



# Faithful & Fearless

RUTH & ESTHER

Lesson Four – Esther 1-3

LA MIRADA CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
DWELLING RICHLY BIBLE STUDY





Written by  
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*...Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...*

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# ...Lesson Introduction...

Welcome Back! Let's share what we've learned and how God is teaching us through this final lesson in Ruth. If you are new or didn't get a chance to do your study, please enjoy the fellowship and insights of others in your group. Thank you for being mindful of others and their time to share.

1. Read the Group Guidelines (below.)
2. Recite Psalm 42 together – printed at the end of this lesson.

## Share your responses...

3. Day 3, pg. 8, Q 9
4. Day 4, pg. 9, Q 3
5. Day 5, pg. 12, Q 4, 5, & 6
6. Day 6, pg. 14, Q 7 & 8
7. Day 7, pg. 16, Q 6 & 7
8. Day 8, pg. 18, Q 4 & 5
9. Day 9, pg. 20, Q 5
10. Share your Day 10 "Create & Share."
11. Pass around the Prayer Journal. Please feel free to share aloud as you write your prayer/praise in your group journal. If you have a prayer request that is more private, you can share with your group leader or our teaching leader, Jennifer, after the study.

# ...Group Guidelines...

- 📖 God's Word is our standard. We'll use the Bible - not personal opinion, popular teachers, or church tradition - as our guide for everything. We are using the English Standard Version (ESV) Bible for this study.
- ♥ We come from varying faith backgrounds, so please be thoughtful of denominational and religious differences.
- 🚫 Avoid commentaries or study notes in your Bible. Trust God, pray, ask for wisdom then read and answer on your own.
- 👉 We're all learning. Be gracious and patient with yourself and with others. No one has it all figured out.
- ✓ This isn't a personal opinion study. This is a Bible study. So, there are going to be "right" and "wrong" answers. Try your best and have a humble and teachable spirit.
- 🗣️ You don't have to share, but if you did the reading and the study this week, why not chime in? We all benefit from one another's thoughts and questions. I bet you have something great to share! 😊
- 🕒 Didn't finish the study this week? That's ok. Life gets busy. You're here! Yay, you! This will be a good week for you to listen and perhaps jot down answers as others share.
- 🍷 Be considerate of your "slice of the pie" Share your thoughts, and allow time for others to do the same.
- 🕒 Watch the time. We'll usually return for teaching time by 7:45pm (evening) or 10:45am (morning) group. So, your leader will wrap up the discussion five minutes before that.

# Lesson Three Review

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Listen to this talk at [www.DwellingRichly.podbean.com](http://www.DwellingRichly.podbean.com)

# Introduction to Esther



Esther is a story that begs to be made into a movie or even better, a full Netflix series. Each chapter could play out in fully entertaining episodes. It's a romantic comedy and a suspenseful drama. It has villains and heroes, sex and battles, parties and feasts, gossip, betrayal, sacrifice, and even a beauty pageant. It opens with glorious views of a colorful kingdom – marble pillars, couches of gold, swaying draperies of fine linen – and a proud, partying king and closes with a humble, honored man of peace and respect. It's an intriguing story filled with boisterous merry-making, improbabilities, misunderstandings, and reversals. There is humor mixed with horror salted with personal sacrifice and

strategic alliances. It's a true page-turner of a story.

Esther is a bit of an outcast as far as books of the Bible go. As you start reading, you may wonder why it was included in the Bible at all. The account of Esther is unique among all the books of the Bible because God is not mentioned anywhere. Unlike Ruth, you won't find a clear path of people that lead to Jesus. You won't hear of blessings or cursings in the name of YWH. You will not read any references to worship, or to faith, or prayer. There is no prophecy. There is no mention of heaven or hell. And yet, the book of Esther provides the explanation for the annual feast of Purim celebrated every year by observant Jews and many Christians around the world.

Then why is it included? Esther reveals how "God moves in mysterious ways." He works even in the lives of those who did not return to the Promised Land. It shows how God works behind the scenes. As in all good stories, you'll find yourself in Esther.

In this study through Esther, we'll see the history of the Jewish festival of Purim, enjoy some fun traditions, and even eat some yummy foods! Most importantly, we'll see that while the name of God is hidden the sovereignty of God is not.

