

## I. Background to Esther

- A. Fits into the gap between Ezra 6 and 7
  - 1. Temple completed - 516 BC
  - 2. Ezra's return - 458 BC
- B. During the period
  - 1. Golden age of Greece
  - 2. Confucius
  - 3. Buddha
- C. Ahasuerus of the book is Xerxes of classical history
  - 1. Man of extremes
  - 2. Fiery and unpredictable
- D. Story deals with the Israelites who did not return to Jerusalem

## II. Unusual Character of the Book of Esther

- A. Name of God is never mentioned directly
  - 1. Name is possibly hinted in the construction of certain lines in the book
- B. Book is associated with the feast of Purim

## III. Key Word to the Book is Providence

- A. Providence speaks of the way God works ordinary circumstances together to achieve His good ends
  - 1. Seldom recognized until the actions accumulated and the result is seen
    - a. Individual events are normal and seemingly random
    - b. The collective effect of the events is the purpose of God being done
  - 2. Providential working of God could easily be described as "fortunate"

## Assignment

*Read Ezra 7-10 and  
Nehemiah 1-8*

#### **IV. Key Elements of the Story of Esther**

- A. Due to modesty issues, a queen rebels
- B. The queen is replaced by Esther
- C. Mordecai, Esther's guardian, stays around the palace because of concern for her
- D. Mordecai overhears a plot against the king and reports it
- E. The plot is destroyed but no honor is given to Mordecai
- F. Haman becomes the king's chamberlain
- G. Because of a latent hatred of the Jews, Haman becomes infuriated with Mordecai
- H. Haman devises a plot to kill Mordecai and destroy the Jews
- I. Esther goes to the king and is accepted
- J. The king has a sleepless night
- K. Esther pleads for her people
- L. A plan is made for their deliverance and permanent favor in the empire

#### **V. Observations and Lessons From the Story**

- A. No single event in the story is "miraculous"
- B. Collectively the activity of God is seen
  - 1. Seen if I am looking for it
  - 2. Easily missed if I am not looking
- C. There is nothing for us to do in response to the providence but give thanks
  - 1. This is another aspect of the "Majesty and Glory of God"