaziah (of Israel), 852 BC. The kingdom of Israel was divided in 931 BC into the northern kingdom, called Israel, and the southern kingdom, called Judah.

**Theme:** Covenant faithfulness. The welfare of the kingdoms depended upon the covenant faithfulness of the people and their kings.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the book of Kings was to provide an analysis of the spiritual and moral causes which had serious political and economic effects in the two kingdoms.

**Key word:** Division

**Key verse:** 11:11. Because Solomon hadn’t kept the Lord’s covenant and statutes, God said that He would tear the kingdom from him and would give it to his servant.

**Key chapter:** 12. The kingdom was divided into 2 nations with 2 kings, 2 capitals, and 2 religions.

**Christ seen:** Solomon was a type of Christ in wisdom, knowledge, peace, and worship, and foreshadows Christ’s fame, glory, wealth, and honor in His Kingdom.

**Significance in the Bible:** First Kings shows the division and decline of the kingdom from its greatness. It also shows how prophetic ministry came to maturity. The prophets mentioned are: Ahijah, Shemaiah, the Man of God, Jehu (son of Hanani), Elijah, and Micaiah.

**Survey:**

### I. United Kingdom (ch 1-11)

#### A. Establishment of Solomon as king (ch 1-2)

- David presides over making Solomon king.
- Adonijah plots to be king, fails, and is executed.
- Abiathar is removed from the priesthood because he followed Adonijah.
- Joab is executed for shedding innocent blood of Abner and Amasa.
- Shimei is executed for disobeying Solomon’s direct order.

**B. Rise of Solomon as king (ch 3-8)**

3:9 Solomon asks for and receives wisdom. He receives a “hearing heart.”

4:21 Solomon’s kingdom was from the Euphrates River to border of Egypt (Wadi El Arish in the Sinai peninsula).

5:12 Solomon made a peace treaty with Hiram, king of Tyre, who promised to give him cedar logs for building the Lord’s temple.

6:38 Solomon completed the building of the temple in 7.5 years.

--Temple symbolism:

Lions=royalty/strength

Palm trees=rest, refreshment

Oxen=submissive servant-hood

Cherubim=presence of God

Pomegranates=fruit producing joy

8:47-49 This is why Daniel prayed toward Jerusalem some 430 years later.

**C. Decline of Solomon as king (ch 9-11)**

Disobedience of Solomon to the covenant:

9:11 Gave away 20 cities in Galilee to King Hiram of Tyre.

9:20-21 Enslaved the Canaanites.

10:21-23 Multiplied his wealth (see Deut 17:17)

10:26-28 Multiplied his horses (see Deut 17:16)

11:1-4 Married heathen foreign women (see Deut 17:17)

11:4-8 Worshiped idols

11:11 God promised to divide the kingdom; stirred up adversaries to Solomon.

**II. Divided Kingdom (ch 12-22)****A. Division of the kingdom (ch 12-14)**

--Cause: idolatry and oppression. Solomon’s son Rehoboam didn’t have a servant’s heart. A king with a servant’s heart would be served by his people because he would give them his example. (Solomon didn’t have a servant’s heart either).

--Benjamin and Judah stayed with Rehoboam, the house of David.

12:20 Jeroboam, son of Nebat, was made king over the northern kingdom (Israel).

--Jeroboam’s sins:

12:28-30 Made 2 golden calves for the people to worship.

12:31 Made artificial priests, not of the house of Levi.

12:32 Made an artificial Feast of Tabernacles in the 8<sup>th</sup> month.

12:33 Made an idolatrous altar at Bethel.

14:15 This is the first mention of an Assyrian captivity for Israel.

14:16 **“Made Israel to sin”** This phrase occurs for every king of Israel except Shallum and Hoshea. It refers to the worshiping of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel.

**B. Reigns of various kings (ch 15-16) (J=Judah, I= Israel, ●=assassinated)**

Abijam (J)—bad

Nadab (I)—bad ●

Zimri (I)—bad

Asa (J)—good

Baasha (I)—bad

Omri (I)—bad

Elah (I)—bad ●

**C. Reign of Ahab (ch 16:29-22:40)** (16:30 He was the worst king of Israel to that time.)

--Ahab's sins:

- 16:31 Worshiped the golden calves of Jeroboam.
- 16:31 Married Jezebel, a heathen Phoenician Baal-worshiper.
- 16:31 Worshiped Baal and served him.
- 16:32 Built an altar and a house for Baal in Samaria.
- 16:33 Made an idol.
- 18:4 Ahab's wife Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord.
- 21:16 Jezebel had Nabal killed, and Ahab stole his vineyard.
- 20:34 Spared Ben-hadad, whom God had appointed for destruction.

--Ahab's death in battle: Micaiah's prophecy was fulfilled (22:17,37)

**D. Elijah's ministry (17:1-2 Ki 2:11)** (Elijah was a type of John the Baptist.)

--Miracles:

- 17:1 Commanded a drought on the land of Israel.
- 17:16 Widow's meal and oil lasted throughout the time of drought.
- 17:22 Raised the widow's son from the dead.
- 18:12 Traveled by translation of the Holy Spirit.
- 18:38 Brought fire down from heaven at Mt. Carmel.
- 18:41 Brought rain to end the drought.
- 18:46 Ran from Mt. Carmel to Jezreel before Ahab's chariot, about 35 miles

--Prophetic tasks:

- 18:40 Slew the prophets of Baal.
- 19:15 To anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.
- 19:16 To anoint Jehu, son of Nimshi, to be king over Israel.
- 19:16 To anoint Elisha, son of Shaphat, to be prophet to replace Elijah.
- 21:19 Pronounced doom on Ahab for killing Nabal and stealing his land.