In Esther we see that while we may wish God would swoop in and save in a miraculous way, we will find hope to live bold lives anchored in the truth, brave lives that move even if we feel paralyzed, faithful and fearless lives in the face of oppression that proclaim, "Hope in God; for I shall again praise him." (Ps. 42)



Blessings,

*Jennifer*

p.s. As you begin this study, set your intention to complete it. Between now and the final day in this lesson you'll have work, and stress, and schedules, not to mention personal and relationship challenges, and just life, right? God has something to teach you in our study through Esther, enter this study prayerfully and humbly ask God to give you more diligence and enthusiasm and a truer love for your time with Him than ever before. Why not partner with a friend or two for encouragement and accountability? I'm praying for you!

# ...Lesson Four - Day One...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:7-8

## TODAY'S LESSON:

- WRITE & MEMORIZE** Psalm 42:7-8 – Review and meditate on these verses daily. Psalm 42 is printed at the end of this lesson.
- READ & TAKE NOTES** through Esther.
- THINK AHEAD** to the Create & Share on Day 10. The last day of each lesson is set aside to help you bring together your thoughts and feelings about what you learned and to give you an opportunity to share what you are learning. Read over the Create & Share day so you can be thinking ahead and maybe even completing it as you go.
- PLAN AHEAD:** Days 8 & 9 may take a wee bit longer to complete than normal. Plan now to have enough time for these two super-duper important days! You won't want to miss these, I promise! ☺



...DWELL IN THE WORD...

Welcome back! Over the next two weeks, we'll read, write, memorize, and study our way through Esther chapters one through three along with Psalm 42:1-8

**REMINDER:** One of the goals of this Bible study is to help you develop skills of a good student of the Word. Read Esther straight through *without referring to any study notes or commentaries*. Use only the maps and references in your Bible. It may be tempting to read notes or commentaries, but do the work of your own personal study. Pray for wisdom and understanding as you read.

**TRY THIS:** Don't just read Esther, read Esther *aloud*. Read it to your spouse or kids or read it with a friend. You'll find it really changes the experience. Enjoy!

## AS YOU READ...

- Write your questions and key observations
- Use the line on the left side of the following notes pages to outline the timeline of Esther. Note especially pivotal moments in the narrative. Note in particular, "just so happen" moments – coincidences in timing, placement, people, events, etc.
- Complete the timeline chart on page 8 during this read-through or as you read through your lessons
- Highlight: people (**brown**), places (**green**), times/dates (**pink**), God's name (**blue**), phrases of note (**orange / yellow**)
- Locate places on a map [https://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map\\_persian\\_empire.html](https://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map_persian_empire.html)

=== NOTES THROUGH ESTHER ===



=== NOTES THROUGH ESTHER ===

EVENTS IN ESTHER			
VERSE	EVENT	MONTH/DAY/YEAR OF KING'S REIGN	TIMELINE DATE
1:3			483BC
2:16			479
3:7			479
3:12			474
3:13			473
8:9			474
8:12; 9:1			473
9:6-10, 20-22			473



# ...Lesson Four - Day Two...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:7-8

## TODAY'S LESSON:

- MEMORIZE & WRITE [Psalm 42:7-8](#)
- COMPLETE the study questions.
- WRITE [Esther 1:1-9](#) (Pages to write Esther are provided at the end of this lesson.)

...DWELL IN THE WORD...



## ...BACKGROUND...

It's been about 500 years since the time of Ruth. Israel went through a myriad of judges and then the last judge, Samuel, crowned their first king, Saul. Since that time, the kingdom of Israel is no more. Kings Saul, David, and then Solomon were the only kings to rule over a united kingdom. Solomon's sons, Rehoboam and Jeroboam, rebelled and the nation split around 930BC. Jeroboam became king over the northern kingdom "Israel" (or sometimes "Ephraim"), and Rehoboam became king over the southern kingdom, "Judah." For their rebellion and sin, God sent prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Daniel, and others) to warn the nations that they would be overthrown by pagan nations, first the Assyrians then Babylonians, Persians, and finally the Roman Empire.

The account of Esther is set about 60 years after Persia conquered Babylon during the period of captivity and exile in Persia, around 483-465BC (although there is some disagreement among scholars on the exact dates.) Both Esther and her cousin Mordecai were descendants of the exiles who had been taken away from Israel to Babylon under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar. Although Cyrus the Great, the first Persian king, had permitted the exiles to return to Judea ([Ezra 1:1-8](#)) to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, many exiles remained. Esther's parents were among those who stayed back. When they died, Mordecai raised her as his own daughter. At the time of Esther, there are hundreds of thousands of Jews living in Persia (modern day Iran).

## ...CULTURE & CONTEXT...

Ahasuerus is the transliteration of the king's name in Hebrew, Ahashverosh. Xerxes is his Greek name. He was a usurper to the throne who bought the crown. His wife, Vashti, had the rights of royal lineage.

