



Introduction

Esther

Welcome to the INTRUTH Bible Study on Esther.

Studying the Word of God transforms lives!

The Bible is God's message of redemption, as well as our instruction book for life. God wants us to search the Bible so we can understand the TRUTH of His character and His desire for us. The book of Esther reveals some very powerful truths, great wisdom for today and an understanding that God works in mighty ways on behalf of His people.

This study includes 5 lessons, a cover sheet and a dictionary. Each lesson has a memory verse, 15-20 questions, a Take Away and a Blessing. They are written with the New Living Translation (NLT), but any translation will add to your experience.

These lessons are beneficial to anyone but are geared toward 10-15 year olds. This age group is experiencing major changes developmentally - physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. It is a time of having questions about God, about self and about where they fit in the world. These lessons were created to help students think critically and wrestle through who they are and what they believe.

Teenagers are inundated with technology but starving for relationship. If possible, complete the lesson on your own and then discuss it together to learn from each other.

Esther weaves God's sovereignty and loving care throughout the chapters. Truths and wisdom include:

God will give us the courage to do all that He asks us to do.

God is able to bring great favor and blessing on our lives, even in dark times.

God is always faithful to lead us and to fight on our behalf.


Our prayers matter. Our voice matters. Our actions matter. And God is our Deliverer.

May the Lord use these lessons to help you develop a personal, life-long love for God's Word and encourage you to connect in a community that prays, supports and shares life together!

Enjoy!



Esther

 THEME VERSE: "... And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14

Author

Unknown

Dates

Approximately 483 - 471 B.C.
(Esther became queen in 479 B.C.)

Written

To the Jewish people to record the origins of the Feast of Lots, or Purim.

Synopsis

The book is named for a young Jewish girl named Hadassah who was taken from her guardian, Mordecai, and forced to compete for the affection of the king. This unlikely contestant for beauty pageant was crowned queen of Persia and renamed Esther, meaning "star." Haman, a high official of the king, plots to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom, but Mordecai hears of the plot and reports it to Esther. Esther outwits Haman and takes her petition to the king and pleads for the protection of her Jewish people.

Themes

God's sovereignty
God's deliverance

Lessons

Lesson 1: God Has A Plan For You! (Esther 1-2)
Lesson 2: Right Place At The Right Time (Esther 3-4)
Lesson 3: Live For God, Not For Man (Esther 5-6)
Lesson 4: Be Confident - God Is In Control! (Esther 7-8)
Lesson 5: Courage Is Choosing Faith Over Fear (Esther 9-10)



☆ ☆ Commentary ☆ ☆

Ezra and Nehemiah tell the story of the Jews who returned to Jerusalem after their 70-year captivity in Babylon. The book of Esther deals with Jews who stayed in Persia during the reign of King Ahasuerus. Even to this day, Jews celebrate the salvation God brought through Esther, a young orphan girl, at the Feast of Purim.

Esther never mentions God Himself, yet God's providence is woven throughout the entire book. Think of all that God arranged in the story of Esther:

- God arranged for the noble Queen Vashti to lose her place.
- God arranged for a competition to replace Queen Vashti.
- God arranged for Esther to enter the Queen competition.
- God arranged special favor for Esther among the other women.
- God arranged for Mordecai to have access to both Esther and the affairs of the kingdom.
- God arranged the lot that was cast to give 11 months warning before the evil event (Esther 3:12-13).
- God arranged that the decree command that the Jews be killed by private hands, instead of by the army of Persia – which would have been much more difficult to stop.
- God arranged that Haman restrain his anger and not kill Mordecai immediately (Esther 5:10).
- God arranged for Esther to delay her request; first asking for a banquet with the king and then another banquet.
- God arranged for Haman's anger to come to a peak on one particular day.
- God arranged for King Xerxes to have a sleepless night and order a certain book to be read.
- God arranged for Haman to enter the outer court at just that time.
- God arranged for the Jews to have victory.
- God arranged for Mordecai to create the festival celebrating the Jews victory.
- God arranged all things, so that not only will all the Jews be ultimately protected, but also so that both Mordecai and Haman would get what was coming to them.

God's hand in history never rules out our actions. God's will is accomplished even with our freedom to choose. The actions of Esther and Mordecai were critical to the preservation of their people.

