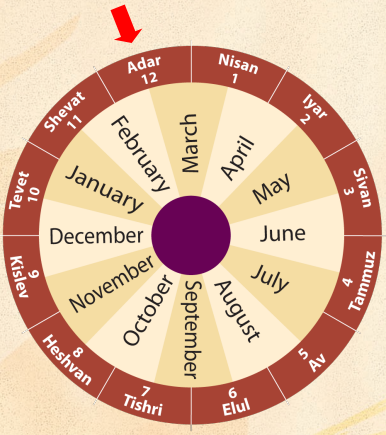
Feast of Lots

Also Known As: *Purim*

Observed:
14 or 15 Adar
February or March

Scripture:
Book of Esther

Hebrew: פּוּרִים



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Persian Kings in the 3 Books

Ezra 1-6	539-530 B.C.	Cyrus "the Great"
	530-522	Cambyses II (not mentioned)
	522-486 B.C.	Darius I "the Great"
Esther	486-464 B.C.	Ahasuerus (also called Xerxes) (Esther's husband)
Ezra 7-10 & Nehemiah	464-423 B.C.	Artaxerxes I (Esther's stepson, Ezra's supporter & Nehemiah's boss)
	423-404 B.C.	Darius II (briefly mentioned in Neh.12:22)

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Feast of Lots

Background

- Commemorates the preservation of the Jewish people.
- Purim marks the deliverance of the Jews through Jewish Queen Esther in Shushan, Persia (modern day Susa, Iran).

3

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Feast of Purim

Background

- The word *purim* means "lots" and refers to the lot Haman cast to decide the day to choose for the destruction of the Jewish people.
- *Est 3:7- In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.* NKJV

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Feast of Lots (PURIM)

Background

- Adar 14 and 15 became days of joy and feasting, giving of gifts and taking food to the poor.
- Purim is celebrated on Adar 14 in most cities except those cities surrounded by walls since the time of Joshua.
- Walled cities celebrate Purim on Adar 15 (Shushan Purim).
- Read Esther 9:23-32

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The Book of Esther

Esther is the only book in the bible where the name of God is not mentioned or even inferred! Why?

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Feast of Lots (PURIM)

Queen Esther
by
Andrea Del Castagno, 1450

Background

- Esther – derived from Persian word 'star' or Persian goddess Ishtar. Also from root meaning 'hidden' or 'concealed'
- Her Hebrew name was **Hadassah**, meaning "myrtle." Myrtle means 'love' or 'crowning glory' Note: myrtle only gives fragrance when crushed

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Esther's Fast

4:15Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: 16"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise

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The Lot was cast duringNisan

3:6…Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who *were* throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai. 7 In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that *is,* the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month, until *it fell on the* twelfth *month,* which *is* the month of Adar.

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The Lot was cast duringNisan

Esther's 3-day fast (Esther 4:16) is believed to have taken place during Passover, Nisan 14-16) a time when fasting is normally forbidden.

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A Song of Purim

The people of Israel rejoiced and became overjoyed
When together they saw Mordecai wearing royal blue

Their salvation was from eternity. And their hope is from generation to generation. Blessed is Mordecai the Jew! Blessed is Mordecai the Jew!

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Hidden But In Control!!

Despite the fact that God is not overtly present in the lives of Esther and Mordecai and the Jews of Susa, and He is not plainly revealed in the book, He still demonstrates His ability to control all circumstances and situations for His own glory.

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Our Extraordinary God

God saved the Jewish people from their enemies—not because they were extraordinary in and of themselves. God saved them because He is an extraordinary, God of love and faithful to His Word!

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Haman- The Enemy of the Jews

Esther 9:24- Why did Haman want to annihilate the Jews?

The Conflict begins long before the Book of Esther.

Haman was most likely a descendent of Agag, king of the Amalekites- 1 Samuel 15:1-3

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Haman/Agag- Mordecai/Saul

Haman was a decendent of Agag, Mordecai was a descendent of Saul.

. Esther 2:5 identifies Mordecai as the "son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite". Kish is also identified as the father of King Saul in 1 Samuel 9:1.

Mordecai completed what Saul failed to do!

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Impalement was a common means of execution among the Persians

Hung on stake, not hung from gallows

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The Charge of Purim

Are you inviting the Lord into your story? Is your story silent of His Name and His Glory?

Are you picking up a Agagite spirit of Antisemitism?

Recognize for such a time as this you have been born! Choose today to be obedient to the Lord in what you are called to do!

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Feast of Lots (PURIM)

Background

- The annual celebration of Purim is a joyous feast remembering the foiled plot of Haman to kill all the Jews living within King Xerxes's (Ahasuerus's) kingdom.
- Esther's uncle Mordecai uncovered the plot and warned Esther, who then told the king.