**E. Reigns of Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah (22:41-53)**

Jehoshaphat (J)---good      Ahaziah (I)---bad

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## 2 KINGS

**Author:** Jeremiah was the author, according to Jewish tradition (Talmud). The two books of kings were originally one book in Hebrew, called “Melechim” (Kings). Jeremiah had access to several historical documents which are mentioned in 1 Kings: Acts of Solomon (11:41), Chronicles of the kings of Israel (14:19), Chronicles of the kings of Judah (14:29), and Isaiah 36-39.

**Setting:** The book of 2 Kings covers the period 852-560 BC. It traces the monarchies of Israel and Judah by first carrying one nation’s history forward, and then tracing the same period for the other nation. The prominent prophets for each nation are listed below.

ISRAEL						JUDAH				
Elijah	Elisha	Hosea	Amos	Jonah		Isaiah	Jeremiah	Obadiah	Micah	Joel
						Nahum	Habakkuk	Zephaniah		

**Theme:** Same as in 1 Kings, Covenant Faithfulness. The welfare of Israel and Judah depended on the covenant faithfulness of the people and their King.

**Purpose:** Same as in 1 Kings. The spiritual and moral climate of each nation determined its political and economic conditions. God is seen in the books of Kings as the controller of history who reveals His plan and purpose to His people.

**Key word:** Captivities

**Key verses:** 17:22-23. The Lord brought Israel into captivity.  
 23:27 The Lord decided to remove Judah into captivity.

**Key chapter:** 25. This chapter shows the utter destruction of Jerusalem and its glorious temple.

**Christ seen:** Elisha is a type of Christ who lives among the people and emphasizes grace, life, and hope, and does great miracles.

**Significance in the Bible:** This book shows the deterioration of both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. It also shows God’s method of using gentile nations as instruments of judgment for His backslidden people. This is very significant for God’s backslidden people today.

### Comparison of 1 and 2 Kings:

1 KINGS
Opens with David, King of Israel Solomon’s glory Temple built and consecrated Begins with blessings for obedience Growth of apostasy United kingdom is divided

2 KINGS
Closes with Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon Jehoiachin’s shame Temple violated and destroyed Ends with judgment for disobedience Consequences of apostasy The 2 kingdoms are destroyed

**Survey:****I. Divided Kingdom (ch 1-17) (J=Judah, I=Israel, ●=assassinated)****A. Reign of Ahaziah (I) : bad (ch 1)**

--Miracle of Elijah calling fire from heaven to destroy 2 groups of 50 soldiers each.

**B. Reign of Joram (I) : bad ● (ch 2-8:15)****C. Elisha's ministry (ch 2:12-8:15) (Elisha was a type of Christ)**

--Translation of Elijah-What are the chariot of Israel and its horsemen?

See 1 Chron 28:18.

--Scorning God's prophet brings a curse (2:24)

--Miracles:

- Ch 3 Saved the armies of Israel and Judah from dying of thirst.  
Jehoshaphat always inquired of God after he compromised with evil.
- 4:3-6 Increase of widow's oil
- 4:16 Prophesied birth of a son to the Shunammite woman.
- 4:35 Raised the Shunammite's son from the dead.
- 4:41 Making the poisonous food harmless
- 4:43 Multiplying the 20 loaves of barley and grain to feed 100 men
- Ch 5 Healing of Naaman the Syrian  
Principle of Naaman's healing: To humble oneself and obey the Word  
Principle of Elisha's payment: To take nothing for exercising his gift
- 6:6 Making the iron axhead to float on the water
- 6:10 Predicted at least 3 times where the Syrian army was lying in ambush.
- 6:18 The Syrian army was blinded. Who did it? The angelic army.
- 7:1,7 Predicted the end of the siege of Samaria. What made the noise of the chariots and horses? The angelic army.
- 7:2,17 Predicted death for the unbelieving noble before he could eat the food of the Syrians after they had fled.
- 8:1 Predicted 7 years of famine which came to pass.
- 8:13 Predicted that Hazael would be king of Syria & Ben-hadad would die.

**D. Reigns of Jehoram (J): bad, and Ahaziah (J): bad ● (8:16-9:29)**

--Jehu anointed king of Israel to annihilate the house of Ahab (9:6-10)

--Jehu executes King Joram (I) and King Ahaziah (J) (9:24,27)

**E. Reigns of Jehu (I): bad, Athaliah (J): bad ●, and Joash (J): good ● (9:30-12:21)**

--Israel east of Jordan River was cut off from the rest of Israel by Syria. (10:32-33)

--God's covenant was renewed in the days of Joash. (11:17)

**F. Reigns of Jehoahaz (I): bad, Jehoash (I): bad, Jeroboam II (I): bad**

**Zechariah (I): bad ●, Amaziah (J): good ●, Azariah (Uzziah) (J): good (13:1-15:12)**

--How could powerful Elisha die of sickness? The answer is burnout. (13:14)

--See 13:17-18. Once the arrows of the Lord's deliverance had been identified, it was dependent upon Joash to smite many times until he had smashed the Syrians.

**G. Reigns of Shallum (I): bad ●, Menahem (I): bad, Pekahiah (I): bad ●, Pekah (I): bad ●, Hoshea (I): bad, Jotham (J): good, Ahaz (I): bad (15:13-17-41)**

--Tiglath Pileser III (Pul) took northern Israel and Gilead in 732 BC. (15:29)

--Shalmanezar V besieged Samaria 3 years 724-722 BC. (17:3-5)

--Sargon II (Jareb) took Samaria, captured Israel and deported them 722 BC. (17:6)

--The kings of Assyria had a policy of deportation to lessen chances for revolt.

--Reason for Israel's deportation: Idol worship. (17:22-23)

**II. The Surviving Kingdom of Judah (ch 18-25)**

**A. Reign of Hezekiah: good (ch 18-20)**

--1st and 2nd invasions of Judah by Sennacherib, king of Assyria. He scoffed at God.

