

Book Study on Esther
The Other Characters in the Story - Mordecai
Esther 2:5-6
Dr. Bill Gilmore
Oakleaf Baptist Church, Orange Park, Florida
Sunday, April 19, 2020 PM

Introduction

The last time we studied the book of Esther we studied about King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) and how he had endeavored into a military campaign that at first is successful, however turns into a long and difficult campaign. Xerxes ends up leaving the battlefield and returning home, while leaving a general to complete the campaign, however the campaign ended in a disaster. As his closest counselors saw his depressive state they suggested he find a new queen. This is a 2-3 year process.

- Review books of the Bible: Gen – Esther
- Esther is 40 years after Ezra and 40 years before Nehemiah
- The story setting in Shushan the capital city in Ahasuerus' Persian kingdom
- Vashti, the Chaldean Queen, refused to present herself to the king and the 127 princes of the land.
- Disastrous military campaign that leaves the king depressed, counselors suggest looking for a new queen.

Let's pick up here in chapter 2 and verse 5

Bible

Est 2:5 Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

Est 2:6 Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

Lets look a little deeper into these verses:

We see in this passage the Word of God continues to lay more groundwork for the story that is about to unfold.

Another character in the story

Est 2:5 Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

- Where we find the character -
 - In Shushan – The capital of Persia¹
 - In the Palace –
 - A place of a depressed king – he had lost a major military campaign and was in remorse over Vashti.
 - In the gate (vs. 19)– This does not mean he was a servant/porter or passerby. It is well received that this man was a councilor to Xerxes. Quite possibly one of his most trusted cabinet members.²
 - “his attendance at the king's gate, Esther 2:19 is thought to have been one of the porters at the royal palace; but, probably, he was an officer of higher rank; for it was an order instituted by Cyrus, as Xenophon informs us, Cyropaed. lib. 8: that all persons whatever, who had any employment at court, should attend at the palace-gate (where there was, doubtless, a proper waiting-place for their reception), that

¹ <https://www.ancient.eu/susa/>

² Jamieson, Robert, D.D.; Fausset, A. R.; Brown, David. "Commentary on Esther 2:5". "Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/jfb/esther-2.html>. 1871-8.

they might be in readiness whenever they were wanted or called for;”³

- Xenophon of Athens – “(born c. 430 BCE, Attica, Greece—died shortly before 350, Attica), Greek historian and philosopher whose numerous surviving works are valuable for their depiction of late Classical Greece.”⁴
- Mordecai, the eunuch Esther 2:7, Esther 2:11, has been conjectured to be the same as Matacas, who, according to Ctesias, was the most powerful of the eunuchs during the latter portion of the reign of Xerxes.⁵
- What his nationality is – Jewish –
 - The contrast between Judah and Israel was lost in a strange land; and, as Nebuchadnezzar's campaign was against Judah, so "Jew" became the name used by Gentiles.⁶
- His name - Mordecai
 - what it means - The Book of Daniel provides accounts of Jews in exile being assigned names relating to Babylonian gods and "Mordecai" is understood to mean servant of Marduk, a Babylonian god.⁷
 - Marduk is the patron deity of the city of Babylon⁸
 - His lineage – “*the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;*”
 - Mordecai’s line of descent is traced from a certain Kish, carried off by Nebuchadnezzar in 598 B.C. - the year of Jeconiah’s captivity - who was his great-grandfather. The four generations, Kish, Shimei, Jair, Mordecai, correspond to the known generations in other cases,⁵
 - The significance of his tribe – “a Benjamite;”

Est 2:6 *Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.*

- How did he end up in Shushan?
 - as a result of the Babylonian captivity. His great grandfather Kish was carried into Babylon.
 - 597 Jehochin becomes king of Judah
 - 597 Babylonians capture Jerusalem
 - 597 Second wave of deportation to Babylon from Judah.
 - 597 Ezekiel is taken captive to Babylon
 - 597 Zedekiah becomes king of Judah
 - 593 Ezekiel begins to prophesy
 - 586 The Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and the Temple (9th of Av)
 - 586 Jerusalem’s walls and gates are burned with fire
 - 586 Third wave of Jews deported to Babylon
 - 586 Babylonian Exile (Galut Bavel) begins
 - 586 End of Biblical (First Temple) Period
 - 586 The end of the monarchy in Judah
 - 539 The Fall of Babylon
 - 539 Beginning of the Persian Period to 332⁹

³ Coke, Thomas. "Commentary on Esther 2:5". Thomas Coke Commentary on the Holy Bible. <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tcc/esther-2.html>. 1801-1803.

⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Xenophon/Historical-themes>

⁵ Barnes, Albert. "Commentary on Esther 2:5". "Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/esther-2.html>. 1870.

⁶ Bullinger, Ethelbert William. "Commentary on Esther 2:5". "E.W. Bullinger's Companion bible Notes". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bul/esther-2.html>. 1909-1922.

⁷ Huehnergard, John (2008-04-10). "Appendix 1: Afro-Asiatic". In Woodard, Roger D. (ed.). *The Ancient Languages of Syria-Palestine and Arabia*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 225–46. ISBN 978-1-13946934-0.

⁸ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/marduk>

- Jeconiah - Or, Jehoiachin; 2 Kings 24:6
 - Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim and Nehushta, was also called Jeconiah, and Coniah, became king at age 18, but only reigned for three months. During his reign the armies, of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon besieged the city of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar himself arrived during the siege, and king Jehoiachin, all of his officials, and the queen mother surrendered to him. The surrender was accepted, and Jehoiachin was imprisoned in Babylon during the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (2 Kings 24:10-12).
 - Then the king of Babylon appointed Jehoiachin's uncle, Mattaniah, to be the next king, and changed his name to Zedekiah. While in exile throughout the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiachin remained in prison.¹⁰

⁹ https://www.bible-history.com/map_babylonian_captivity/map_of_the_deportation_of_judah_timeline_of_events.html

¹⁰ <http://www.aboutbibleprophecy.com/p74.htm>