

### Persian Kings from the Period of the Return from Exile

Name of King	Date of Reign	Relationship to Judah
Cyrus, The Great	559 - 530 BC	Conquered Babylon: first King of Persia. Probably knew the Prophet Daniel. He allowed the people to return to their lands. He returned what had been taken from the Temple (sacred furniture*) and financed the rebuilding.
Darius I	522 - 486 BC	Continued to support the former Jewish exiles' construction of the Temple in Jerusalem. The writings of the Prophet Haggai are dated in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of Darius I (Hg 1:1, 15; 2:10), and the writings of the Prophet Zechariah are dated in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> years of his reign (Zc 1:1, 7; 7:1). The Temple is completed in the 6 <sup>th</sup> year of his reign (Ezr 6:15) and he is the king mentioned in Nehemiah 12:22. He may or may not be the Darius mentioned in the Book of Daniel who cast the Prophet Daniel into the lions' den (Dan 6:1; 6:6ff). Daniel may be referring to Cyrus the Mede whose other name may have been Darius before he took his throne name.
Xerxes [Ahasuerus]	486 - 465 BC	Son of Darius I and Esther's husband: this Persian king gave the Jews in Persia the right to defend themselves against attack.
Artaxerxes I	465 - 424 BC	Queen Esther's step-son: Nehemiah was his cup-bearer. Allowed both Ezra and Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem

\*all the sacred furniture was returned with the exception of the gold covered (inside and out) Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat (the solid gold lid of the Ark), and the golden Altar of Incense. The Babylonians did not take these sacred items from the Temple. They had already been removed and hidden by the prophet Jeremiah and have never been recovered (see 2 Maccabees 2:1-8)

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## SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER

BIBLICAL PERIOD	# 9 THE RETURN FROM EXILE			
FOCUS	The Jewish Community in Peril		Salvation of the Jewish Community	
COVENANT	THE SINAI COVENANT			
SCRIPTURE	1:1-----2:21-----5:1-----8:4-----10:3			
DIVISION	Introduction: Mordecai's dream; disgrace of Vashti; Esther becomes queen of Persia	Haman plots to kill the Jews; decree of the King	Vindication of Mordecai	Esther warns the Jews; victory of the Jewish community
TOPIC	Feasts of the King		Feasts of Esther	
	Danger		Deliverance	
LOCATION	PERSIA - capitol city Susa			
TIME	10 years [483-473 BC]			

### TIME LINE: [all dates BC]

Judah vassal state of Persia	-----		Greek Empire	-----Hellenistic period-----				
538	516	483-473	458	444	332 323	250	166	
#1 return of the Exiles of Judah	Temple in Jerusalem is rebuilt!	<b>Esther Queen of Persia</b>	#2 return led by the <b>Ezra</b>	#3 return led by <b>Nehemiah</b>	conquest of <b>Alexander the Great</b> compete	\death of Alexander	Greek translation of the Old Testament = Septuagint	\ revolt of the Maccabees against Greek Seleucid

Same time-line as Ezra and Nehemiah

-Mordecai: tribe of Benjamin, minister to Persian King Ahasuerus [Xerxes I]

-Esther: cousin of Mordecai. Hebrew name Hadassah; queen of Ahasuerus

-Haman: Vizier of the king; enemy of Mordecai and the Jews; possible descendant of King Agag (Num 24:7; 1Sam 15:8ff), enemy of Israel.

-Feast of Purim [Lots] celebrated 3 days in February/March. This feast commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish communities of Persia by Esther and her cousin Mordecai when Haman, vizier to the king, planned to exterminate the Jewish communities. Haman ordered that lots be drawn to determine the day on which the massacre should take place. The lot fell on the 13th day of Adar. The plot failed when Queen Esther was granted the right to warn the communities. The Jews were ready for their enemies and defended themselves. The battles lasted 3 days. The 13th day of Purim is a day of fasting and prayer. In Hebrew the Book of Esther is called the Megilla = The Scroll.

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## SUMMARY OF THE BOOK NEHEMIAH

BIBLICAL PERIOD	# 9 THE FAITHFUL REMNANT OF JUDAH RETURNS			
FOCUS	RECONSTRUCTION OF THE WALLS		RESTORATION OF THE PEOPLE	
COVENANT	THE SINAI COVENANT			
SCRIPTURE	1:1-----3:1-----8:1-----11:1-----13:31			
DIVISION	Preparation	Reconstruction	Covenant renewal	Covenant obedience
TOPIC	Political		Spiritual	
	Construction		Instruction	
LOCATION	JERUSALEM			
TIME	19 years			

### TIME LINE: [all dates BC]

Judah vassal state of Persia	-----		Greek Empire	-----		Hellenistic period	-----		Hasmonean	--	Roman Empire
538	516	483-473	458	444	333	323	250	166	63		
#1 return of the exiles to Judah	Temple in Jerusalem is rebuilt!	<b>Esther Queen of Persia</b>	#2 return led by the priest <b>Ezra</b>	#3 return led by <b>Nehemiah</b>	Battle of Issus \death of <b>Alexander the Great</b> defeats the Persians	of Alexander	Greek translation OT Bible	revolt of the Maccabees		Rome conquers Judah	
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