God, in His perfect wisdom, allows His people to be tested – sometimes severely. Servants of God aren't protected from every trial because suffering is part of God's design for good.

The book of Esther reveals some very powerful truths, great wisdom for today and an understanding that God works in mighty ways on behalf of His people.

Adapted from commentary by David Guzik ©2006.





Dictionary

Esther

believe	to accept as true or real; trust; have confidence in; have faith in; make a commitment to. Faith.
Bible	God's autobiography; God's plan for the world; a love letter to us; an instruction manual on how to act and live.
 blessing	an affirmation of God's love and approval. It is a deep, abiding sense that we are secure in His presence.
 burlap & ashes	display of extreme remorse or repentance or grief ; rough clothing and markings with ashes. Sackcloth & Ashes.
Christ	Jesus Christ; anointed Son of God; the Savior of the world. Paid the complete penalty for sin for the whole world.
compassion	sharing the hurts of another and wanting to help.
concubine	in the Old Testament, additional wives usually acquired by purchase, gift, or war victory.
conform	agree, follow, act according to socially acceptable standards; become similar in character.
culture	shared and accepted attitudes, values, goals, and practices in a society.
destiny	a predetermined course of events
disciple	"student"; a learner. Disciples of Jesus Christ want to think and live like Him.
eternal life	life that begins when a person turns from sin in commitment to Jesus. Supreme quality of life on earth as well as unending life with God.
eternity	forever; time without a beginning or an end.
eunuch	a castrated man placed in charge of a harem or given duties in a palace.
faith	trust, loyalty, belief; accepting God's Word as fact; deciding to surrender and live your life to follow Jesus.
fasting	to go without food or drink for a certain length of time as a way to focus on and draw closer to God.
fear of the Lord	to respect who God is, what He says, and what He does; a respect that leads to obedience and love of God; profound reverence and awe toward God; true honor, devotion, obedience and love of God.
forgiveness	to pardon sins; ceasing to demand punishment.
glorify	praise; worship; glorify God by obeying Him and living His way.
glory	divine quality; splendor, beauty and radiance of God's presence.

God	The One who is all-powerful; all-knowing; present everywhere at once; unchanging; above the bounds of time; absolutely right to govern His creation; Holy.
Good News/ gospel	"good news"; story of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection. The message that God sent His Son Jesus to take away our sins by dying on the cross and resurrecting to life again to save all who trust in Him.
grace	God's free and undeserved love toward sinful humans that never quits. God's favor. God's power to help us do whatever we need to do.
harem	the wives, concubines, female relatives, and servants living together, secluded, and owned by one man.
heart	inner thoughts and feelings; the real me living inside that thinks, feels, and decides; my character or personality.
heaven	God's home and where those who have believed in Jesus as their Savior go when they die.
hell	a place of punishment for those who die without believing in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.
holy	set apart for use by God; a continual work by the HS in the lives of Christians. A life like God wants you to live.
Holy Spirit (HS)	God's Spirit. Lives within all Christians to help them, communicate God's truth to them, convict them of sin, convince them that God's ways are right, empower them to obey Jesus and comfort them when sad.
hope	believe with confidence that God will accomplish what He has promised; that God will be faithful to do what He said He would do; that we trust God even if we never find out why something happens.
humility	a modest view of one's own importance; seeing ourselves as God sees us; recognizing that all we have comes from God.
Israelites	God's chosen people; Jews; God promised the land of Israel to these people.
Jesus	The Christ; anointed Son of God; true Messiah; Savior of the world. Paid the complete penalty for sin for the whole world.
Jews	descendants of Abraham; also called Israelites or Hebrews.
joy	deep feeling of contentment; evidence of a Holy Spirit filled life.
judgment	act or process of judging - only God's to decide and carry out.
Kingdom of God	Jesus' reign now and a future time when Jesus will rule over all humanity. Jesus has come but He will come again.
law	God's rules for living; commandments; makes people aware of sin and their sinfulness.
lots	objects (usually stones) were tossed like dice by ancient people to reach a decision. Purim.
mercy	deep caring, loving, forgiveness, and kindness when it is not deserved.
obey/obedience	believing and doing what God says; living like Him; pleasing Him; serving Him; getting to know Him better. Obeying God shows our trust in Him and His will.
peace	God-given contentment which results in total confidence in God for everything.