Ahasuerus is infamous for his drunken womanizing, capricious temper, and lost battles (notably the battle on which the movie "300" was based.) He was the grandson of Cyrus the Great. For more history on this fascinating man, read [https://www.ancient.eu/Xerxes\\_I/](https://www.ancient.eu/Xerxes_I/)  
Check out this helpful timeline at <http://timeline.biblehistory.com/period/the-exile>

1. Locate these areas on a [map](#) of ancient Persia: Susa/Shushan, India, Babylon. Name the modern countries that the reign of Ahasuerus covered:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Xerxes/Ahasuerus ruled from 486-465 BC. In what year does the account of Esther begin? (Esther 1:3)
3. Summarize Esther 1:3-5.

How long was the "feast" that Ahasuerus threw? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Six months is quite a long time for a party. Considering the guest list and the king's history (see Background notes on page 9) what could he have been doing with these leaders?

### ...CULTURE & CONTEXT...

Historians record the Persian custom of drinking at a feast whenever the king commanded or whenever he took a drink.

5. What was the king's edict? Why do you think he stated this?

6. This opening description sets the tone of the king's life and, while not recorded in Esther, it also foreshadows his downfall. Based on Esther 1:1-8, how would you describe the character of Ahasuerus?

### ...CULTURE & CONTEXT...

Queen Vashti's Greek name was Amestris. Her 3<sup>rd</sup> son, born in 483 BC, was Artaxerxes who became king after Xerxes. Read [Ezra 7:1](#).

7. What is the queen doing while the king is partying?

## ...REFLECT ON THE WORD...

The account of Ruth opened during a time when "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." While God had made a special covenant and laws with explicit behavioral expectations for the people of Israel, the reality is that all people are subject to the laws of God. Just as there are physical laws that govern our world – gravity, for example – there are spiritual laws, and God has ordained them all. Esther opens with a snapshot of a prideful king who is not unlike the rebellious children of Israel who "did right in their own eyes," and he is not out from under God's laws. The debauchery, drunkenness, and pride he shows will not go unpunished. Proverbs 16:18 is a good reminder to keep our pride in check and our hearts submitted in humility to our Father: "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

# ...Lesson Four - Day Three...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:7-8

## TODAY'S LESSON:

- MEMORIZE & WRITE [Psalm 42:7-8](#)
- COMPLETE the study questions.
- WRITE [Esther 1:10-12](#)



...DWELL IN THE WORD...

1. At this point, how many days of feasting have there been? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What condition was the king in? Write the description from Esther 1:10:

3. Ahasuerus is not unique in the list of biblical characters whose hearts were merry after having some wine. Compare the following accounts and their results:

[Ruth 3:6-8](#)

Esther 1:10-12

4. What has Vashti been up to while the king was partying? (1:9)
5. What detail about the palace does the narrator note in Esther 1:9? Why do you think the author includes this detail?

## ...CULTURE & CONTEXT...

Vashti was Babylonian royalty. She was the daughter of Belshazzar the last of the Babylonians kings. Her grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem and drove the Jews into exile – which is why so many are in Persia during the reign of Ahasuerus. Tradition holds that Vashti was the only survivor when the Babylonian kingdom was destroyed by the Persians.

6. What does the king command his eunuchs to do? How many were there?
7. What two specific commands does the king give Vashti, and what was his reason?
8. What is Vashti's response? Why do you think she responded this way?
9. How does the king react? Why do you think he reacts this way?
10. Compare the emotion of the opening and closing of today's passage:
11. Write [Proverbs 22:24](#) (I particularly like the NASB translation of this verse.)

### ...CULTURE & CONTEXT...

Some scholars suggest, based on the timeline of this feast, that Vashti may have been pregnant with her son and future king at the time of her refusal. Jewish tradition has suggested that the king was requesting she appear wearing her crown – and *only* her crown!

### ...REFLECT ON THE WORD...

Vashti refuses to go before the king, and this becomes the first of many pivotal moments in Esther. Some have held Vashti up as a model of the first feminist. She defies her husband to protect her honor. She refuses to be paraded in front of hundreds of gawking, drunken, men. She will not be at the beck and call of her rash, angry husband. Jewish tradition says that she, as the remnant Babylonian royalty used this moment to deliberately humiliate her usurping husband in front of the princes and people at that palace party. Whatever her motivation, associating with a hot-tempered man – particularly one with power – will not end well. Vashti decision forever changes her life story. She may not have been free to defy the king without severe consequence, but there is a bigger story here – God's story. All of history is ultimately the story of God working in time to bring all people to Him. Vashti's moment in time and history is a part of that story, for, in her decision, God opens the way for Esther to move from obscurity to the center of one of the greatest stories ever told.

