

# Psalm 137

1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered

5 If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. 6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.

Let my right hand  
forget what it's  
supposed to do





[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1yp1eLU\\_CgA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1yp1eLU_CgA)

# ESTHER

The STAR and the SCEPTRE



*She was young,  
beautiful, and queen  
of an empire. Only  
one man knew her secret . . .  
a secret that could mean death!*





Esther is a Proverbs  
31 woman!

She is a model of  
devotion to her  
people and her God.

All of you women  
would do well to  
emulate her  
character . . .

But are we really  
sure ? ? ?





# What exactly does God want us to see?

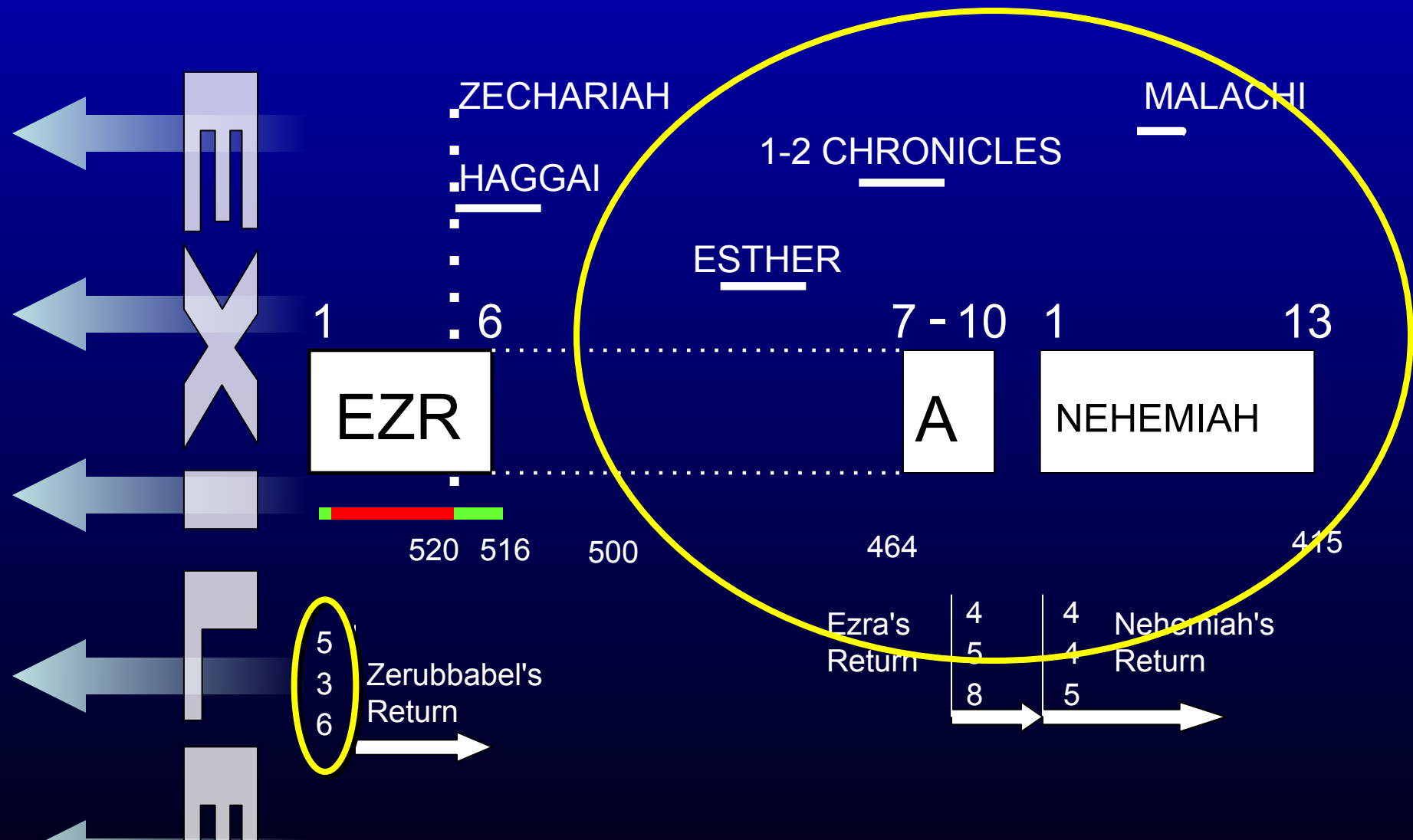
- Historical—inform the reader about facts that happened in the past
  - *What's good?* The Bible is true and accurate
  - *What's the problem?* It leaves out many "important" historical details, because...
- Moral—inform the reader about how to behave
  - *What's good?* Most of us need to behave better.
  - *What's the problem?* every story does not prescriptively tell me how to behave better, e.g. Abraham, Gen 12.
  - Becoming a "nice" person isn't really what God cares about most
- Theological—revealing WHO God is to draw the reader into relationship with him
  - *What's good?*
  - *What's the problem?*