His army was destroyed by an angel of the Lord in 701 BC. (19:35)

--Hezekiah's sickness and recovery. The sundial shadow retreated 10 degrees. (20:10-11)

**B. Reigns of Manasseh: bad, and Amon: bad ● (ch 21)**

**C. Reign of Josiah: good (22:1-23:30)**

--Assyria was destroyed in 612 BC by a coalition of Medes and Babylonians.

--Josiah repaired the temple, found the book of the Law of God, humbled himself, reinstated the passover, and was killed in a battle which was not his fight.

**D. Reigns of Jehohaz: bad, Jehoiakim: bad, Jehoiachin: bad, and Zedekiah: bad (23:31-25:30)**

--Babylon was the reigning power. There were 3 deportations of Judah to Babylon.

1. 606 BC, Daniel and his 3 friends. Jehoiakim made king. Dan 1:3

2. 598 BC, Jehoiachin + 10,000 people. Zedekiah made king. 2 Ki 24:14

3. 587 BC, Zedekiah + 832 people. Gedeliah made governor. Jer 52:29

--Gedeliah the puppet governor was assassinated. (25:25)

--Remaining Jews flee to Egypt. Kingdom of Judah finished. (25:26)

--Judah becomes a province in the Babylonian Empire.

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## 1 CHRONICLES

**Author:** Ezra the priest, according to the Jewish tradition (Talmud). The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles were originally one book in Hebrew, called “Divrei-HaYamin” (Events of the Times). The emphasis is on the temple, the priesthood, the theocratic line of David, genealogies, and obedience to God’s law. Chronicles is similar in style to the book of Ezra. The last verses of 2 Chronicles are also the first verses of Ezra, and may have been one consecutive history. The material in Chronicles was compiled from several sources.

**Setting:** The book of 1 Chronicles was probably written between 450 BC-430 BC and was addressed to the returned exiles. The genealogies extend from Adam (4000 BC?) to 971 BC. The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles cover the same period as 2 Samuel-2 Kings, but from the priestly perspective of a spiritual history of David’s dynasty. The book of 1 Chronicles deals with events through the reign of David.

**Theme:** The temple of God in Jerusalem. Chapters 11-29 cover David’s preparation for the construction and service of the temple.

**Purpose:** To encourage the Jewish remnant in rebuilding their heritage after the exile.

**Key words:** Davidic covenant.

**Key verses:** 17:11-14 The statement of the Davidic covenant.

**Key chapter:** 17. Records the Davidic covenant.

**Christ seen:** 1. David, a type of Christ.  
2. David’s “son” Messiah got the promise of an eternal throne and kingdom because he is the eternal seed.

**Significance in the Bible:** The book of 1 Chronicles covers more history than any other Old Testament book. It begins with Adam, approx. 4000 BC and ends with the death of David, 971 BC. It covers the temple’s conception and planning.

### Comparison of Samuel/Kings and Chronicles:

SAMUEL & KINGS	CHRONICLES
Israel’s history from united kingdom to captivities	History of southern kingdom and David’s line
Political history	Religious history
Prophetic author: prophetic ministry	Priestly author: priestly ministry
Written soon after the events	Written many years after the events
More negative: rebellion and tragedy	More positive: hope, in spite of tragedy
Message of judgment	Message of hope
Man’s failings	God’s faithfulness
Emphasizes kings and prophets	Emphasizes the temple and priests

**1 Chronicles:****OMITS**

David's struggles with Saul  
 David's 7 year reign in Hebron  
 David's wives  
 Absalom's rebellion  
 David's acts of adultery & murder

**ADDS**

David's preparations for the temple  
 Worship services in David's tent

**Survey:****I. The Royal Line of David (ch 1-9)****A. Value of the genealogies to the returned exiles**

1. A clear tracing of the Davidic line
2. Who was a Levite and could do temple service and worship
3. Who had a right to tribal lands

**B. From Adam to the return from captivity (ch 1-3)**

- 1:19 Peleg = division. In his days the division of nations and tongues occurred.  
 2:13-17 David's family roster  
 2:20 This is Bezalel, the skilled craftsman who made tabernacle articles.

**C. Genealogies of the 12 tribes (ch 4-8)**

- 5:1-2 Joseph's sons got the birthright, but Judah got the kingly line  
 Birthright: See Deut 21:17  
 6:33,39,44 These were the 3 singers who were over the service of song in David's tabernacle (tent). Their names were Heman, Asaph, and Ethan and came down from Aaron's 3 sons Kohath, Gershom, and Merari respectively.

**D. Genealogy of the Remnant (ch 9)****II. The Reign of David (ch 10-29)****A. Accession of David (ch 10-12)**

- 11:3 David is crowned King of all Israel.  
 12:24-37 There were 337,000 soldiers at David's side.

**B. Acquisition of the Ark of God (ch 13-17) David was a spiritual man and Saul was not.**

- 13:3 David thought of bringing the ark to Jerusalem.  
 14:2 David perceived that God had honored him because God loved Israel.  
 14:10 David asked for God's plan before waging war.  
 15:29 David humbled himself by dancing in front of the ark.  
 16:3 David treated women as equals with men.  
 16:7 David wrote a psalm of thanksgiving to God.  
 17:1 David, in his leisure time, thought about God's honor.

**C. Military victories of David (ch 18-20)**

- 18:1 David subdued the Philistines.
- 18:2 David subdued the Moabites.
- 18:3 David subdued Hadadezer, king of Zobah, and reached the Euphrates River.
- 18:6 David subdued the Syrians of Damascus.
- 18;8,11 David gathers the spoils of war for the building of the temple in Jerusalem.
- 18:12 Abishai, David's general, subdued the Edomites.
- 19:15,18 David and his men subdued the rest of the Syrians.
- 20:1 Joab, David's general subdued the Ammonites.
- 20:3 David put the Ammonites to work to prepare for building the temple.