persecution	treating someone in a cruel way because he is different.
plunder	valuables and goods taken by force.
prejudice	irrational suspicion or hatred of a particular group, race, or religion; often leads to persecution.
providence	God's plan and purpose for the world. His providence is demonstrated by His active involvement in moving His creation to a goal. Intentional and purposeful.
Purim	a Jewish holiday celebrates that the deliverance of the Jews from massacre by Haman.
purity	God's cleansing process to make a person whole and like Jesus; it affects both character and conduct.
redeem/ redemption	buy back; to rescue with a ransom; Jesus paid the price for our release from sin - He redeemed us.
repent	regret something you have done; ask God to forgive you; and want to change your ways; turn away from sin.
righteous/ righteousness	being in a right relationship with God; without guilt or sin. God declares believers not guilty/righteous because of their faith in Jesus.
sackcloth	rough clothing worn as a sign of grief.
salvation/saved	rescued or delivered from the penalty and power of sin in your life because you believe that Jesus, God's Son, came to earth and died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins. He resurrected to life again to save all who trust in Him. Saved.
Satan	God's enemy; powerful angel who rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven; tempts people to sin.
Savior	Jesus Christ is "The Savior" because He delivers us from being punished for our sins.
Scripture	God's Words; the Bible.
sin	any action or attitude that falls short of God's perfect standard; separates us from a holy God. When we sin we show contempt for God. Sin keeps the world from working as God originally intended it to.
sovereign	having complete power and authority.
temptation	anything that attracts a person to do something unwise, wrong, or opposed to God's will.
Truth	God's Word is truth. It comes from God and can be trusted; genuine; honest; reliable; Jesus is called the Truth.
virgin	a person who has not had sexual intercourse.
wisdom	God-given understanding; the ability to distinguish between right and wrong; comes from God.
worship	giving reverence and honor to God; expressing our love and praise to Him.
world	the values and ways of life found in the world that oppose the ways of God. People who live as though there is no God.

God Has a Plan for You

 MEMORY VERSE: “Dear friends... Let’s make our entire lives fit and holy temples for the worship of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:19 MSG

DAY 1 ESTHER 1:1-22 — The King’s Banquet

1. King Xerxes was planning to invade Greece in the near future, so he held a very long celebration. What do you learn about the first and second banquets? vv. 1-8
2. Read verses 9-12. Why did Xerxes order the eunuchs to bring the queen? Why do you think Queen Vashti refused?
3. How did King Xerxes respond? What did his advisers tell him? vv. 13-20
4. Share a time when your friends gave you bad advice.

DAY 2 ESTHER 2:1-9 — Search Is Made for a New Queen

5. Four years have passed and King Xerxes had made his great, unsuccessful invasion of Greece and come home a defeated man. His attendants suggested sort of a “Miss Persian Empire” contest to find a new queen. What does Xerxes think of the plan? vv. 1-4

6. Who are Mordecai and Esther? vv. 5-7

7. Read verse 8-9. What do you think it was about Esther that made her stand out? (In addition to her beauty.)

8. What character traits of others most impress you?

DAY 3 ESTHER 2:10-14 — Preparation to Visit the King

9. What does Esther not reveal? Why? v. 10

10. What did Mordecai do every day? Why? v. 11

11. What did each girl have to go through? vv. 12-14

12. How do you think God was preparing Esther during this time? What do you think God is working on in you right now?

DAY 4 ESTHER 2:15-23 — Esther Is Selected as Queen

13. What happened when it was Esther's turn? v. 15

14. How did Xerxes feel about her and what did he do? vv. 16-18

15. Why did Esther still keep her family history a secret? v. 20

16. What does Mordecai hear and do? vv. 21-23

DAY 5 ESTHER 1-2 — Wrap Up

17. Consider the advice that was given in these chapters. Who advises whom to do what? Is it good or bad advice? What does this say to you about the importance of the advice you give and receive?

18. How did you see God working behind the scenes to arrange for Esther and Mordecai to be in a place of influence? How have you seen God at work behind the scenes in your life?


