

July 26, 2021

Greetings Family and Friends,



I was on the phone the other day with one of our prison chaplains. His instructions for me included: get your volunteer clearance papers into our office right away; we really are looking forward to seeing you all again; we cannot believe that you still want to volunteer for us considering the distance you have to come.

We are still available to teach classes with Prison Fellowship. Pray that we will be wise as to the prisons we visit. Obviously, driving long distances every week is not wise, so we are asking the prisons to help us build a schedule that will meet their needs and protect us from exhaustion & burn-out.

Some challenges we are facing:

1. The number of students we see could be severely limited due to the continuing COVID restrictions. That would cause us to re-evaluate how far we would drive should the class size be limited to 10.
2. The rising prices of gasoline could limit our travels. We pray God will continue to provide the monthly funds to carry these expenses.
3. We are committed to visiting our grandchildren in Utah during their remaining school years. That travel cuts into our availability to teach in the prisons, but it is an important part of our lives.
4. Neither Liz nor I have or can get the COVID vaccine for health reasons. In recent years, various shots have cause serious reactions & potential harm to us. So far, that has not been an issue for getting into the prisons we are focused on. However, as you know, decisions & policies change unpredictably.

We are creating Bible studies (brief, simple ones) that chaplains can use should they not have access to materials, or due to lack of scheduled programming.

Pray for our chaplains in our prisons. They have faced incredible pressure to maintain programming, to maintain contact with the inmates, to even maintain their

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employment. Some have resigned during this pandemic fiasco. Another concern that could be pending would be the replacement of staff chaplains with "Religious Coordinators" as attrition occurs. Pray protection over our good chaplains. The key to good programming that meets the spiritual needs of the men is having a good chaplain who cares about the spiritual growth of the men.

Personally (Bruce & Liz), we are enjoying being back in the family home we have owned for 45 years. We have connected with good doctors since being back in the San Diego area. When we get older, we seem to have a doctor for each joint in the body; I told my daughter I have more doctors than socks. So far, I am doing ok. Liz has found great medical care through the amazing Scripps medical system. She has lingering problems due to past surgeries & a car accident. Pray we can get to the bottom of those issues, and that she will regain her strength.

We try to keep in touch with parolees who we have had extended contact & involvement with. There are three who could use your support in prayer:

1. One is pursuing legal assistance to get his personal records updated & corrected.
2. Another has been very productive since being released several years ago. He entered a good profession, earned a good reputation, supported himself well. He hurt himself (the back) & is entangled in the Worker's Comp process.
3. My last dear brother is struggling. He has a good job & good work history. However, he is cheating on his wife & is (as of this writing at this moment) not repentant nor trying to end the affair. Of course, he won't answer my texts. Fortunately, his wife found our address & is communicating with Liz.

Thank you for including us in your lives. That is an honor. Many read our letter; many pray for us; many send financial monthly gifts.

May we extend our deepest love to you; you have pressures and disappointments of your own; you have kids & grandkids that need your prayers & support; some of you have family illnesses. "Father, please embrace our dear friends for us, give them hope & strength, provide their needs, & look them in the eye & tell them they are special. Oh, God, how we desperately need you. Because Jesus controls all, Amen."

Bruce & Liz Leary

PS. Give us a call or text & say howdy.

Financial support should be sent to: MGF, PO Box 1535, Turlock, CA 95381 (Project 89).

Press CTRL & click link to access our webpage: <https://www.mgfhq.org/leary> OR
https://www.continuetogive.com/4826389/donation_prompt

PS. If you are interested in taking a peek at a few Bible studies we're creating, check out the next four pages of this letter.

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A TIME TO ENCOURAGE

“Encouragement” means to “put heart into somebody.” (French)

“Encouragement” also means in Greek “to hold on to someone.”



Opposites could be: discouraged, depressed, disappointed, hopeless, lack of confidence, unhappiness, in despair, aimless, stalled, distracted rebellious dead end

The box of opposites describes who needs to be encouraged.