**D. Preparation and organization of Israel for the building of the temple (ch 21-27)**

- 21:26 Purpose of David's altar was for intercession for the people of Israel.
- 1 Sam 13:11-12 Purpose of Saul's altar was for fear of losing his army before his battle with the Philistines. (This is a good contrast between Saul & David.)
- 22:1 David selects the site to build the temple, the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, where God had sent fire to consume David's offering.
- 22:8 David was not to build the temple because he had shed much blood.
- 23:4 There were 24,000 Levites chosen to build the temple.
- 23:5 There were 4,000 Levite porters and 4,000 musical instrument players.
- 24:5-19 There were 24 courses of priests that were to serve in the temple.
- 25:7 There were 288 Levites that were to sing praise to God in the temple. They were divided into 24 orders.
- 26:1-19 There were 120 Levites appointed to be porters (gatekeepers).

**E. The last days of David (ch 28-29)**

- 28:11-13 David gave Solomon the pattern for the temple
- 28:18 This giant chariot and angel statues were called "the chariot of Israel and its horsemen." (See 2 Ki 2:12 and 2 Ki 13:14)
- 28:19 God gave David the pattern for the temple.
- 29:28 David died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor.

\* \* \*

## 2 CHRONICLES

**Author:** Ezra, who compiled Chronicles, and used at least 16 different documents, mostly prophetic and kingly records. As mentioned in 1 Chronicles, originally there was only one book of Chronicles; later it was divided into two parts. The book of 2 Chronicles parallels the books of 1 and 2 Kings, but considers only the kingdom of Judah from a priestly viewpoint. It focuses only on godly kings, mainly on Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

**Setting:** Chapters 1-9 cover the 40 years of Solomon's reign (971 BC-931BC), and chapters 10-36 cover the 393 years from 931 BC to 538 BC. The prophet Jeremiah's prediction of 70 years of captivity (Jer 29:10) and 70 years of desolation (Jer 25:11) were fulfilled in this manner:  
**POLITICAL CAPTIVITY:** 606-537 BC when the exiles returned under Zerubbabel.  
**RELIGIOUS DESOLATION:** 589-520 BC when the foundation of the new temple was laid.

**Theme:** The temple of God in Jerusalem. Ch 1-9 = building and consecrating the temple. Prominence is given to Judah's temple reforms and the godly kings who instituted the reforms.

**Purpose:** To encourage the godly remnant of returned exiles to accept the new temple, and to remind them to rebuild their heritage and to recover their calling.

**Key words:** Priestly view of Judah.

**Key verses:** 7:14 If my people.....and will heal their land.  
 16:9 The Lord looks for those of loyal heart to show himself strong for them.

**Key chapter:** 34. The dramatic revival under king Josiah.

**Christ seen:** The temple prefigures Christ. Jesus likened his body to Herod's temple (Jn 2:19).

**Significance in the Bible:** Aside from the book of 1 Chronicles, the book of 2 Chronicles covers more history than other books of the Bible. It deals with the period 971 BC to 538 BC. It shows the temple's construction, consecration, corruption, cleansing, and conflagration.

**Survey:**

### I. Reign of Solomon (ch 1-9)

#### A. Inauguration of Solomon (ch 1)

1:10 Solomon asked God for wisdom and knowledge to judge his people.

1:12 God gave Solomon wisdom, knowledge, riches, wealth, and honor.

#### B. Completion of the temple (ch 2-7)

3:1 The temple was built on Mt. Moriah where Abraham had put Isaac on the altar.  
 See Gen 22:2.

3:10-13 Compare the cherubim here with those of 1 Chronicles 28:18 (the same) and the cherubim on the ark of the covenant of Ex 25:17-20.

5:3 The temple was dedicated during the Feast of Tabernacles.

5:13 The Lord's glory came when the praisers using instruments and voice were in perfect harmony (unity).

6:6 God chose the city of Jerusalem that his name might be there.

6:33 Solomon knew that Israel's task was to bring God's name and his fear to all peoples.

7:14 This promise of God still applies to God's people today, and to America.

### **C. The glory of Solomon's reign and his death (ch 8-9)**

9:8 When foreigners see a wise, benevolent ruler who governs in God's ways, they are drawn to God.

## **II. Reign of Kings of Judah (ch 10-36)**

### **A. Reign of Rehoboam (ch 11-12)**

11:13-14 Priests & Levites in Israel, being deposed by Jeroboam, migrated to Israel.

11:16 All Israelites who sought God moved to Jerusalem, strengthening Judah.

12:14 We do evil if we do not prepare our hearts to seek the Lord. (See Prov 16:1)

### **B. Reign of Abijah (ch 13)**

13:15 Judah, outnumbered 2 to 1, defeated Israel with God's help.

### **C. Reign of Asa (ch 14-16)**

14:7 When a person seeks God, God gives rest on every side.

15:8 A true word of prophecy gave Asa courage to act boldly to destroy idols.

15:9 When God was with Asa, he attracted godly men who saw God's favor.

16:9 God is looking to show himself strong for the person whose heart is blameless.

### **D. Reign of Jehoshaphat (ch 17-20)**

17:7-9 Jehoshaphat sent princes (civil gov't) and Levites & priests (religious gov't) to teach the law of the Lord in the cities of Judah.

18:1-3 Joining in a covenant with a wicked family dulled Jehoshaphat's spiritual sensitivity.

18:31 God often protects his people when they are out of his will, when they recognize it when they are in trouble, and call upon God for help. He helps the truly penitent.

20:20 Belief in the Lord establishes you; belief in his prophets prospers you.

20:22 Faith was still required—the people sang & praised while facing destruction.

20:35-36 Jehoshaphat still had no spiritual discernment in the area of alliances.

### **E. Reign of Jehoram (ch 21)**

### **F. Reign of Ahaziah (ch 22)**

22:7 Ahaziah's destruction was from God because of his friendliness with the evil house of king Ahab of Israel.



