

**ESTHER**

***GOD IS NOWHERE***

# ESTHER

Not your typical Sunday School Story







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**GOD IS PRESENT . . . EVEN WHEN HE IS ABSENT.**

## Historical Timeline and Background

- **930 B.C.** The Kingdom of Israel was divided (Israel & Judah)
- **722 B.C.** Israel was conquered and taken into exile to Assyria.
- **605 B.C.** Daniel is taken into captivity to Babylon
- **586 B.C.** Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem
- **539 B.C.** Babylon fell to Persia; King Cyrus decreed the Jews could return from Babylonia.
- **486-465 B.C.** King Ahasuerus/Xerxes ruled Persia



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Deuteronomy 28:15, 36, 64:

*However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon and overtake you.... The LORD will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your fathers.... Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other.*



# Historical Timeline and Background

- **539 B.C.** Babylon falls to Persia; King Cyrus

*2 Chronicles 36:22-23 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, <sup>23</sup> Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!*

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Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus (this was the Ahasuerus who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia), <sup>2</sup> in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the citadel, <sup>3</sup> that in the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his officials and servants-- the powers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces being before him-- <sup>4</sup> when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty for many days, one hundred and eighty days in all.

Esther 1 & 2:1-4



<sup>5</sup> And when these days were completed, the king made a feast lasting seven days for all the people who were present in Shushan the citadel, from great to small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace. . .

<sup>7</sup> And they served drinks in golden vessels, each vessel being different from the other, with royal wine in abundance, according to the generosity of the king. <sup>8</sup> In accordance with the law, the drinking was not compulsory; for so the king had ordered all the officers of his household, that they should do according to each man's pleasure.

<sup>9</sup> Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women in the royal palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

<sup>10</sup> On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,

<sup>11</sup> to bring Queen Vashti before the king, wearing her royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she was beautiful to behold.



*Moreover it is their [the Persians] custom to deliberate about the gravest matters when they are drunk; and what they approve in their counsels is proposed to them the next day by the master of the house where they deliberate, when they are now sober and if being sober they still approve it, they act thereon, but if not, they cast it aside. And when they have taken counsel about a matter when sober, they decide upon it when they are drunk.*

*LCL: Herodotus 1.133.*

<sup>12</sup> But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command brought by his eunuchs; therefore the king was furious, and his anger burned within him. <sup>13</sup> Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times (for this was the king's manner toward all who knew law and justice, <sup>14</sup> those closest to him . . . were the seven princes of Persia and Media, who had access to the king's presence, and who ranked highest in the kingdom):



<sup>15</sup> "What shall we do to Queen Vashti, according to law, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus brought to her by the eunuchs?"

<sup>16</sup> And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: "Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the princes, and all the people who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.

<sup>17</sup> "For the queen's behavior will become known to all women, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes, when they report, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.'

<sup>18</sup> "This very day the noble ladies of Persia and Media will say to all the king's officials that they have heard of the behavior of the queen. Thus there will be excessive contempt and wrath.



<sup>19</sup> "If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.

<sup>20</sup> "When the king's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout all his empire (for it is great), all wives will honor their husbands, both great and small."

<sup>21</sup> And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan.

<sup>22</sup> Then he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be master in his own house, and speak in the language of his own people.





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