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Feast of Lots (PURIM)

Background

- The king had Haman executed.
- The word *purim* means "lots" and refers to the lot Haman cast to decide the day to choose for the destruction of the Jewish people.
- *Est 3:7- In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.* NKJV

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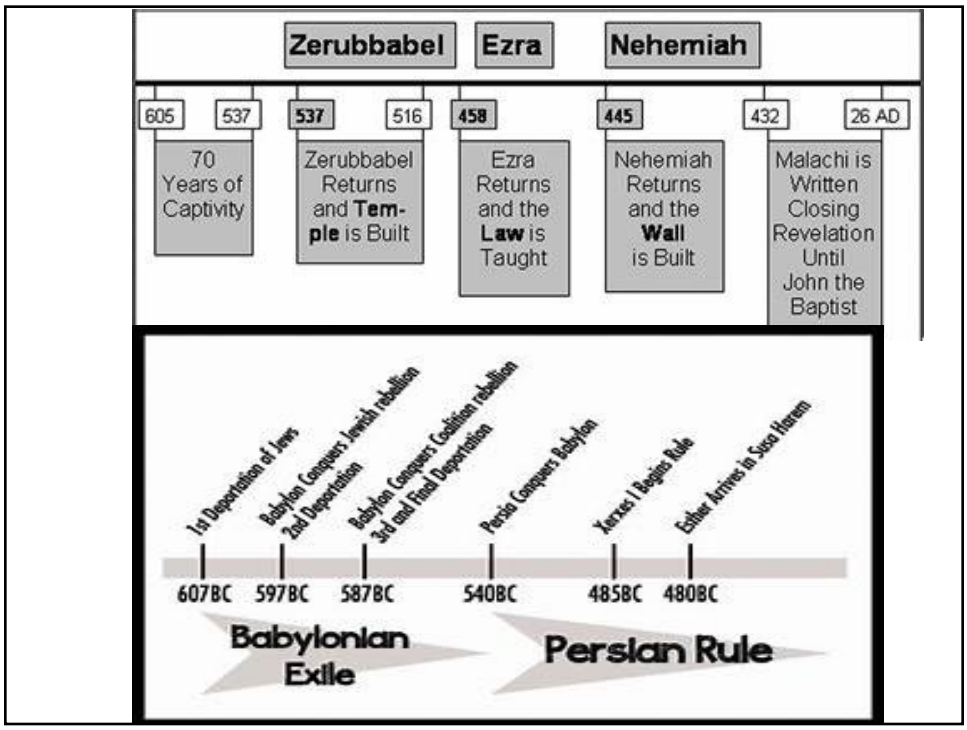

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Feast of Lots (PURIM)

Yeshua (Jesus)

- The Jews of Esther's day were delivered from an irrevocable decree of the Persian king Ahasuerus.
- The King offered a new decree allowing the Jews the right to defend themselves.
- God also has an irrevocable decree that all people are sinners and deserve death.

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Feast of Lots (PURIM)

Yeshua (Jesus)

However, the Messiah (Jesus) delivers all who believe in him from that irrevocable decree as well

Rom 6:23- For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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Feast of Lots (PURIM)

Yeshua (Jesus)

- Many have and may continue to persecute believers in Messiah, but Isaiah's prophecy proclaims that they will not prevail because "God is with us," or literally, because of *Immanuel* (Isaiah 8:10).

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Feast of Lots (PURIM)

Fascinating Facts

- Purim is a happy and noisy holiday.
- The *megillah*, the scroll of the book of Esther, is read in the synagogue.
- Whenever Mordecai is mentioned, everyone cheers.

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Feast of Lots

Tradition

- The *megillah*, the scroll of the book of Esther, is read in the synagogue.

Grogger and Hamantashen

- Whenever Mordecai is mentioned, everyone cheers.
- Whenever Haman is mentioned, everyone boos, stamps their feet, and shakes noisemakers, called *groggers*.

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Feast of Lots

Fascinating Facts

- Treats include *Hamantashen*, a three-cornered cookie which represents Haman's hat.

Grogger and Hamantashen

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Feast of Lots

Fascinating Facts

- Other customs include parades, dressing up as characters and reenacting the story of Esther, parties, and carnivals.
- It is customary to give gifts to the poor on Purim.
- Did Jesus celebrate Purim? Perhaps- John 5 - only feast during Shabbat during those years was Purim.

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Feast of Lots

The four central commandments (mitzvot) of Purim include:

Reading the Megillah: Listening to the story of Esther (twice) in the synagogue, often with rowdy, festive noise-making.

Cheer for Mordachai - Boo Haman

Mishloach Manot: Sending at least two portions of food to one person or family

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Feast of Lots

Matanot La'evyonim: Giving charity to at least two needy individuals.