# Background... the return to the land in 536 BC

and why it wasn't all it was expected to be!!

- No King--poor Zerubbabel
- Squatty little Temple
- God didn't come back to his home!
- Serious doubts about God's interest in continuing the "relationship"



# POST-Exile



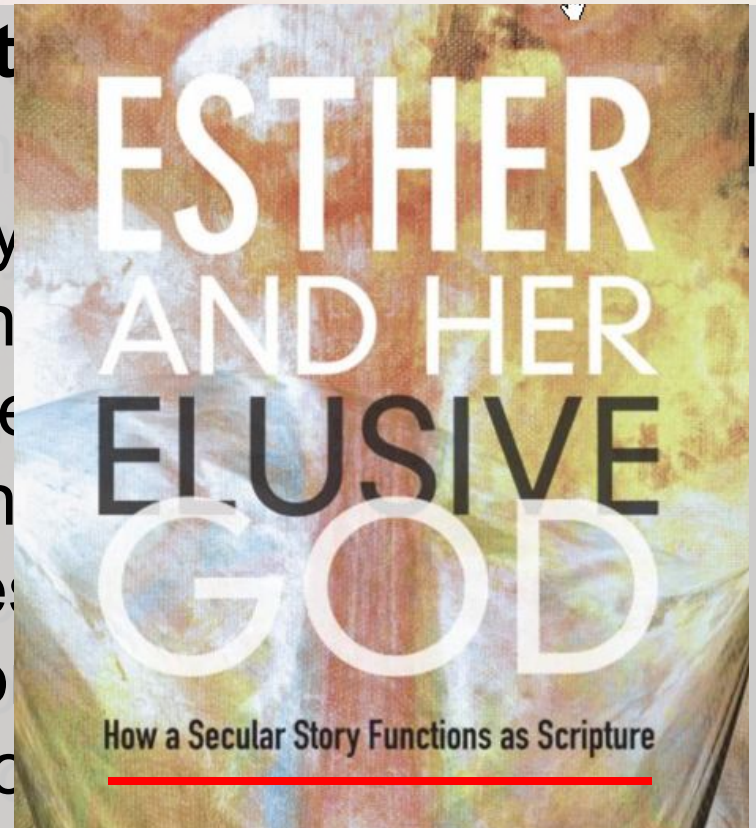
# And one more thing...

- Esther is almost the last book in the Old Testament
- So, if you're expected to bring everything God has said before with you to study a particular book then realize
- You must bring the entire Old Testament to bear if you want to understand this book



# Agree or disagree?

“Additions to Esther” Chapter 1  
1 Queen Esther also, being in  
unto the Lord: 2 And laid away  
and put on the garments of an  
and instead of precious ointme  
head with ashes and dung, an  
body greatly, and all the place  
with her torn hair. 3 And she p  
God of Israel, saying, O my Lo  
King: help me, desolate woman, which have no  
helper but thee:



- What's his lineage?
- “Son of Kish, son of Shimei”



# Who is Shimei?

- 2 Samuel 16:5-17 Then king David came to Bahurim. There a man from Saul's extended family named Shimei son of Gera came out, yelling curses as he approached. 6 He threw stones at David and all of king David's servants, as well as all the people and the soldiers who were on his right and on his left. 7 As he yelled curses, Shimei said, "Leave! Leave! You man of bloodshed, you wicked man!"
- 13 So David and his men went on their way. But Shimei kept going along the side of the hill opposite him, yelling curses as he threw stones and dirt at them.