**G. Reign of Joash (ch 23-24)**

23:19 The porters stopped anyone who was unclean from entering the temple.

24:8,12 Joash made a chest to receive the offerings of the people so that the house of the Lord could be repaired. The people willingly gave the temple tax, and the temple was repaired.

24:21 Joash had the prophet Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, killed.

**H. Reign of Amaziah (ch 25)****I. Reign of Uzziah (Azariah) (ch 26)**

26:16 Uzziah's sin was pride, and because of it he became a leper. Kings could burn offerings on the brazen altar, but not incense on the golden altar. That was the job of the priests.

**J. Reign of Jotham (ch 27)**

27:6 Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord.

**K. Reign of Ahaz (ch 28)**

28:19 The Lord brought Judah low because Ahaz transgressed greatly against God.

**L. Reign of Hezekiah (ch 29-32)**

29:27-28 The song of the Lord was with both musical instruments and voices.

30:5 Hezekiah invited the remnant of Israel to share the Passover with Judah in the second month of the year.

30:20 The Lord was gracious and healed the people who had prepared their heart to seek him although they were ritually unclean. Remember that FORGIVENESS = HEALING.

32:20-21 God answered Hezekiah's and Isaiah's prayers by sending an angel who killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, destroying their army. (See also Isa 37:36)

32:32 Hezekiah's goodness is written in 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, and 2 Kings.

**M. Reign of Manasseh (ch 33)**

33:9 Manasseh made Judah sin worse than the Canaanites whom they had displaced.

**N. Reign of Josiah (ch 34-35)**

34:28 Because Josiah humbled himself, he would not see God's judgment on Judah.

35:18 Josiah celebrated the Passover better than any previous celebration since the days of Samuel the prophet.

35:22 Josiah didn't recognize godly words from an ungodly man, and paid for it with his life.

**O. Reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah (ch 36)**

36:10 This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> deportation to Babylon in the year 598 BC.

36:18 This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> deportation to Babylon in the year 587 BC.

36:21 The desolations were to last 70 years until the land had fulfilled its Sabbaths.

36:23 King Cyrus of Persia releases the captives to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

## EZRA

**Author:** Ezra, according to the Talmud. His name comes from “Ezer” (Heb.), meaning “help.” He was a priest, and the book has strong priestly emphasis. He studied, practiced, and taught God’s law as an educated scribe (7:6). He had access to written documents gathered by Nehemiah. Ezra probably wrote between 458 BC and 445 BC when Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem.

**Setting:** The books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah were viewed by Jews as one continuous history. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah were originally bound together as one book. The relationship of the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther to each other and to the three returns of the Jews to Israel from Persia, is shown below:

<u>RETURN</u>	<u>DATES (BC)</u>	<u>LEADER</u>	<u>SCRIPTURE</u>	<u>PERSIAN RULER</u>
1	538-520	Zerubbabel	Ezra 1-6	Cyrus II
---	483-473	Esther	Esther 1-10	Xerxes (Ahasuerus)
2	458	Ezra	Ezra 7-10	Artaxerxes I
3	445-425	Nehemiah	Nehemiah 1-13	Artaxerxes I

As part of the setting, it is helpful to know something about the history of the Medes and Persians, and the ranks within the Persian court, and the names of the Persian kings and the period of their reigns. The Aryans came onto the Iranian plateau around 1500 BC. Two tribes rose to greatness. The first was the Amadai or Ummanmanda (Medes) of whom today’s Kurds are the descendants. The second was the stronger tribe called Parsans (Persians) who defeated the Medes in battle, but never destroyed them. Instead, the Medes were accepted into the Persian Army and treated as cousins. The Persian court rankings and names and terms of the Persian kings are shown below:

<u>COURT RANKS</u>	<u>PERSIAN KINGS</u>	<u>REIGNS (BC)</u>
King	Cyrus II (The Great)	559-530
Cabinet ministers (7)	Cambyses	530-522
Magoi (Upper house)	Smerdis	522-522
Sofi (Lower house)	Darius I (The Great)	522-486
	Xerxes (Ahasuerus)	486-465
	Artaxerxes I	465-424

**Theme:** The spiritual, moral, and social restoration of the returned Remnant in Jerusalem.

**Purpose:** To show how God protected his people in captivity, prospered them, gave them favor with their captors, and kept His promise to return them to their land and end the desolations of the land of Israel.

**Key word:** Temple

**Key verses:** 1:3 ...Let the people go up to Jerusalem and build the house of God.  
7:10 Now Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord...

**Key chapter:** 6, which records the completion and dedication of the temple.

**Christ seen:** God's promise to keep the descendants of David alive and bring Messiah from his descendants is seen in **Zerubbabel**, who himself is one of David's descendants, being the grandson of Jehoiachin. The whole book of Ezra typifies Christ's work of forgiveness and restoration.

**Significance in the Bible:** Ezra forcefully emphasizes the power of the Word of God, and the need to obey it.

**Survey:**

## I. Restoration of the Temple (ch 1-6)

### A. The First Return Under Zerubbabel (ch 1-2)

1:1 The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus the Persian (538 BC). Cyrus was chosen by God to do God's pleasure regarding Israel. (See Isa 44:28 and Isa 45:1-4, 13.

- To let the Jewish captives go free
- To lay the foundation of the temple
- To order the rebuilding of Jerusalem

1:2-3 Cyrus ordered the temple to be built and the captives to be released. He admitted that the Lord God of Israel was the God of heaven.

1:5 The Lord stirred up the spirits of certain Jewish people to build the temple.

1:7-8 Cyrus gave the former temple vessels to Sheshbazzar (Zerubbabel) for the new temple.

Ch. 2 There were 49,697, or almost 50,000 people who returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. They were composed of Leaders, Priests, Solomon's Servants, Levites, Nethinim, and common people.

