



Esther

October 10th

Last week we left the southern kingdom of Judah still standing while the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 BC. Jonah and the other prophets had done their work, but the Israelites had turned away from God so many times that at last he did what he had warned—removed his protection and allowed them to be utterly defeated, deported, dispersed, and destroyed as a nation. The people who were brought to the empty land to occupy it were of various ethnicities and worshiped many different gods.

Read **2 Kings 17:24-41**.

Discuss how this produced the Samaritans that Jesus dealt with 750 years later.

Meanwhile, down south in Judah and Jerusalem, good and bad kings ruled the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Look at the **Chapter headings** for the remainder of 2 Kings and name as many of the remaining kings of Judah as you see there.

Read **Jeremiah 25:1-14**.

What does Jeremiah say that God is going to do?

Why is God doing this now?

How many years had Jeremiah warned the people?

What gospel message does Jeremiah also include?

Now, read **2 Kings 25 1:17**.

Who conquers Jerusalem?

What does he do to the city?

What does he do with the people?
(These events happen in 587-586 BC).

Look at **2 Chronicles 36:22-23**
(notice that these verses are repeated in Ezra 1:1-3).

We've just looked at the prophecy referenced here. Who fulfills it?

Of what nation is he king?

This happens in 536 BC. These people rebuild a poor copy of Solomon's temple and live in a ruined Jerusalem.

The action of Esther takes place in the early reign of Xerxes, 486-464 BC. The book shares the origin of the Jewish feast of Purim.

Read **Esther 9:20-32**.
Why is the feast called "Purim?"

What are its dates?

Purim falls next on March 5, 2015. (Incidentally, we're currently in Sukkoth, the Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths, right now!) Esther and Mordecai's faithfulness results in the sparing of the Jews in all the Persian Empire, so that Ezra and Nehemiah would survive and be able to do their work in 458 BC and following. Chronologically, only the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi come later than the events of Esther. The stage is set for Jesus to come!

Next Week: Mary Magdalene
Read the Resurrection Chapters in each Gospel