Esther (In a Nutshell)
Sept 23/Oct 7, 2009

King’s Feast
Queen Vashti banished
Virgins gathered
Esther selected
Mordecai saves king
Haman plots against Mordecai and the Jews with decree
Esther told of plot
Esther’s request of King
Banquets with King and Haman
Haman builds gallows for Mordecai
King examines chronicles of Mordecai’s deed
Mordecai honored by King
Esther’s request made known to king
Haman exposed at banquet
Haman hanged
Haman’s house given to Esther
Mordecai given king’s signet ring
New decree for Jews
Jews destroy tormentors (75,810)
Feast of Purim established
Mordecai becomes great

Historical Data for Esther

ESTHER 1:3 (Time of the event, 483 B.C.)
[In the third year] In this year, 483 B.C., Xerxes assembled the governors of provinces at Susa, in connection with his contemplated expedition against Greece.

ESTHER, BOOK OF (Date written, 400 B.C.)
That monarch was assassinated by Artabanus in 465 BC. This gives us, say 460 BC, as the highest possible date. The lowest possible date is the overthrow of the Persian empire by Alexander in 332 BC; for the royal records of the Median and Persian kings are plainly in existence and accessible, which they would not have been had the empire been overthrown. The book must have been written, therefore, some time within this interval of 128 years. There is another fact which narrows that interval. The initial waw shows that Esther was written after Neh, that is, after 430 BC. The interval is consequently reduced to 98 years; and, seeing that the Persian dominion was plainly in its pristine vigor when Esther was written, we cannot be far wrong if we regard its date as about 400 BC.

ESTHER, BOOK OF (Place; Susa)
The book is characterized by supreme dramatic power. The scene is "Shushan, (Susa), the palace," that portion of the ancient Elamitic capital which formed the fortified residence of the Persian kings.

ESTHER, BOOK OF (Who is Esther?)
Hadassah, (Esther), the cousin and adopted daughter of Mordecai,

ESTHER 1:1-9 (Mordecai is Esther’s guardian & cousin)
Mordecai is said to have been one of those that were carried captive from Jerusalem (Est 2:5-6), whence it should seem that this Ahasuerus was one of the first kings of that empire. (Esther and Mordecai would have been contemporary with Daniel, who also went into captivity for that 70 year period.)

ESTHER, BOOK OF (The villian)
Haman, (a Prince), the son of Hammedatha, whose seat the king had set "above all the princes that were with him." All the king's servants who are at the king's gates prostrate themselves before the powerful favorite.

ESTHER, BOOK OF (Order and importance of Book) (The absence of reference to God)
In the original arrangement of the Old Testament canonical books (the present Hebrew arrangement is post-Christian), Esther is joined to Nehemiah. In 1895 I made a suggestion which I still think worthy of consideration: More than 60 years had passed since Cyrus had given the Jews permission to return. The vast majority of the people remained, nevertheless, where they were. Some, like Nehemiah, were restrained by official and other ties. The rest were indifferent or declined to make the necessary sacrifices of property and of rest. With such as these last the history of God's work in the earth can never be associated. In His providence He will watch over and deliver them: but their names and His will not be bound together in the record of the labor and the waiting for the earth's salvation.

Who was the prophet Daniel?

The life of the prophet Daniel is recorded in the book that shares his name. Daniel means "God is my judge." There is not much know about the early years of his life, but he appears to have been of the upper class, perhaps even from a royal family. It is recorded that he was taken to Babylon as a teenager in 605 B.C.

He began service to the royal court and abstained from unclean food (Daniel 1:8-16). Three years later, Daniel was brought before the King to interpret the King's dream. The king was pleased and made Daniel "ruler over the whole province of Babylon" and "chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon" (Daniel 2:48). In Chapter 4, we learn that Daniel interpreted another of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams.

Nelson's Bible Dictionary comments: "Daniel remained in governmental service through the reigns of the kings of Babylon and into the reign of Cyrus of Persia after the Persians became the dominant world power (Dan 1:21; 10:1). Daniel was also a person of deep piety. His book is
characterized not only by prophecies of the distant future but also by a sense of wonder at the presence of God. From his youth Daniel was determined to live by God's law in a distant land (see Dan 1). In moments of crisis, Daniel turned first to God in prayer before turning to the affairs of state (2:14-23). His enemies even used his regularity at prayer to trap him and turn the king against him. But the grace of God protected Daniel (chap. 6). . .So the Book of Daniel is more than a treasure of prophetic literature. It also paints a beautiful picture of a man of God who lived out his commitment in very troubled times. We should never get so caught up in the meanings of horns and beasts that we forget the human dimension of the book-the intriguing person whose name means 'My God is Judge.'"