--Leaders:	11	(2:2)	}	5033 persons
--Priests:	4289	(2:36-39)		
--Levites	341	(2:40-42)		
--Nethinim and Solomon's Servants	392	(2:58)		
--Common people	44,664			

### B. Construction of the Temple (ch 3-6)

3:2 Jeshua the son of Jozadak was the high priest in the days of Zerubbabel.

3:8 The construction of the temple began in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year after the exiles' return, 537 BC.

3:10 When the foundation was laid, the priests and Levite singers praised the Lord.

3:11 There was great joy but also tears when those who had seen Solomon's Temple wept when they compared this new building to that of Solomon.

4:4-5 Who were these people who frustrated the building of the temple? They were the descendants of the Samaritans who the Assyrian kings had settled in the land of Israel when the 10 tribes were dispersed throughout their empire.

The Jews refused their help rebuilding the temple, avoiding religious mixture.

4:5 Why were the Samaritans able to stop the rebuilding during the days of Cyrus and the Persian kings that followed him, until the days of Darius I? Reasons:

--The time of 70 years of the desolations of Jerusalem were not yet finished.  
(See Preface to History II)

--Cyrus was continually on the battlefield, expanding his empire. He was killed in battle in 530 BC. Cambyses also expanded the Persian Empire into Egypt, and couldn't bother with the Jews. Smerdis was killed the same year that he took office, and it wasn't until Darius I that the Jews could argue their case in the Persian court.

4:6-4:23 These are parenthetical verses set in here, which talk about the Samaritans stopping the Jews from rebuilding the **walls of Jerusalem** during the days of the future Persian kings Xerxes (Ahasuerus) and Artaxerxes. It seems that an effort had been made to build the walls during this time, and had been effectively stopped by the Samaritans.

4:24 So the work on rebuilding the **temple** stopped also, until the days of Darius I.

5:1-2 The prophetic word from God was given by prophets Haggai and Zechariah that stirred up the people to resume building the temple in 520 BC. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius I and the end of the desolations of Jerusalem.

5:17 The Samaritans request that the Persian records under Cyrus be searched to see whether he had ordered the Jews to rebuild the temple or not.

6:1-3 Darius wisely searched all of the Persian records in different locations, and did find the command of Cyrus to have the Jews rebuild the temple. He threatened the Samaritans with death if they hindered the temple's rebuilding, and even commanded them to supply the things necessary for the temple services.

6:14-18 The temple was finished in 516 BC. and was dedicated.

6:19 The Passover was restored by the returned Remnant.

### 58 Years pass

## II. Reformation of the People (ch 7-10)

### A. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Return Under Ezra (ch 7-8) 458 BC.

7:5-6 Ezra was the chief priest of Israel and a scribe in the law of Moses. Ezra asked Artaxerxes to send him to Jerusalem for these reasons: Artaxerxes agreed.

--To see whether the Jews in Jerusalem were keeping God's law.

--To take the king's money and the people's money for temple sacrifices.

--To deliver many of the temple's vessels to the temple.

--To free the temple servants from any taxes.

--To establish godly judges, and to teach and enforce God's law.

7:10 Ezra had prepared his heart to seek, to do, and to teach God's law.

Ch 8 About 1772 people went up with Ezra to Jerusalem, including 38 Levites.

8:22 Ezra didn't ask for a bodyguard of any soldiers, but trusted God to protect them

8:24-30 They carried 25 tons of silver, 3.75 tons of silver vessels, 3.75 tons of gold and 20 gold vessels. It was a very rich caravan.

**B. Restoration of the People (ch 9-10)**

9:1-2 Israel had intermarried with the people of the land, including the rulers who had done so too. This is what had caused the captivity to Babylon.

10:1 Ezra's intercession brought a spirit of repentance upon the people.

10:2-3 Shecaniah came up with the plan for all the people to put away their foreign mates.

10:5 The priests, Levites, and all the people agreed to do this plan.

10:12-14 The people said that they would put away their foreign wives and children, and it took 3 months to set the situation right because of rainy weather. The priests, Levites and singers all had to comply also.

\* \* \*

## NEHEMIAH

**Author:** Nehemiah or Nehemyah (Heb.) meaning “comfort of Jehovah” was the author. The book was written from his personal memoirs. He was the cupbearer to Artaxerxes I, the Persian king, in a position of confidence and trust. He risked his life every day for the king. Nehemiah became the governor of Judah from 445 to 433 BC. He had courage and compassion for the oppressed, and had integrity, godliness, and selflessness.

**Setting:** During the reign of Artaxerxes I, 465 to 424 BC, the king had continued the policy of his father Xerxes by commanding the Jews in Jerusalem to stop building the city walls. This is seen from Ezra 4:6-7, 21, However, in 458 BC he had sent Ezra to Jerusalem to teach the people the laws of the God of the Hebrews, and after a space of 13 years he trusted that the people of Jerusalem would not revolt against the king. Therefore when Nehemiah requested permission to go to Jerusalem and rebuild its walls, the king was willing to permit him to do so, and gave him the necessary authority to overcome any local opposition. Bear in mind that Queen Esther was the king’s stepmother, and she was a trusted Jewess. Nehemiah left Persia in 445 BC, returned in 433 BC, and made a second visit to Jerusalem about 425 BC. Bigvai replaced Nehemiah as governor of Judah by 410 BC. Malachi ministered during Nehemiah’s time. It was a time of the coldness of the Jewish Remnant toward God.

**Theme:** Judah’s political and geographical restoration

**Purpose:** To show the hand of God in the establishment of His people in their homeland in the post-exile years. Obedient faith overcame great opposition.

**Key words:** Jerusalem walls

**Key verses:** 6:15-16 So the wall was finished ...in 52 days. Our enemies...perceived that this work was wrought by our God.

**Key chapter:** 9. The nation reaffirmed its loyalty to the Mosaic Covenant, which is the theme and unifying factor in the Old Testament.

