

Introduction to Esther

Title of Our Study:

“For Such a Time As This”

Title of Book:

“Esther” – main character of the book. The name means “star”.

Author (several suggestions):

Mordecai (also a key character) – Esther’s older cousin who raised her.

Ezra – would have had access to key historical documents

Nehemiah – was butler to Artaxerxes in same palace 20 years later.

Date of Events:

483 – 473 (See timeline)

Date of Writing:

Could have been written anytime between about 470 – 330

Most likely was written between 450 – 400

Historical Background:

King Ahasuerus, the ruler of Persia, was a very powerful, very volatile, and evidently a very power-hungry ruler. He wanted revenge for military defeats his father suffered at the hands of Greece. He spent most of his reign planning and attempting military campaigns against Greece. He won a few battles, but lost more than he won, and he carried out his anger when losing on his subordinates. He was obviously a very vulgar, very immoral, often irrational man. The story of Esther opens when he was holding a summit of government and military leaders to plan his first campaign against Greece. The summit was followed by a weeklong banquet. Persia was a vast kingdom that stretched from India to Africa and was the most powerful kingdom in the history of the world up until that time. It had a diverse population and was ruled by a strict rule of law known as The Law of the Medes and Persians (Daniel 6:8).

Major Doctrinal Themes:

The providential protection of God for His people Israel.

Warning against growing comfortable living in a strange land among the enemies of God.

Key Verses:

4:14, 16

Esther Timeline

Babylonian Ruler Persian Ruler

Year	Foreign Ruler	Reign	Event	Bible Text
605	Nebuchadnezzar II	605 – 562	First wave of Judah taken captive – Daniel	2 Kings 23 and Daniel 1
597			Second wave of Judah taken captive	2 Kings 24
586			Third wave of Judah taken captive	2 Kings 24 & 25; 2 Chronicles 36
562	Evil -Merodach	562 – 560		2 Kings 25:27 & Jeremiah 52:31
560	Neriglissar	560 – 556		
556	Labasi-Marduk	556		
555	Nabonidus	555 – 539	(Belshazzar was vice-regent)	
539	Cyrus the Great	539 – 530	Persia overthrows Babylon	
538			First wave of return to Judah -Zerubbabel	Ezra 1-6
530	Cambyses II	530 – 522		
522	Gaumata	522		
522	Darius the Great	522 – 486		Ezra 4 – 6 & Nehemiah 12
485	Ahasuerus (Xerxes the Great)	485 – 465		Ezra 4:6 & Esther
483		483 – 473	Events of the Book of Esther	
465	Artaxerxes	465 – 424		
458			Second wave of return to Judah – Ezra	Ezra 7-10
445			Third wave of return to Judah – Nehemiah	Nehemiah 1-13