TAKE AWAY

God planned this remarkable course of events with Esther playing the lead role! You also have a place in God's plan. God has a reason and a purpose for you wherever you are. It might require sacrifice and courage. Are you game? Talk to God.

BLESSING

Lord, help us to see how the Book of Esther has much to reveal for our own lives. Help us to understand the beauty and the glory You have planned for each of us. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

Right Place at the Right Time

 MEMORY VERSE: “Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?” Then Esther sent this reply: “Go and gather together and fast for me. And then, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die.” Esther 4:14-1

DAY 1 ESTHER 3:1-7 — Mordecai Refuses to Bow

1. What did the officials do when Haman walked by? Who refused? vv. 1-2
2. How did Haman react to what the officials told him? vv. 4-6
3. Read Ephesians 4:26-27. What can you learn from this?
4. How does Haman determine the date he will strike against the Jews and how long will he have to wait? v. 7

DAY 2 ESTHER 3:8-15 — Haman’s Plot Against the Jews

5. What approach did Haman use to convince Xerxes that a race of people needed to be destroyed? What was the order given? vv. 8-13

6. As all this was happening and the city of Susa is in confusion, what did Xerxes and Haman do?
How would you describe King Xerxes' character?

How would you describe Haman's character?

7. What do Xerxes and Haman not know, yet? vv. 2:10, 20

DAY 3 ESTHER 4:1-14 — Mordecai Requests Esther's Help

8. What did Mordecai do when he heard all that had happened? What did many other Jews do?
vv. 1-3

9. Esther sent Hathach to Mordecai to find out why he was mourning.
What did Mordecai's want Esther to do? v. 8

What was Esther's fear? v. 11

How does Mordecai respond? vv. 13-14

10. What do you think about Mordecai's words?

DAY 4**ESTHER 4:15-17 — Esther Prepares**

11. What was Esther's plan? vv. 15-16

12. The fate of God's people rested with God, not Esther, but her own fate depended on her own faithfulness to God. What do you think you would have done in this situation?

13. How would knowing your friends are praying for you when you are in need, help you?

DAY 5**ESTHER 3-4 — Wrap Up**

14. How did this lesson give you fresh understanding of how God works among His people?

15. God puts us in places for a reason. How might God want to use you right now?

TAKE AWAY

This week keep your eyes open for Esther moments – times where you can say an encouraging word, help someone, pray for someone, etc.

BLESSING

“He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection.” Psalm 91:4

Live for God, Not for Man



MEMORY VERSE: “I’m not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ’s servant.”
Galatians 1:10

DAY 1 ESTHER 5:1-8 — Esther’s Request to the King

1. What did the king say when he saw Esther? vv. 1-3
2. What does King Xerxes do? vv. 4-5
3. Read verses 6-8. What do you think Esther was waiting for? What might this tell you about God behind the scenes?

DAY 2 ESTHER 5:9-14 — Haman’s Plan to Kill Mordecai

4. Why was Haman happy and then furious? v. 9
5. Read verses 10-13. Why is it all worth nothing to him?
6. Why do you think God does not want you to keep bitterness, jealousy, anger, hatred inside?

7. Read verse 14. What do you think his wife and friends were thinking?

8. How would a godly friend influence your life? How could an ungodly friend influence you?

DAY 3 ESTHER 6:1-10 — King Wants to Honor Mordecai

9. Read verses 1-2. Why do you think this happened this night and what does this tell you?

10. What does King Xerxes ask Haman and what does Haman assume? vv. 4-6

11. Read verses 7-9. Notice how many times Haman used the words “the king”.
Why do you think Haman was able to give such a specific answer?

12. What does the king command? v. 10

DAY 4 ESTHER 6:11-14 — Mordecai Honored

13. What words would you use to describe Haman during the parade?

What words would you use to describe Mordecai during the parade?

14. What did both men do after the parade?

15. What did Haman's wife and friends tell him?

DAY 5 ESTHER 5-6 — Wrap Up

16. What do you learn from Esther in this lesson?

17. What does this lesson show you about God and coincidences?

18. What does this lesson reveal to you about the destructive and distorting power of pride?

TAKE AWAY

Esther's faith and courage and Haman's pride - two lifestyles, with two perspectives on life.
Are you more like Esther, or are you more like Haman?