# Who is Haman the “Agagite”?

Samuel hears the “bleating of sheep”

Saul says, “I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king.”

1 Sam 15:22 So Samuel said:

“Has the Lord *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,

As in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,

*And* to heed than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft,

And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.



# Who is Haman the “Agagite”?

32 Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag king of the Amalekites.”

Agag came to him confidently, thinking, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.”

33 But Samuel said,

“As your sword has made women childless, so will your mother be childless among women.”

And Samuel put Agag to death before the Lord at Gilgal.”



1A Background, 1-3

1B Queen Vashti Deposed 1

This king knows how to party, but is he in control?

1:10!

1:16, “Memucan”

—be a critical reader!

Is anyone in control?

2B Esther made queen, 2:1-20

The rules of the “contest”

Meet Mordecai: don't miss his

Note 4 things about Esther:

Her diet, 2:9

Her “witness,” 2:10

Her “morality,” 2:14

Her “success,” 2:17





3B Mordecai Rescues the King, 2:21-22

4B Haman's Plot to Exterminate the Jews, 3

Meet Haman: don't miss his lineage!

"But Mordecai would not bow down or pay him honor" 3:2

Is it an issue of religious faith to not bow down in honor of a court official?

Did Daniel?

What is the "pur"?



1 Die	Pur
2 Dice	Purim



## 2A The Conflict, 4:1—7:10

### 1B Esther's Decision to Approach, 4

Does she go at first?

“Sorry cousin, it's been 30 days and I'm not goin'”

Is Mordecai's statement (4:14) a reference to Yahweh?

“For if you remain silent at this time relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish”

“For if you remain silent at this time **WILL** relief and deliverance for the Jews arise from another place? and you and your father's family will perish”—Bush, *Ruth & Esther*, p. 90.

So Mordecai's persuasion is “You're our only hope!”

Note Esther's request (4:16), “to fast (and pray?)”



## 2B Esther's Approach, 5-7

Slow start (5:1-8) sets us up for  
and night's worth of intrigue.

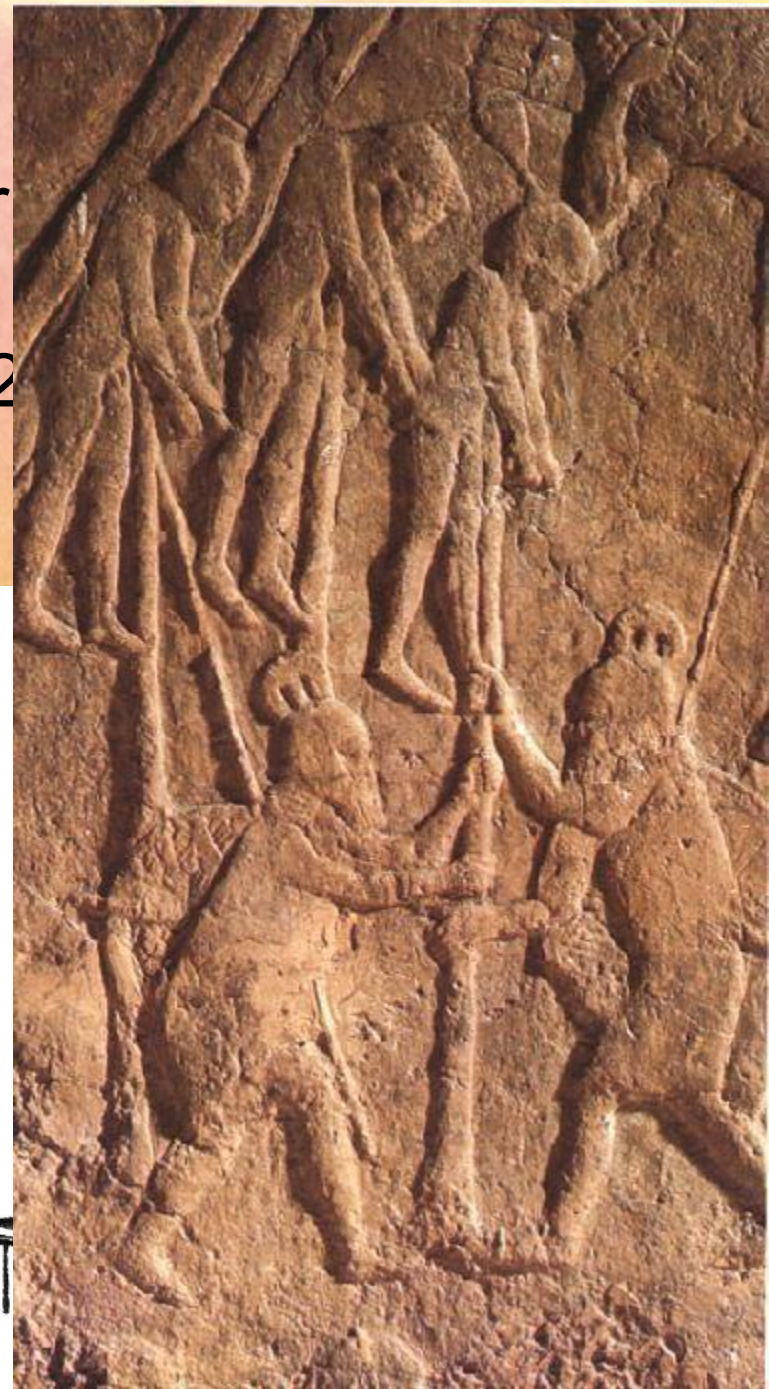
Note Haman's 3 boasts! (5:9-12)