Seudah: Partaking in a festive, celebratory meal, often featuring wine and, for some, drinking to the point of being unable to distinguish between "cursed be Haman" and "blessed be Mordecai".

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Why the Cheers & Jeers?

Central to the book of Esther is the conflict between Mordechai and Haman.

In Esther we see the God who is faithful to His Word and Promises

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Why the Cheers & Jeers?

Why the Jeers against Haman?

Saul's disobedience allowed the spirit of destruction in the generations of Amalek to continue against Israel until the time of Esther.

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Why the Cheers & Jeers?

Why the cheers for Mordecai?

1. He was old in body but powerful in spirit!

2:5 Now there was at the citadel of Susa a Jewish man from the tribe of Benjamin named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish. 6He had been <u>carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon among those taken captive with Jeconiaha king of Judah</u>

Exiled in 597 BC Book of Esther around 480 BC

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Why the Cheers & Jeers?

Why the cheers for Mordecai?

2. He was a descendent of Saul sovereignly appointed to finish the job of eradicating Amelek

2:5 Now there was at the citadel of Susa a Jewish man from the tribe of Benjamin named Mordecai son of Jair, the son of Shimei, THE SON OF KISH. 6He had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon among those taken captive with Jeconiaha king of Judah

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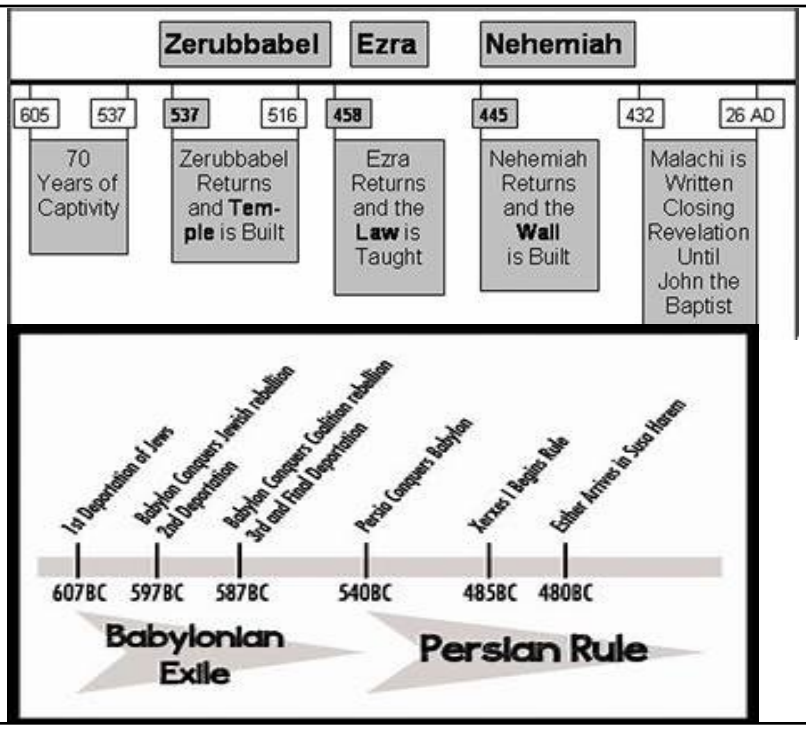

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Persia is in Modern Day Iran

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Why the Cheers & Jeers?

Why the cheers for Mordecai?

He was a great man in life!

He was of the first to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple-

Ezra 2:1 Now these are the people of the province who came up from the captivity of the exiles carried away to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar its king. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town, accompanied by Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, …..

He Returned back to Babylon to care for and adopt his uncle's daughter (Esther) whose parents had died

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Why the Cheers & Jeers?

Why the cheers for Mordecai?

His placement in the palace gave his access to Esther and the main guide for her actions

As soon as Mordecai heard about the decree, cried and prayed in the streets, wearing sackcloth and ashes. He also directed Esther to speak to the king on behalf of her people. This required bravery on her part, but Mordecai insisted that it must be the reason God had put her in the position of queen in the first place

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Why the Cheers & Jeers?

Why the cheers for Mordecai?

Scripture refers to him as Mordecai Bilshan. The word Bilshan is related to the Hebrew word *lashon*, "tongue," and he was given this title because he was fluent in many languages. In fact, as a leading member of the Sanhedrin (the highest Jewish court) he was required to know all 70 languages.

He understood the language of those plotting to overthrow the king & reported it.

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Why the Cheers & Jeers?

Why the cheers for Mordecai?

STILL REVERED TODAY!

Nearly 2,500 years after the events of Purim, Iranian Jews (and Muslims) still proudly and reverently point to the tombs of Mordecai and Esther in Hamedan, 360 kilometers (220 miles) southwest of Tehran

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