1. What are we supposed to do?
 - a. (Romans 15:1) _____
 - b. (Galatians 6:1-2) _____
 - c. (1 Thess. 5:11) _____
2. What is the discouraged person supposed to do? (Psalm 31:24)

*Check out this verse more closely. **"Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord."***

3. Do you think that a person who is depressed & discouraged can do this verse? Maybe, they won't allow themselves to be encouraged (push people away). Maybe, they are not remotely interested in God right now. Explain.

It appears to me that sometimes, we have to step up to the plate even when the person is not able or not willing to ask for help. They can get so numb & depressed that they cannot see straight.

4. Write out Proverbs 3:5-6. _____

Possibly you needed someone once; maybe you attempted to help someone.

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5. Why did the converted killer, Saul of Tarsus, need encouragement? (Acts 9:26)
 - a. Saul _____ to join the disciples.
 - b. They were all _____ of him.
 - c. They did not _____ that he was a _____.
6. What did Barnabas do to encourage Saul? (Acts 9:27)
 - a. Barnabas _____ Saul to the _____.
 - b. Barnabas told them that Saul had been converted on the road.
 - c. Barnabas said that Saul _____ boldly about _____.
7. Saul had to be sent to Tarsus because his life was in danger. 14 years passed.
 - a. (9:25) Barnabas departed for Tarsus to _____.
 - b. (9:26) Did he find Saul? ___Yes ___No
 - c. (9:26) Barnabas _____ to Antioch.

Antioch was where the disciples (church leaders) had their headquarters. They had Saul in training for 1 year.

8. What assignment were Barnabas & Saul given after the 1 year? (11:30)

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9. While on the road, Barnabas the veteran and the Saul the rookie definitely had a lot of alone time; Saul would have had rough edges. Could Barnabas have said:
 - a. ___Yes ___No Saul, I enjoy spending time with you; I like you.
 - b. ___Yes ___No Saul, you work hard; you do it well; I am proud of you.
 - c. ___Yes ___No Saul, you're probably dried out; here's some water.
 - d. ___Yes ___No Saul, I love you; you're God's gift. Here's a hug.
 - e. ___Yes ___No Remember that great time we had on the lake?

Ok, it's a stretch but oh how encouraging that would feel.

A servant is someone who gets excited about making someone else successful.

Barnabas' positive strokes to Saul were felt by Saul & seen by all who watched. Barnabas was not hung up on himself. He wanted God to be pleased & the Gospel message to be heard.

10. Write down the order of their names in these verses:

- a. (13:2) _____ & _____
- b. (13:7) _____ & _____
- c. (13:43) _____ & _____
- d. (13:46) _____ & _____
- e. (14:14) _____ & _____

Saul (Hebrew name) changed to Paul (Roman name) as he traveled more throughout the Empire populated mostly by non-Jews. Notice that Paul became more dominant on the team as he became more skilled.

We can thank Barnabas for encouraging Paul (the great missionary). Look around for those who need your attention, your love & your encouragement.