**Christ seen:** Nehemiah, in his ministry of restoration is a figure of Christ. He gave up a high position in the Persian court, to remedy the plight of his people, who were helpless without walls to protect them. Like Christ, he fulfilled a specific mission, and his life was characterized by prayerful dependence on God.

**Significance in the Bible:** The book of Nehemiah provides the background of the post-exile period, and the hostile interaction of the Jews with the people of the land (Samaritans). It helps to understand the post-exile prophetic writings of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The book also shows the importance of prayer, and portrays Nehemiah’s balance of dependence and discipline, prayer and planning.

**Survey:**

**I. Reconstruction of the Wall (ch 1-7)**

**A. Preparation for Construction (ch 1-2:10)**

- Ezr 4:12, 21 The walls had been partially rebuilt by 465 BC (Artaxerxes' time).
- 1:3 The partially rebuilt walls had been broken down a 2<sup>nd</sup> time by the Samaritans.
- 1:5-11 Nehemiah prayed for favor with the king. Good petition prayer includes:
  - Remind God of His perfect character.
  - Confession of sin before God.
  - Remind God of His promises in His Word.
  - Make a request.
- 2:6-8 Artaxerxes granted Nehemiah permission on 14 March 445 BC.
  - To pass through the land beyond the Euphrates River unhindered.
  - To use the king's forest for building material for the wall, palace, and the governor's house.
  - To build the walls of Jerusalem, gates of the palace, a house for Nehemiah, and the governorship of Judah for 12 years.

**B. The Third Return under Nehemiah (ch 2:11-20)**

- 2:13-16 Viewing of the condition of the wall of Jerusalem by night. Why in secret? To build Nehemiah's faith that the building could be done without hearing any negative comments from the local Jews.
- 2:17-18 Nehemiah tells the Jews his plan to rebuild the city walls, and that the King of Persia had given him permission and authority to do it.
- 2:19-20 The local Samaritan leaders mocked Nehemiah's plan and thought the Jews were going to rebel against King Artaxerxes. They had no portion, or right, or memorial in Jerusalem, just as the Palestinians have none today.

**C. The Reconstruction of the Wall (ch 3-7)**

--Opposition by the Samaritans and by the Jews. (Satan uses these tactics)																			
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- 6:16 Wall finished in 52 days. Even the enemies knew that was of God.  
 7:5 Registration of Jews by genealogy. Why is it necessary? To find out who were qualified to be priests, Levites, and Nethinim.

## II. Restoration of the People (ch 8-13)

### A. Renewal of the Mosaic Covenant (ch 8-10)

- 8:3 On Rosh Hashana Ezra read the book of Mosaic law all morning to the Jews.  
 --The people's response to the law was:  
 8:5 They stood up out of respect for God's law.  
 8:6 They worshipped the Lord.  
 8:8 They studied the Torah (law) and the Levites gave the meaning of the words.  
 8:9 Penitence and weeping.  
 8:12 Shared joy.  
 8:16 Kept the Feast of Tabernacles.  
 10:28-39 The Mosaic Covenant is renewed and the terms set forth. People would:  
 --Walk in God's law.  
 --Have no intermarriage with non-Jews.  
 --Do no business on the Sabbath day.  
 --Keep the Sabbatic year.  
 --Bring their first fruits to God in the temple.  
 --Pay the temple tax.  
 --Pay the tithe.  
 --Bring the wood offering for the sacrifices.

### B. Obedience to the Covenant (ch 11-13)

- 11:1 The rulers of Judah dwelt in Jerusalem, and the people cast lots to choose 1 in 10 to dwell in Jerusalem.  
 12:27-43 The new wall of Jerusalem was dedicated with great joy.  
 12:44-47 The ritual procedures of the temple were restored and responsible people were assigned.  
 13:6-7 This is Nehemiah's 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to Jerusalem in 425 BC. It required him to have to reform the people all over again.  
 13:25 --Jews had to put away their foreign wives.  
 13:9 --The temple had to be cleansed.  
 13:12 --The tithe had to be reinstated.  
 13:19 --Sabbath day trade had to be stopped.  
 13:30 --The temple duties had to be reassigned.  
 13:31 --The wood offering had to be reinstated.

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## ESTHER

**Author:** Unknown, but was probably a Persian Jew, maybe Mordecai himself. The name Esther comes from “Amestris” where Am = God, est = Esther (star), and is = a suffix for Persian names. Esther’s Hebrew name was Hadassah, meaning “myrtle.”

**Setting:** The setting is in Shushan, in the palace of the Persian king Xerxes (Gk.) or Ahasuerus (Heb.). The time of the book of Esther is from 483 BC to 473 BC. The occasion of the 7 day feast described in chapter 1 was to decide whether or not to go to war against the Greeks, who had defeated the army of Xerxes’ father Darius I at Marathon in 490 BC. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, it was customary during this feast for the king to hold a sober vote and a drunken vote to find out exactly the feelings of his 7 wise men (Magoi) who were also called princes, and his 7 cabinet ministers (Chamberlains). The king then compared their sober vote with their drunken vote to determine their true feelings. The feast was an affair of State. While the decision whether to war against Greece is not recorded here, it was WAR.

**Theme:** God’s providential care for His people in exile

**Purpose:** To reassure the Jewish exiles that God would continue to care for them in their powerless condition.

**Key word:** Providence

**Key verse:** 4:14. “Who knows whether you are come to the kingdom for a time like this?”

**Key chapter:** 8. The king’s decree showed royal favor to the Jews, and ensured their survival.

**Christ seen:** Esther, a type of Christ, sacrificed herself for her people and showed Christ’s work as advocate for us, as she pleaded for her people before the king.

**Significance in the Bible:** This book shows the faithfulness of God in preserving the Jews, who were His people.

**Survey:**

### I. Threat to the Jews (ch 1-4)

#### A. Selection of Esther as Queen (ch 1-2) 483 BC

1:4-5 The 180 day revelation of the majesty of the Persian Empire was for the purpose of deciding whether or not to go to war with Greece, a rising power in the region.