BLESSING

"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing." James 1:2-4

Be Confidant – God Is in Control



MEMORY VERSE: “Trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.”
1 Corinthians 2:5

DAY 1 ESTHER 7:1-7 — Esther Presents Her Request

1. King Xerxes and Haman arrive at Esther’s second banquet. What does Esther ask for? Why?
vv. 1-4
2. Read verse 3:13. Why do you think she repeated the same words?
3. What do you think Xerxes and Haman thought when they discovered that Esther was Jewish?
4. How did Xerxes and Haman respond? v. 7

DAY 2 ESTHER 7:8-10 — The King Executes Haman

5. A veil was placed over Haman’s face because Persian kings refused to look upon the face of a condemned person. Then what did Harbona tell the king? v. 9
6. What happened? v.10

7. What lessons can you learn from Haman's life and death?

DAY 3 ESTHER 8:1-14 — A Decree to Help the Jews

8. What else happened this same day? vv.1-2

9. Even though Haman was defeated, the irrevocable decree of the king still stood against the Jews. How did Esther act to save them? vv. 3-6

10. What did the new decree give the Jews? vv. 9-11

DAY 4 ESTHER 8:15-17 — The Jews Rejoiced

11. Why do you think God wrote the details of the honors Mordecai received?

12. How did the Jews react when they received the new decree? vv. 16-17

13. How do you think God wanted these events to impact the people of that day?

DAY 5 ESTHER 7-8 — Wrap Up

14. You can look at a crisis – or any event in your life – as coincidence, random, or you can see it as part of God’s plan and direction for your life. How would your thinking be different if you looked at things as part of God’s plan for your life?

15. How has studying Esther changed your thinking on God’s ability to work in impossible circumstances? In hopeless situations?

TAKE AWAY

God wants you to see His hand in your life – during both the good times and the hard times. Look closely this week for them – and praise God when you see them!

BLESSING

So like Esther, step out and do the impossible thing that God wants you to do. Obey Him and let Him bless you.

Courage is Choosing Faith Over Fear



MEMORY VERSE: What shall we say about such wonderful things as these?
If God is for us, who can ever be against us?" Romans 8:31

DAY 1 ESTHER 9:1-13 — The Victory of the Jews

1. What happened on the day the decrees were put into effect? vv. 1-2
2. What did the officials do? What happened to Mordecai? vv. 3-4
3. What did the Jews do? What did the Jews not do? vv. 5-10
4. What did Xerxes offer to Esther after he told her what had happened? How did Esther respond?
vv. 11-13

DAY 2 ESTHER 9:14-16 — The Jews Did Not Take Any Plunder

5. What happened in Susa and in the other provinces? vv. 14-17

6. By not taking plunder the Jews corrected a mistake made many generations before when they disobeyed God and kept some plunder after defeating Haman's ancestors (Deut. 25:17-19; 1 Samuel 15:13-23). What does this tell you about God and the Jewish nation?

DAY 3 ESTHER 9:17-32 — The Festival of Purim

7. What did Mordecai do? Why? vv. 20-22

8. Why is the celebration called Purim? vv. 23-26

9. Jews still celebrate this day (Purim). What days do Christians still celebrate to remember God and His great works?

10. What additional days could you celebrate to remember God and His great works in your life?

DAY 4 ESTHER 10:1-3 — Epilogue

11. What authority did Mordecai gain and how did he use it? v. 3

12. The Book of Esther shows God is in control, working for good even when evil people have power in the world. What do the following Scriptures say about this?

Ephesians 1:11

Philippians 2:13

Romans 8:28

DAY 5 ESTHER 9-10 — Wrap Up

14. What are two important insights you've gained from the study of Esther? With these in mind, how would you like to ask God to change your life?

15. Esther and Mordecai give us dramatic examples of God working through believers. Your gifts, circumstances, lessons learned, lives touched, choices made –they all shape your destiny. Can you see how God is shaping your destiny? Explain.

TAKE AWAY

When God seems absent in your life, keep trusting Him to do what He has promised. If you remain humble and dependent upon Him, He will raise you up and bring honor to you as only He can.

BLESSING

Courage is not a feeling. Courage is a choice. "So be strong and take courage, all you who put your hope in the Lord!" Psalm 31:24