# ...Lesson Four - Day Four...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:7-8

## TODAY'S LESSON:

- MEMORIZE & WRITE [Psalm 42:7-8](#)
- READ [Ephesians 5:21-33](#)
- WRITE [Esther 1:13-22](#)
- COMPLETE the study questions.

...DWELL IN THE WORD...



1. What does God say about kings and rulers? Read [Daniel 2:20-21](#).
2. To whom does the king turn after Vashti's infamous refusal? Describe them based on the account in Esther 1:13-15
3. Who was the leader of this group of men? \_\_\_\_\_ What was his advice (1:19)?

Where does he advise this edict be recorded?

What was his rationale (1:16-18)?

## ...STUDY SMART...

There is a difference in Scripture between passage that describe events and passage that prescribe what we should or shouldn't do. The difference is summarized as either "prescriptive" or "descriptive." The account of Esther, like all narrative accounts in the Bible are filled with descriptions of what happened to key people in history. As you're studying, be careful not to take the descriptions of what happened as prescriptions for how you, as a follow of Christ should or shouldn't behave. Look for ways God's character is revealed. See how those who are held up as godly or rebellious are behaving. Consider general principles in behavior that show obedience to or defiance of God's clear commands.

4. Read Esther 1:18 in several Bible versions. How does Memucan describe potential homelife in the wake of Vashti's rebellion? (Honestly, I found this to be quite humorous!)

5. How does Vashti's husband's behavior contrast with God's prescription for husbands and wives in [Ephesians 5:21-25ff](#)?

6. What does Memucan think will be the result of the decree? (1:20)

7. How is Memucan's advice a perversion of God's will for marriage?

8. How does the king's edict compare with God's will for marriage? Should men be the "master in their own households" along the lines of Ahasuerus' decree? Why or why not?

9. Read [Proverbs 20:1](#) and [Proverbs 31:4](#). Consider the behavior of the king in the preceding 187 days leading up to this moment. Imagine how things would have been different had the king followed the prescription of the one true God in these commands.

### ...HEBREW LANGUAGE...

The Hebrew word translated "in plenty" (ESV) is וַיְכַדֵּי (yoo-keh-day) and means literally, "more than enough." The king's man, Memucan, describes not only the upset this will cause in all Persian homes, he says there will be trouble, "a plenty" or an excess of trouble. In other words, if you think we have difficulty now with our wives, imagine the trouble if we let this precedent be set. No way. We have to get in front of this! LOL!

### ...REFLECT ON THE WORD...

Jesus, the king of all Kings, stands as the ultimate contrast to all godless kings and husbands. Where Ahasuerus was drunk, Jesus was sober. Where Ahasuerus gathered to himself self-interested yes-men, Jesus gathered the God-honoring and humble. Where Ahasuerus sought to elevate himself and disrespect his wife, Jesus lowered himself and elevated women and all wives. God will use this prideful king's rash edict to make way for a new queen and to ultimately save His people, reminding us again that "all things work together for the good of those who love him and are called according to His purposes."

# ...Lesson Four - Day Five...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:7-8

## TODAY'S LESSON:

- MEMORIZE & WRITE [Psalm 42:7-8](#)
- READ [Psalm 33](#)
- WRITE [Esther 2:1-4](#)
- COMPLETE the study questions.

## ...DWELL IN THE WORD...

1. Considering that it is God who removes and sets up kings, how do you see the sovereignty of God in the account of Esther to this point?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who/What is the king thinking about? (three details)

Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What had Memucan specifically said about the edict (1:19)?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Considering what has happened between Esther 1:22 and 2:1 (see "Culture and Context" note) and what he's doing now, how would you describe the king's state of mind and emotional mood?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who is giving him advice now? \_\_\_\_\_ (2:2)

What is their idea? Summarize the four points of their advice: (2:2-3)



## ...CULTURE & CONTEXT...

Chapter two begins with "after these things" (ESV) or "awhile later" which is vague in the reading, however a lot has happened. Ahasuerus is back in Persia after an infamously unsuccessful campaign against the Greeks at Thermopylae which was fictionalized in the movie and comic books "300."

6. How does the king respond to this idea?
7. What “just so happen” moments have occurred to this point in the account? Review your notes from Day One in this lesson for any “coincidences” you see that are moving the account forward:
8. From [Psalm 33](#). Note how God's sovereignty is described and praised:
9. **THINK BIBLICALLY:** Are there truly any coincidences? Why or why not?