1:5 The 7 day feast was to be the final decision-making period.

1:8 According to Herodotus, when Persians decided matters of State, they took a sober vote and a drunken vote, so that the princes’ opinions both with and without inhibitions.

1:10 This was the day for the drunken vote.

1:12 Vashti had interfered with grave matters of State. This was why Xerxes was so angry. The outward reason given was wives' submission to their husbands.

1:19 The king deposed Vashti from being queen.

### 3 Years pass

2:1 From 483 to 480 BC, the Persians prepared for war against Greece. They invaded Greece with a huge army of over 100,000 soldiers and had a navy of 1000 vessels. In the summer of 480 BC the invasion took place, and the army was successful in burning Athens, the Greek capital. However, the navy suffered a drastic defeat by the Greek navy at Salamis, and to avoid being cut off from future supplies, the Persian army retreated back into Asia Minor. King Xerxes had been involved in the preparations for war, and in the invasion itself, and had had no time to focus on his harem. So in 479 BC, Xerxes consoled himself in his harem after his defeat. He looked for a woman to replace Vashti as queen.

2:7 Mordecai, a Benjamite Jew, reared his cousin Esther, who was an orphan.

2:9 Esther was taken into the harem, and had a pleasant personality, pleasing the eunuch who was in charge of the harem, Hegai. She had favor with him.

2:15 Esther obtained favor with all those who looked at her.

2:17 King Xerxes liked Esther the best of all, and made her queen of Persia.

2:21-23 Mordecai saved the king from assassination, and it was recorded.

#### B. Haman's Plot (ch 3-4)

3:1 Haman was descended from Agag, former king of Amalek (1 Sam 15:8).

3:2 The king promoted Haman, but Mordecai refused to honor him. Why? Because the Amalekites were God's eternal enemy (Ex 17:16).

3:6 Haman determined to destroy Mordecai and his people, the Jews.

3:7 In 474 BC, Haman cast lots (called "**Pur**") to find a favorable day to exterminate the Jews and take their property, confiscating it.

3:8-9 Haman lied about the Jews to the king, and offered to pay 10,000 talents of silver into the king's treasury if he would agree to have them killed. The king agreed. Haman's plan was to confiscate all the Jews' property, which amounted to much more than 10,000 silver talents.

3:13 The 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month was chosen as the day to kill Jews. This casting of lots was an occult practice. The proclamation of killing went out to the entire Persian Empire.

4:8 Mordecai showed Esther the fatal document through one of her chamberlains, and begged her to intercede to the king for the Jews.

4:14 Mordecai told Esther that if she wouldn't intercede, her own life and her father's house would be destroyed. **And maybe she had come to the kingdom for such a time as this.**

4:16 Esther promised to try to save her people, or die in the attempt, because if she came into the king's courtyard without an invitation, she was subject to the death penalty. She requested that all the Jews in Shushan the capital city would perform a complete fast of food and water for 3 days and 3 nights, and she and her maidens would fast also. Then she would go into the inner courtyard of the king without being invited.

## II. Triumph of the Jews (ch 5-10)

### A. Mordecai's Triumph over Haman (ch 5-7)

5:1-3 The king extended the golden scepter to Esther, and she found great favor in his eyes, so much that he promised to give her anything she asked, up to half of his kingdom.

5:4,8 Esther asked Xerxes and Haman to attend her banquet the next day, and at that banquet she asked them to attend her 2<sup>nd</sup> banquet the next day. Esther built up suspense in her husband for what she had risked her life to request of him.

5:14 Haman's wife told him to build a 75 foot high gallows, and before the 2<sup>nd</sup> banquet, to ask Xerxes to hang Mordecai on it.

6:1-3 The king couldn't sleep, and commanded that the chronicles be brought to him so he could read them. He discovered that Mordecai had saved him from assassination, and that he had not been rewarded.

6:10 The king told Haman to honor Mordecai by dressing him in the king's clothing, and putting him on the king's horse, and leading him through the city saying: "Thus it shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor." (Haman had thought that Xerxes wanted to honor himself.)

6:13 Haman's wife prophesied against him that if Mordecai was Jewish, Haman would not prevail over him, but would fall before him.

7:1 The king pressured Esther to tell him her request.

7:3-6 Esther pleaded for her life and the life of her people, and exposed Haman as the culprit who wanted to kill them all. The king was furious until Haman had been executed.

7:10 Haman was hanged on high (greatly lifted up) on his own gallows.

### B. Israel's Triumph over her Enemies (ch 8-10)

8:1-2 The king gave Haman's house to Esther, who gave it to Mordecai. Mordecai also received the king's ring in order to officially seal a document.

8:8 The king told Esther that his former command to kill the Jews could not be reversed, but that she could write anything she desired, seal it with the king's ring, and it would be done.

8:11-12 Mordecai wrote in the king's name that the Jews were to defend themselves on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month when they were supposed to have been killed. The writing went out in every language of the Persian Empire. This was the first letter of **Purim** (plural of **Pur**).

8:15 Mordecai was promoted in Xerxes' court, and was dressed in fine clothing, and had a crown of gold on his head.

9:2-3 On the fateful day (13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month) the Persian people feared the Jews, and the Persian officials helped the Jews because they feared Mordecai.

9:10 The Jews killed the 10 sons of Haman, but didn't take their property. Also, throughout the capital city, the Jews killed their enemies but didn't take their property.

9:13 Esther asked the king that the Jews be allowed to kill their enemies also on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month. Xerxes agreed and ordered it to be done.

9:26-29 Esther wrote the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter of **Purim** that the Jews would always celebrate the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> days of the 12<sup>th</sup> month as joyful feasting days.

10:3 Mordecai was promoted to be next to King Xerxes in authority, and was accepted by all the Jews in Persia.

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