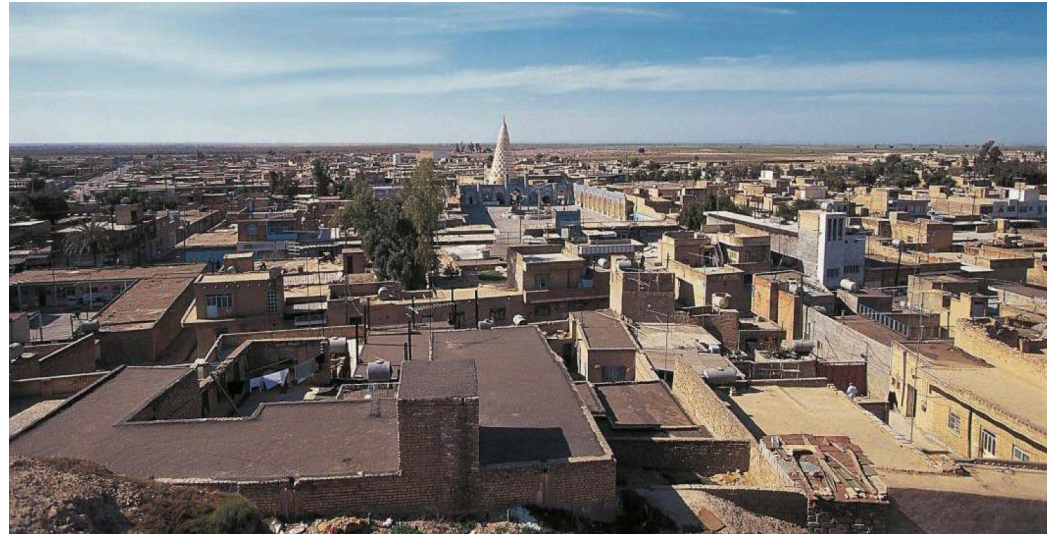


ESTHER - LESSON 20



From Biblical Archaeology Review: Part of the “Esther” panel from the famous third century A.D. synagogue at Dura-Europos, now in Syria. We see the king, Ahasuerus, sitting on Solomon’s golden throne (as he did according to rabbinic tradition) with Queen Esther seated beside him, smaller but also higher in the picture: She is a woman, but more important than Ahasuerus. Of particular interest is her three-turreted golden crown. Scripture tells us Esther wore a crown (Esther 2:17) but does not describe it. The particular crown she wears in the painting can now be identified as a “Jerusalem of Gold,” a headdress representing the walls of the Holy City. Esther wears a tight blue bodice, with a long pink skirt and a drape wrapped around her legs. In addition to the crown, she is adorned with necklace, earrings and bracelets.



The modern city of Susa, looking west across the Mesopotamian plain. The conical tower in the center of the photograph is the traditional tomb of Daniel. Susa was the capital of ancient Elam, and was later made a capital of the Persian empire by Darius I.



Naqsh-e Rostam is an ancient archeological site and necropolis located about 12 km northwest of Persepolis, in Fars Province, Iran. A collection of ancient Iranian rock reliefs are cut into the face of the mountain and the mountain contains the tombs of four Achaemenid kings, notably king Darius the Great and his son, Xerxes.