### ...REFLECT ON THE WORD...

We haven't met her yet, and in the timeline of this story she has no idea what is about to happen, but Esther's life will change forever in a few short verses. What about your life right now? Is it possible that God is working behind the scenes to bring together people and events – even moods and mindsets – for a turn in your life? Of course, it is! For those who believe in the sovereignty of God, the truth of His grand will should be a great comfort. Is it to you? David reminds us beautifully, “*Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you*” (Ps 33). Let that be your hope today. God is on the move, and He is good to those who seek Him.



# ...Lesson Four - Day Six...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:7-8

## TODAY'S LESSON:

- MEMORIZE & WRITE [Psalm 42:7-8](#)
- READ [Daniel 1:1-21](#)
- READ & WRITE [Esther 2:5-18](#)
- COMPLETE the study questions.

...DWELL IN THE WORD...



1. **LET'S MEET MORDECAI.** What is Mordecai's nationality? \_\_\_\_\_ List his genealogy:  
|  
|  
|
2. The narrator includes fascinating and essential information about Mordecai's ancestry. What *extra* information does the narrator provide about Mordecai's great-grandfather, Kish?  
|  
|  
|
3. How did Mordecai end up in Susa?  
|  
|  
|
4. Look up [Kish](#) and [Jeconiah](#) (AKA: King Jehoiachin) in your concordance (online or a good old fashioned book) and write details. Be sure to hit [1 Samuel 9:1-2](#) in your concordance adventure!  
|  
|  
|
5. What can you learn about Mordecai's character from Esther 2:11?  
|  
|  
|

6. **LET'S MEET** "Hadassah that is, Esther" What do we learn about Esther from 2:5-18?

7. How is the meaning of Esther's Hebrew name significant to her story? Recall Mordecai's instructions to her (2:10).

8. Esther's life as a woman in exile parallels the lives of two other significant people of God. Note any similarities in the following accounts:

[Genesis 41:37-57](#)

[Daniel 1:1-21](#)

9. What did the king do in honor of his new queen? (2:18)

10. Enter the month and year of King Ahasuerus' reign (2:16) in your timeline if you haven't done that already (see page 8.)

### ... HEBREW LANGUAGE ...

Esther is the transliteration of the Persian word for star from which Ishtar, the Persian goddess of love and war, is thought to be connected. Esther's Hebrew name is Hadassah which means "myrtle" – a tree common in Israel and used in the Feast of Booths. Additionally, Hadassah means "hidden."

### ... REFLECT ON THE WORD ...

Among the people in "all the provinces" for this ancient episode of "Persia's Got Talent" are the people of God – voluntary exiles. The Jews were allowed to leave the region by order of the Babylonian king Cyrus; however, hundreds of thousands had remained. Mordecai's family were among them. It's now been over 100 years since the return to Jerusalem, and little do Esther or Mordecai know that while ideally, their ancestors should have joyfully returned to Jerusalem, these remnants will soon have their joy turned to terror when the next scene of this account unfolds. For now, we have a happy king and new queen enjoying, for a time, peace and favor all because of a little orphan girl under the loving guidance of a wise cousin has grown to become the most gracious and favored in all the land – a true Cinderella story if ever there was one.

# ...Lesson Four - Day Seven...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:7-8

## TODAY'S LESSON:

- MEMORIZE & WRITE [Psalm 42:7-8](#)
- READ [Jeremiah 29:4-14](#)
- WRITE [Esther 2:19-23](#)
- COMPLETE the study questions.

...DWELL IN THE WORD...



1. Summarize Esther 2:19-23
2. What is revealed about Esther's character in this passage?
3. Where is Mordecai when he just so happens to overhear the plotting of the eunuchs?
4. Consider the significance in scripture of sitting at the city gates. What pivotal moment in Israel's history happened in this account?  
[Ruth 4:1-11](#)

What did God promise to Abraham – the father of the nation of Israel - in [Genesis 22:17](#)?

How is this promise kept in the life of Mordecai?