Wealth

Sons

Honor

How high does the gallows need  
for a 5 foot man?





## 2B Esther's Approach, 5-7

Insomniac King decides to honor Mordecai, (6:1-6)!

M  
O  
R  
D  
E  
C  
A  
I

Note the reversal of Haman's hopes! (6:7-14)





Esther 6:13

His advisors and his wife Zeresh said to him, “Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!”



## 2B Esther's Approach, 5-7

By the way, I'm Jewish... and Haman is trying to kill me.  
"Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, 'Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?'"

NOT a good time to fall on the Queen!!!!

Now where can we find a good gallows????

## 3A THE VICTORY, 8-10

### 1B The Preparation for Victory, 8

Mordecai gets Haman's 1) Honor & position (signet ring) 2) Wealth (estate) 3) but not his \_\_\_\_\_

### 2B The Experience of Victory, 9:1-17

Israel slaughters all her enemies on the day of "Purim"  
Mordecai finally gets Haman's sons



# The point?

- Esther 9:24-26
- 24 For Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them and had cast the *pur* (that is, the lot) for their ruin and destruction. 25 But when the plot came to the king's attention, he issued written orders that ***the evil scheme Haman had devised against the Jews should come back onto his own head***, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. 26 (Therefore these days were called Purim, from the word *pur*.)



If God is in the Temple

No God in the Temple

hot-line to heaven

quatty little Temple

# ESTHER

The STAR and the SCEPTRE



She was young, beautiful, and queen of an empire. Only one man knew her secret... a secret that could mean death!



Mordecai is courageous

Observations

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

Author's  
Big Idea

I will be  
courageous  
too!

Applications

Esther stands up  
for her people



Mordecai is courageous

Observations

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

Author's  
Big Idea

I will use  
immoral  
means to  
attain positions  
of authority

Applications

Esther stands up  
for her people



Observations

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

God is faithful to his people even when they are faithless to him

**Theology: God will be faithful to Israel**

**Humility: b/c of God's faithfulness when I have been faithless**

**Behavior: I want to be faithful to those who are faithless to me**

Applications



# POPULARITY

*i'm accepted because i have a pretty face?*



**“IMAGINE HOW MUCH A MAN’S LIFE WOULD BE CHANGED IF HE TRUSTED THAT HE WAS LOVED BY GOD?** He could interact with the poor and not show partiality, he could love his wife easily and not expect her to redeem him, he would be slow to anger because redemption was no longer at stake, he could be wise and giving with his money because money no longer represented points, he could give up formulaic religion, knowing that checking stuff off a spiritual to-do list was a worthless pursuit, he would have confidence and the ability to laugh at himself, and he could love people without expecting anything in return. **IT WOULD BE QUITE BEAUTIFUL REALLY.”**

*Donald Miller  
“Searching For God Knows What”*