

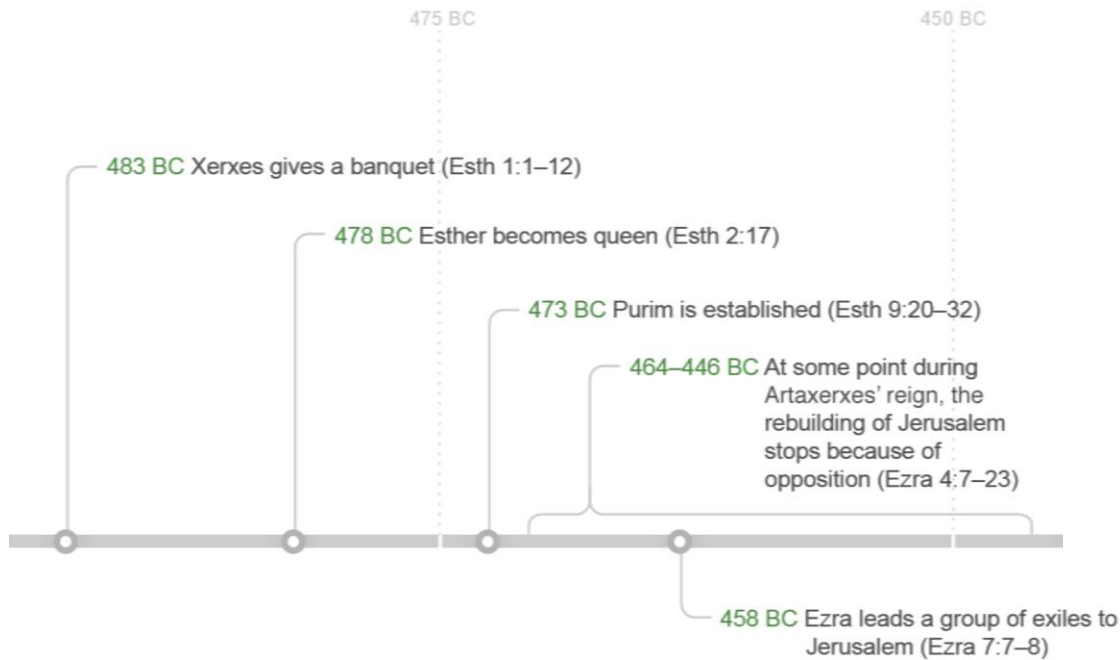
Pastor's Bible Study

Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study

Week Forty-One
Esther 1 to 4

Review

Literary Period



Lecture Segment

The Book of Esther, chapters 1-4, unfolds a dramatic narrative set in the Persian Empire under the reign of King Xerxes (also known as Ahasuerus). The story recapitulates back into the timeframe of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Here's a summary of these chapters:

Chapter 1: The Deposition of Queen Vashti

King Xerxes hosts an extravagant 180-day feast to display the riches of his kingdom and the splendor of his majesty. History informs us the context of this feast is seek support of the leadership and the people to enter into war with Greece in an attempt to prevent their rise to power. At the culmination of this event, he orders Queen Vashti to appear before his guests to show off her beauty (wearing only her crown). When Vashti refuses,

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the king, following his advisors' counsel, deposes her to set an example for all women in the empire.

Chapter 2: Esther Becomes Queen

Chapter 2 opens after Queen Vashti's removal. History tells us, Xerxes is mourning for her after the Persian army and navy's loss to Greeks.

King Xerxes of Persia would be defeated by the Greeks at the Battle of Salamis in 480 BCE, marking a decisive turning point in the Greco-Persian Wars where the Greek fleet, led by Themistocles, lured the Persian navy into a narrow strait and destroyed it; this defeat forced Xerxes to retreat back to Persia, effectively ending his invasion of Greece.

The story continues with the search for a new queen. Esther, a young Jewish woman raised by her cousin Mordecai, is among the candidates brought to the palace. After a year of beauty treatments, Esther wins the king's favor and is crowned queen. Meanwhile, Mordecai uncovers a plot against the king's life and reports it through Esther, saving the king.

Chapter 3: Haman's Plot Against the Jews

Haman, promoted to a high position by the king, becomes enraged when Mordecai refuses to bow to him. Upon learning that Mordecai is Jewish, Haman convinces the king to issue a decree for the antihalation of all Jews in the empire. Under Cyrus the Great 10% of the Jewish population has relocated to Jerusalem. There they have rebuilt the Temple. The remaining Jewish population under threat of annihilation includes Ezra and Nehemiah.

Chapter 4: Mordecai's Appeal to Esther

When Mordecai learns of the plot, he informs Esther and urges her to intercede with the king. Esther, initially hesitant due to the risk of approaching the king uninvited, agrees to help after Mordecai's impassioned plea. She requests that all Jews fast for three days before she approaches the king. The story sets the stage for Esther's courageous act to save her people, highlighting themes of divine providence, courage, and the use of one's position for the greater good

Next week:

Read

Esther 5 to 10

As we continue our journey through Esther note that there is no mention of Go. But, we see God's providential hand at work.