5. How does Esther further show her worth and character as a worthy woman when she reports Mordecai's news to the king?

6. The final details of this passage are a significant foreshadowing of events to come. What specific details does the author make sure to point out in 2:23? List the order of events in this one verse:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

7. In spite of Esther's clear credit to Mordecai, what expected result is glaringly missing?

8. God had made very clear to his people through the prophet Jeremiah how they were to behave while in exile. Read [Jeremiah 29:4-14](#). Paraphrase God's essential admonition: (Jer. 29:4-7)

**...CULTURE & CONTEXT...**  
The Persians actually executed criminals by impalement, and it is likely they were the inventors of crucifixion. Given this, they probably impaled these men and then hanged their corpses on gallows as a public display of what would befall any who sought the king's harm. ("Daniel & Esther: Israel in Exile" J. MacArthur)

What was God's promise and assurance? (Jer. 29:10-14)

9. How does this impact your faith and trust in God today?

### ...REFLECT ON THE WORD...

"I know the plans I have for you, plans for welfare and not for evil..." the famous (and often misapplied) portion of the prophetic words of God to the exiles in Babylon came to pass when the Persian Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. Seventy years to the day after this prophecy, God fulfilled this promise and Cyrus released the exiles to go back to Jerusalem. While 50,000 exiles embraced God's promise for welfare and a future, thousands remained. Were God's promises still true for them? Did God's mandates still apply? Yes! And here we see the hand of God moving to bless and continue to protect His people.

# ...Lesson Four - Day Eight...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:7-8

## TODAY'S LESSON:

- MEMORIZE & WRITE [Psalm 42:7-8](#)
- WRITE [Esther 3:1-6](#)
- READ [1 Samuel 15](#)
- COMPLETE the study questions.



...DWELL IN THE WORD...

### 1. LET'S MEET HAMAN –

Haman is an \_\_\_\_\_. Who is Haman's father? \_\_\_\_\_

In order to fully understand Haman's personal and political motivations and actions, we need to know a little more about his background. It's super fascinating! I promise! We'll need to travel back, then way back, then even further back...let's go!

**FROM TODAY'S READING:** [1 Samuel 15:1-33](#) – the author makes sure to point out that Haman was an Agagite. Who was this guy, Agag? What was Saul supposed to have done to him and the rest of his people?

**READ** [Exodus 17:8-17](#), [Deuteronomy 25:17-19](#) – This account give you some background as to why God was so severe with the Amalekites. Summarize that reason:

**READ** [Genesis 36:12](#) – Who was Amalek's father? \_\_\_\_\_

So, Haman is a direct descendant of \_\_\_\_\_ and Mordecai is a direct descendant of \_\_\_\_\_  
What is the importance of their ancestry in relation to one another?

Of course, Haman doesn't realize any of this history. Not yet. But wait for it...

### 2. What does Mordecai do (or not do, actually), where does he not do it, and why? (3:2-4)

3. Why doesn't he bow? Were Jews forbidden from bowing to leaders? Consider [Exodus 20:4-6](#); [1 Samuel 24:8](#)

4. How does Haman find out about Mordecai and how does he respond? (Esther 3:4-5)

5. Why does Haman hold back? (I prefer the NIV and CSB rendering of [Esther 3:6](#) for clarity.)

6. Contrast Mordecai's two gate encounters (Esther 2:21-22 and 3:2-5)

7. Go back and re-read Esther 2:22-3:1. Read it without the chapter-verse numbers, and let the words and the events flow in your mind to the logical conclusion.

Mordecai has just done what great, noble, honorable thing? \_\_\_\_\_

Immediately following that moment *who* gets promoted? \_\_\_\_\_. What?!

*Do you feel the contrast? The surprise? The moment coming that the author is setting up? I hope so. It's deliberate, and it's one of the many reasons why this account is so compelling – not just the events, but the author's brilliant wordsmithing.*

### ...REFLECT ON THE WORD...

Mordecai jeopardizes his life when he takes a stand and does exactly what he had counseled Esther not to do: reveal he was a Jew. He has been nothing but honorable, honest, wise, and fearless. He encouraged Esther to live in the same way, even if it meant leaving her simple life with him. How was he rewarded? Well, he wasn't. Actually, exactly the opposite. Folks, that's the reality. Do right and get rewarded is not how it works – at least not like some mathematical formula: "do right + be good = get rewarded" Nope. Sometimes – often, actually – this side of Heaven, doing right gets you persecuted. Mordecai is on the eve of great persecution as Haman - true to his nature - begins his conniving. Pressure does that. Pressure pushes out the truest part of who we are. Mordecai's virtue is being pressed out of him just as Haman's villainy is oozing out. As you feel pressed and pressured, what is coming out of you? "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth flows." Is your mouth pouring out truth and grace? Are your words and actions, even under pressure, revealing a heart of righteousness, or does pressure bring out the indignance and entitlement in you? Remember that Mordecai's refusal to bow wasn't motivated by a personal resentment of Haman but from his personal conviction about the promises of God. That's where our faithfulness must sprout from and from where our fearlessness gets its voice.