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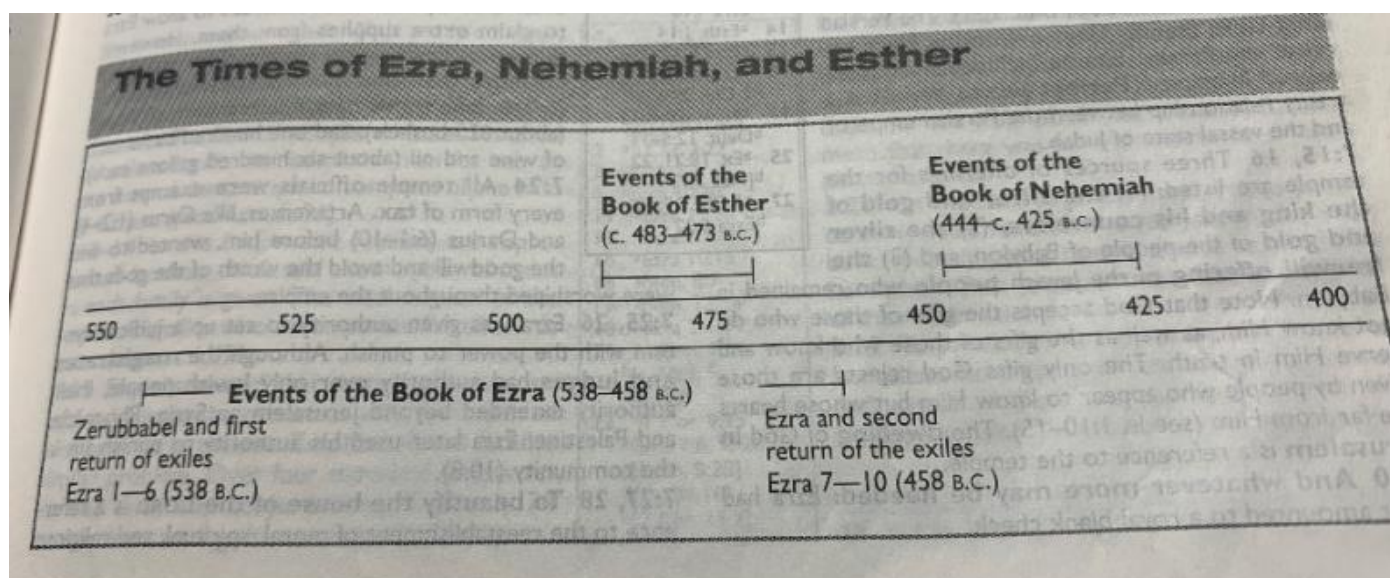
An Old Testament Glance

The History Books – Esther

Written	450 BC	Period*	480-475 BC	Author	Unknown
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*Dates are sometimes hard to know. They can vary depending on scholars & sources of information.

Esther 1-2	Esther Becomes the Queen
Esther 3	The Plot of Jewish Genocide
Esther 4	Esther Agrees to Help Her People
Esther 5-6	Two Banquets
Esther 7	Haman Died
Esther 8-10	The Damages to the Jewish People are Reversed



- Cyrus the Great (r. 550-530 BC)
- Cambyses II (r. 530-522 BC)
- Bardiya (r. 522 BC)
- Darius I The Great (r. 522-486 BC)
- Xerxes I (r. 485-465 BC) (This is King Ahasuerus in Esther)
- Artaxerxes I (r. 465-424 BC)
- Darius II (r. 424-404 BC)
- Artaxerxes II (r. 404-358 BC)

1. What were the two names of the king of Persia who married Esther? (Est. 1:1)

Xerxes (or Ahasuerus), the son of Darius, was mad that some of his dad's battles were failures. Most of his reign involved military activities; many were defeats or at least failures. He came back home & build many building – spending lots of money.

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During Xerxes' reign, Zerubbabel had been sent to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. So, there was rebuilding going on in Jerusalem & turmoil going in Persia. Xerxes was loose with the women & had a leud reputation.

2. What happened when he requested his queen to come to him? (Est. 1:12)

The king then fired the queen & Esther was chosen to replace her. This was God's plan because the Jews still living in Persia were in danger (Est. 3:9).

3. Who was the evil man who hated the Jews? (Est. 3:1) _____

Esther's adoptive father, Mordecai, found out about the evil plan being devised, told Esther who told the king. Mr. Haman was hanged and the Jews in Persia were safe.

4. **What kind of a woman was Esther?** Describe her. This is the person God used to save the Jews from destruction in Persia while the temple was being rebuilt in Jerusalem.

- a. Esther 2:7 _____
- b. Esther 2:8-9 _____
- c. Esther 2:10 _____
- d. Esther 2:15 _____
- e. Esther 2:17 _____
- f. Esther 2:22 _____
- g. Esther 4:16 _____
- h. Esther 4:17 _____

The King of Persia (Xerxes or Ahasuerus) was grateful for being able to save the Jews in his kingdom & being spared of an assassination attempt. He, promoted Mordecai (Esther's adoptive father) to second in command in Persia.

5. Please comment on this statement: "God is not mentioned once in the book of Esther; however, we see God all through the book of Esther."

Xerxes was assassinated a few years later because when Ezra was sent to Jerusalem, he was sent by Xerxes son, Artaxerxes. Isn't it amazing that in the middle of the Jews returning to Jerusalem, God was also working in Persia. God works in all of our lives all the time working out His plan.

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