

# THE GOOD HAND OF OUR GOD IS UPON US

## A Study of Ezra & Esther

### Big Picture & Class Outline (Chronological Study)

- First Exile Expedition: Temple from Ruins (Ezra 1-6).
- Back in Persia: Everyone almost Dies (Esther).
- Second Exile Expedition: A Return to the Law (Ezra 7-10).

### Background of Esther

- Unknown author.
- Events occur between 486-473 B.C., about 50 years after the first exile expedition.
- Many godly Jews (like Danial) remained in Persia, instead of returning to Jerusalem (Daniel 6:10).
- Abnormalities:
  1. No mention is made of God in Esther.
  2. No religious activities recorded.
  3. Focus is on the physical survival of the Jews.
- Three ways to read the book of Esther:
  1. While Esther & Mordecai show high moral courage, they do not actually believe in the God of Israel. God uses godless Israelites to save godless Israel (Martin Luther & John Whitcomb).
  2. Esther & Mordecai have weak faith. God still uses them to save His people from extermination (Me based on Esther 4:13-16).
  3. Esther & Mordecai are strong believers in the God of Israel who show their faith by being courageous in the face of danger. God uses His faithful people to save His whole nation (Most people).

- Greek addition to Esther as recorded in the Apocrypha: [Mordecai’s prayer to God] “13:12 Thou knowest all things, and thou knowest, Lord, that it was neither in contempt nor pride, nor for any desire of glory, that I did not bow down to proud [H]Aman. 13:13 For I could have been content with good will for the salvation of Israel to kiss the soles of his feet. 13:14 But I did this, that I might not prefer the glory of man above the glory of God: neither will I worship any but thee, O God, neither will I do it in pride.”
- What’s the point of the book? Even when God’s people forget His promises, God does not.

#### Lesson 4 – Esther 1:1-2:20

1. King Ahasuerus becomes queen-less (1).
  - a. The king called for 180-day military planning feast and then a 7-day drinking feast (1:1-9).
  - b. The drunk king acts foolishly and loses control of his queen (1:10-15).
  - c. The king wrote a new law using Vashti as an example at the advice of Memucan, a prince of Persia (1:16-22).

2. Esther becomes queen (2:1-20).
  - a. The king desires a queen (2:1-4).
  - b. Esther is taken and chosen as queen (2:5-20).

### So What?

- We often forget to remember God's promises. God never forgets His promises.
- God's providence is greater than,
  - Riches
  - Power
  - Kings
  - Drunkenness
  - Anger
  - Our own fear
  - Space limitations

### Zechariah Study – Part 2 (Chapters 9-14)

#### Background of Zechariah

- Zechariah was both a prophet and a priest (Levite born).
- Zechariah means *Yahweh remembers*.
- Chapters 1-8 focus on the leadership (priest/king) need for restoring the Kingdom.

- Chapters 9-14 anticipate the piercing of God's chosen Priest/King and His future enthronement.
- Theme: Jesus is the chosen King/Priest who will rebuild the temple and restore the Kingdom to Israel.

Day 1: Read Zechariah 9 and think through the following questions:

1. How does Zechariah describe the word of the LORD in verse 1?
2. What will God do for His people and against their enemies according to verses 1-8?
3. How is the coming King described in verses 9-10? When was verse 9 fulfilled and when will verse 10 be fulfilled?
4. What will God do for His people in verses 11-17?

Day 2: Read Zechariah 10-11 and think through the following questions:

1. Why are the sheep in danger according to 10:2? What does God promise to do for His people in chapter 10?
2. What does God prophecy about the foolish and worthless shepherds in chapter 11?
3. What will God raise up in 11:16?

Day 3: Read Zechariah 12-13 and think through the following questions:

1. Why does God promise to save Judah first in 12:1-9?
2. What does the house of David see in 12:10-14 that causes great mourning?
3. What will God open in 13:1? What is its purpose?
4. What will be cut off according to 13:2-6?
5. Who is the Shepherd in 13:7-9?

Day 4: Read Zechariah 14 and think through the following questions:

1. What day is coming for Israel according to 14:1?
2. What will that day be like according to 14:1-15?
3. What will the nations do in the Kingdom according to 14:16-21?