# ...Lesson Four - Day Nine...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:7-8

## TODAY'S LESSON:

- MEMORIZE & WRITE [Psalm 42:7-8](#)
- READ [Psalm 37](#)
- WRITE [Esther 3:7-15](#)
- COMPLETE the study questions.



## ...DWELL IN THE WORD...

1. Understanding the Hebrew calendar will help you grasp the significance of today's passage. Search online for "[Hebrew Calendar](#)." Complete this chart.
2. Read [Exodus 12:2-6, 18](#); [Lev. 23:4-5](#). What is the name and significance of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan?

	HEBREW	GREGORIAN
1	Nissan	March-April
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

3. What is Haman's goal? (3:6, 3:9, 3:13)

4. Why? What motivated Haman? This is pretty extreme, isn't it?

5. Who did Haman consult and what did he do before he approached the king?

6. What did Haman tell the king in order to orchestrate his plan (3:8-9)?

True statements:

False or exaggerated statement:

Appeal to the king's suspicions and ego:

Sweetening the deal:

**...CULTURE & CONTEXT...**

A talent was about 75lbs. Find out how much that would be worth in today's market.

7. How does the king respond (3:10-11)? What, if anything, do you find interesting in the king's response?

8. What happens next (3:12-15)?

WHAT	WHO	WHERE	HOW

On what day is edict announced? \_\_\_\_\_

What Jewish celebration does this edict disrupt? (see pg 23, Q2) \_\_\_\_\_

What ironic foreshadowing do you see in the "coincidence" of these events?

When will the edict take effect? \_\_\_\_\_

How long does that give the Jews to prepare? \_\_\_\_\_

Summarize Esther 3:15b



## ...REFLECT ON THE WORD...

**WHILE HAMAN AND AHASUERUS** are drinking it up, God's people – actually all of Susa – are in confusion. Terror and fear are spreading across all of Persia. This evil edict schedules the genocide of the Jews and is being carried from province to province. Haman isn't the first to make plans against God's people.

**ALL THROUGH HISTORY** men have plotted to kill the Jews. What's interesting, is that while racism exists between all ethnicities and that racism may well show up in evil and destructive ways, annihilation is the repeated plot of evil people through time against the Jews – not just enslaving, or persecuting, or killing off – but total annihilation. Haman is just one tool in a long line that Satan has used since the beginning to cut off God's people. Hitler didn't just want to kill Jews, he set out to exterminate them. The situation may look terribly hopeless, but God is making a way

The situation may look terribly hopeless, but God is making a way.

### THE FORMER AND CURRENT

**PRESIDENTS** of Iran (modern Persia) have literally called for its people to curse Israel and have vowed to exterminate all Jews and "wipe Israel off the map" (Ahmadinejad, president of Iran, 2005.) Isn't this exactly how evil men behave? And yet, God's unchanging word is clear: "*The wicked plot against the righteous...but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming.*"

As throughout time, "*Cast your burden on the Lord,*" David wrote in Psalm 55, "*and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.*"

We may not feel the panic of persecution today, but we need to.

We may not feel the panic of persecution today, but we need to. We need to feel the burden, the fear, the desperation because God's people – Jew and Christian alike – are being persecuted\* this very day around the world. We must not brush off the reality with apathy like King Ahasuerus did any

more than we would personally plot to destroy God's people.

**THIS IS NOT TO SAY** that we live with that burden on us, not at all! We have to feel it, be aware of it, and faithfully give it to God who is ready to take our burdens.

**THE WEEK I WROTE THIS STUDY** over 100 Christians were slaughtered in their homes and churches in Nigeria. The week before that, hundreds more believers in China were killed, jailed, or punished for meeting as Christians. By the time you read this, thousands more will have been tortured, jailed, or killed. God's people are targets for destruction. Persecution and plotting against God's people is a tale as old as time. It's as old as the Garden and Satan's plot to overthrow Heaven itself.

There is only one remedy, one relief, one redeemer for all of this and that tale is even older than the Garden. It's our Savior and God – Jesus the Messiah. Although God's name is never mentioned in Esther, he is present.

**ALTHOUGH GOD IS NOT HEARD**, he is speaking as He commands His angels to move on our behalf. God was moving and active – like his own Word – revealing the truth and preparing the way for salvation. In the midst of the confusion in Susa God was orchestrating all people and events so that His people would be saved. God is doing that today. He's active in the world on behalf of the persecuted believers in Nigeria, China, and Syria.

**OUR PART IS TO BE ACTIVE** as well not apathetic. Helen Keller said, "Science may have found a cure for most evils, but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all – the apathy of human beings." (*My Religion*, p162) We cannot condemn Haman or any evil if we are not willing to confess the apathy in our own hearts. Confess that today. Repent and pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Pray for the hearts of all who love God and claim to follow Jesus Christ to truly love and follow Him faithfully and fearlessly.

