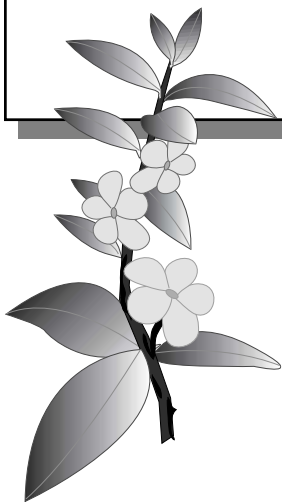


THOUGHT QUESTION

In fulfillment of prophecy (Jer. 29:10-14), Cyrus came to power and defeated Babylon. He then allowed God's people to return home. Since captivity was God's punishment for sin, how do you account for Jews deciding to stay in the captive lands? Was it right for them to stay?



The Myrtle was an evergreen tree with dark shiny leaves, berries, and plentiful, white flowers. The leaves, berries, and flowers were used in the production of perfume and as well as seasoning. Myrtle trees are mentioned symbolically in Zechariah 1:8-11.

ESTHER ELEVATED CHAPTER 2

Lesson 4

BACKGROUND

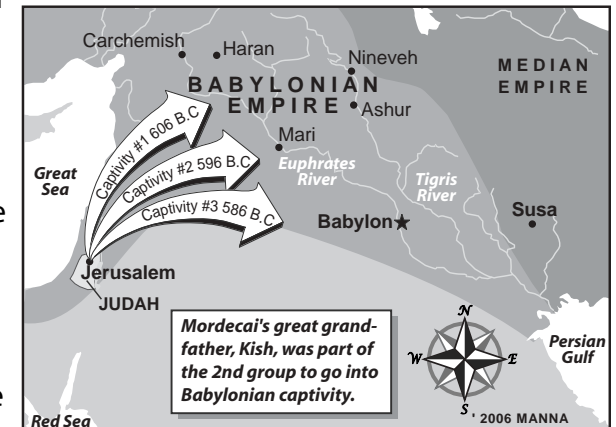
• Three years elapse between the banquet of chapter 1 and the selection of Esther as Queen (1:3 and 2:12, 16). Secular history reveals King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) was defeated in his efforts to conquer Greece. After further clashes and losses to the Greeks, Ahasuerus returned home to take solace in his harems.

• In this chapter we are introduced to Mordecai. It is thought the name Mordecai is the Hebrew form of the Babylonian name *Mardukaya*. The name "Mardukaya" appears in extra-biblical, Persian texts dated about 485 B.C.

• Many Jews were living in Susa and throughout the Persian Empire because of the captivities that had occurred years earlier. Mordecai came to be in Susa because his great grandfather, over 100 years earlier, had been taken into Babylonian captivity.

• Polygamy was common amongst the kings of Persia. It was also common amongst God's people of the Old Testament. Consider the following passages:

Abraham (Genesis 25:6)
Gideon (Judges 8:30-31)
Saul (2 Samuel 3:7)
David (2 Samuel 5:18)



QUESTIONS

1. What was done to find a replacement for Queen Vashti?

2. How did Mordecai come to be in the city of Susa? Be specific in your response.

3. What was Esther's Hebrew name?
What is the meaning of her Hebrew name?

4. How was Mordecai related to Esther?

5. Why do you think Mordecai wanted Esther to keep quiet about being Jewish?

Was it wrong to keep silent about her origins and faith? Why or why not?

6. How long was Esther in preparation for her visit to King Ahasuerus?

7. Why would Mordecai and Esther be agreeable to Esther's becoming a part of King Ahasuerus' harem and then her becoming Queen—especially in view of God's attitude about marriages to foreigners? (1 Kings 11:1-2)

8. In what year of his reign was Esther taken to King Ahasuerus? What was his reaction to Esther, and what did he do?



9. What two men plotted the death of King Ahasuerus? What was the work they did in the King's service? (See Esther 6:2.)

