

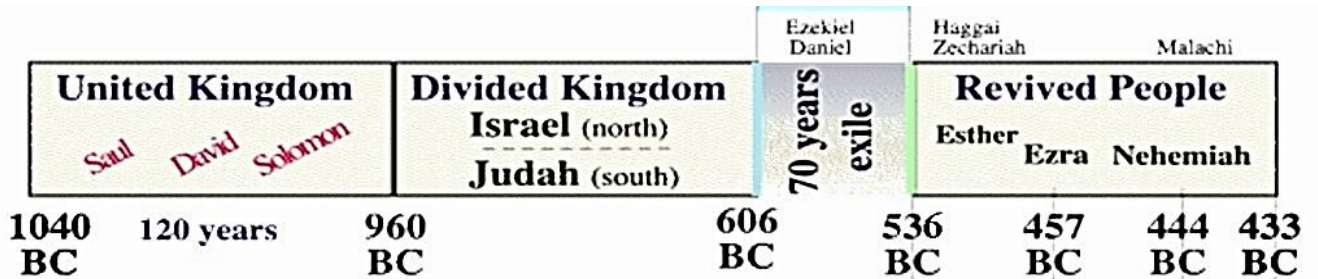


The book of Esther is a 2500 year old true _____ of how God miraculously preserved His nation of Israel from extermination at the hands of the people of the Persian Empire. This ten-chapter story of Esther continues to be celebrated every year in Israel, usually in March (*feast of Purim*), where they read the story aloud together followed by an extravagant feast and the exchanging of gifts (Est. 9:20-22). God has preserved this amazing and unusual story for our church for such a time as this (Est. 4:14).

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER

1. HISTORICALLY – The _____ of God

- In **606 BC**, the Babylonian Empire (*Nebuchadnezzar*) conquers and deports Israel from their land to Babylon. _____ years later the Persian Empire (*Cyrus*) conquers Babylon and a dispersion of God's people continues to a Persian city called Shushan (*Susa*) – Dan. 1:1-2; Neh. 1:1; Est. 1:2.
- In **536BC**, exactly _____ years after the original Babylonian exile (*as God said*), Persian King Cyrus issues a decree that God's people could return back to their land. 42,360 Jews returned home to Israel – Jer. 25:11-12, 29:10; Dan. 9:1-3; 2 Chron. 36:22-23 (Is. 44:28, 45:1); Ez. 2:1-64.
- The unusual and miraculous story of Esther takes place in **486BC** (_____ years after the decree of *Cyrus*) in the Persian city of Shushan. The Jews involved in our story are those, who for whatever reason, did not go home at the decree of Cyrus – Neh. 2:6.



- Why should we even care about this _____ Jewish story? – Rom. 3:1-2, 11:25; Ecc. 1:9-10, 3:15.

2. DEVOTIONALLY – The _____ of God

- The most unique thing about the book of Esther is that there is no mention of God anywhere, however the Providence of God is _____ – Rom. 1:20, 8:28; Deut. 31:18.

Providence = The behind the scenes, yet often obvious, protective or spiritual care of God

GODISNOWHERE

- There is no mention of **God, prayer, worship, faith, sacrifices**, no **prophecy of the Messiah**, no **heaven/hell**, and no clear **supernatural miracles**. God is _____ – Job 23:3, 8; Heb. 11:24-27.
- Just because God is invisible does not mean He is not at work or has always been or will _____ invisible – 1 Tim. 1:17; Col. 1:12-15; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 21:1-3.

3. **DOCTRINALLY** – The _____ of God

- No matter how things look, God is always working His plan from Heaven – Ps. 37:9-11; 103:19.
- The location of Esther in our Bible demonstrates the _____ story of God and His people...

1/2 Chronicles – *The Jews are exiled and scattered from their land (70AD – Roman Empire)*

Ezra – *An edict is Issued for the Jews to return home (1917 – Balfour Declaration)*

Nehemiah – *The wall is rebuilt and Israel is strengthened (1948 – Israel returns)*

****Esther** – *A Gentile bride (Vashti) is replaced by a Jewish bride (Esther) (The _____)*

Job – *A _____-chapter book describing the tribulation of Job in a land of Uz (Tribulation Period)*

Psalms – *God's King David is on the throne reigning and there is much Selah (Millennium)*

4. **CONCLUSION** – Who was Esther in God's plan? – Est. 4:14; Rom. 14:7

- We will see an incredible _____ plan of God to save His people through what appears to be common circumstances of life. Our God can save by any means from any place – Heb. 7:25.