There is only one remedy, one relief, one redeemer for all of this, and that tale is even older than the Garden. It's our Savior and God – Jesus the Messiah.

~ Jennifer Richmond

\*<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/>

# ...Lesson Four - Day Ten...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:7-8

## TODAY'S LESSON:

- MEMORIZE & WRITE [Psalm 42:7-8](#)

...CREATE & SHARE...



We're closing this lesson at a moment where an evil man and an apathetic king are blithely sipping wine while the city around them is in confusion and despair. Haman's evil edict was triggered by his pride but fomented by a long family history of hatred for the Jews. It's more than Haman versus Mordecai or even the house of Israel versus the house of Esau – it's the people of God versus the followers of Satan. How we live our lives is a direct reflection of how we understand this principle – that evil is not a force for bad it is anything that sets up against God and violates His will. Our life then must be in response to that.

The focus of this study has been how we can be faithful and fearless in spite of and even because of the evil going on around us and even the sin nature we have within us.

Take a moment today to think about how you are living faithfully and fearlessly. How do you see yourself as doing well in these ways? How do you need to grow?

**WRITE** your thoughts below. **PRAY** for God to strengthen you.

At the end of this study come back to this page and see how has grown you as a faithful and fearless woman.

...Faithful...

...Fearless...

# Psalm 42

*As a deer pants for flowing streams,  
so pants my soul for you, O God.*

*2 My soul thirsts for God,  
for the living God.*

*When shall I come and appear before God?*

*3 My tears have been my food  
day and night,*

*while they say to me all the day long,  
"Where is your God?"*

*4 These things I remember,  
as I pour out my soul:*

*how I would go with the throng  
and lead them in procession to the house of God  
with glad shouts and songs of praise,  
a multitude keeping festival.*

*5 Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you in turmoil within me?*

*Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
my salvation 6 and my God.*

*My soul is cast down within me;  
therefore I remember you*

*from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,  
from Mount Mizar.*

*7 Deep calls to deep*

*at the roar of your waterfalls;*

*all your breakers and your waves  
have gone over me.*

*8 By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,  
and at night his song is with me,  
a prayer to the God of my life.*

*9 I say to God, my rock:*

*"Why have you forgotten me?*

*Why do I go mourning*

*because of the oppression of the enemy?"*

*10 As with a deadly wound in my bones,  
my adversaries taunt me,*

*while they say to me all the day long,  
"Where is your God?"*

*11 Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you in turmoil within me?*

*Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
my salvation and my God.*

*Psalm 42, English Standard Version*



# Esther



A vertical decorative border on the left and right sides of the page, featuring intricate black and white patterns. The patterns include stylized floral motifs, circular designs, and geometric shapes, creating a traditional, ornate appearance.

A series of horizontal lines for writing, spanning the width of the page between the decorative borders.

# Esther



A series of horizontal lines for writing, framed by decorative borders on the left and right sides.

# Esther



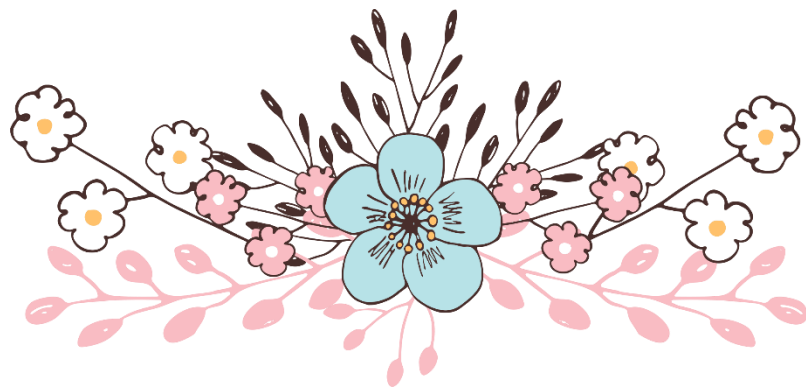
A vertical decorative border runs along both the left and right edges of the page. It features a complex, repeating pattern of black and white geometric and floral motifs, including circles, lines, and stylized floral shapes. The central area of the page is filled with horizontal ruling lines, providing a space for writing.

# Esther



A series of horizontal lines for writing, spanning the width of the page below the title. The page is framed by decorative borders on the left and right sides, featuring intricate geometric and floral patterns.





*Faithful &  
Fearless*  
RUTH & ESTHER

