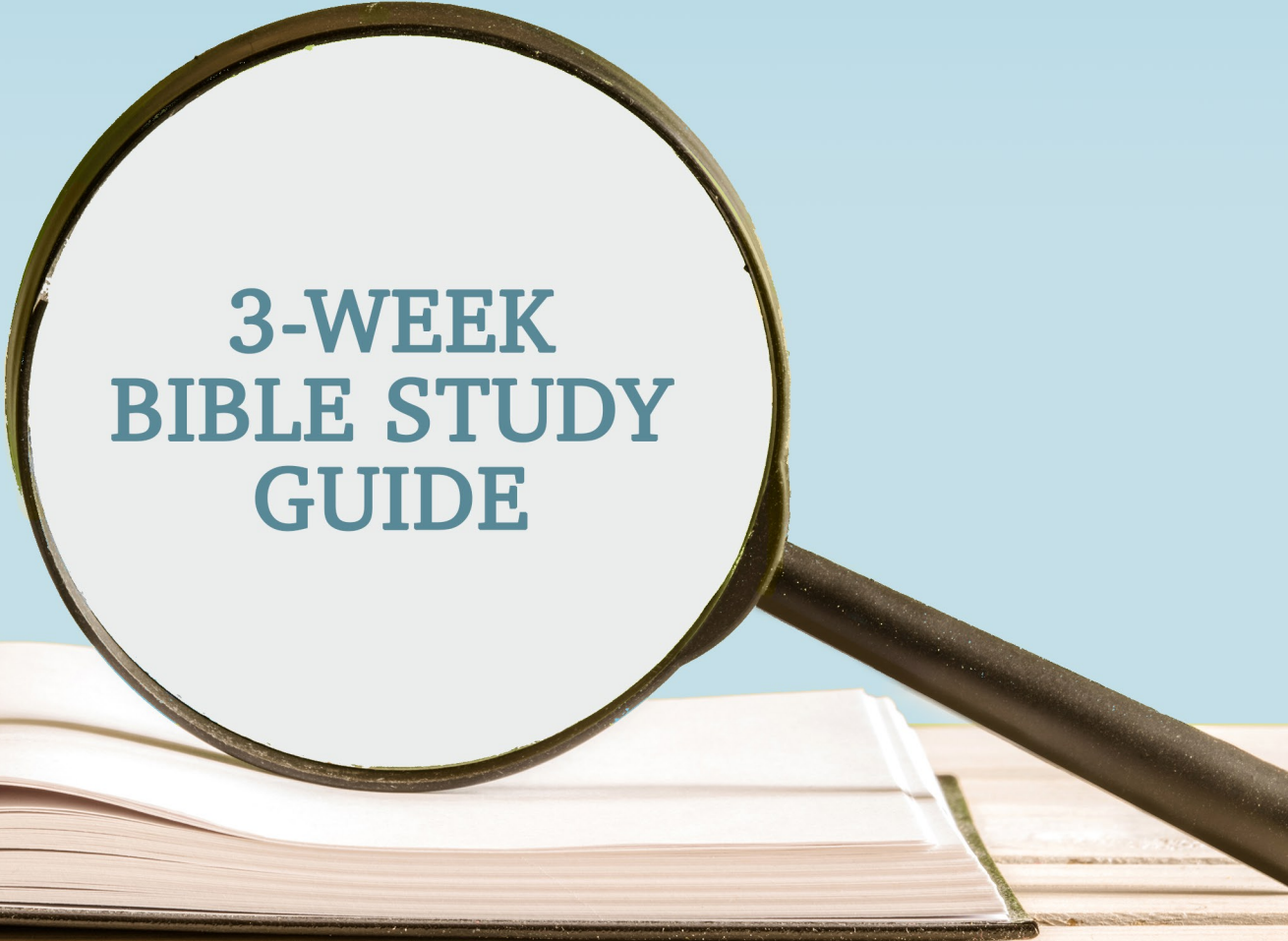


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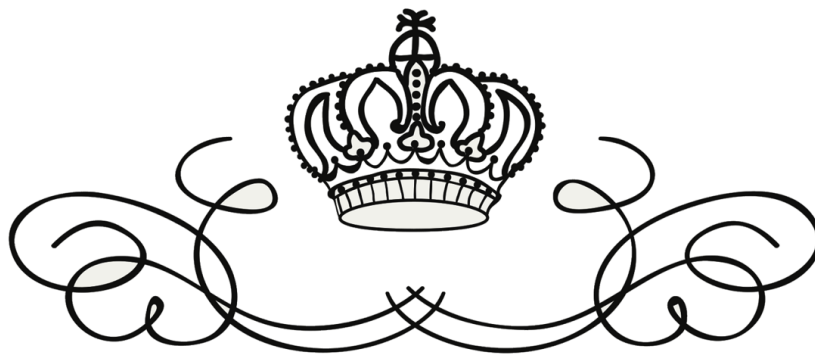
Esther



**3-WEEK
BIBLE STUDY
GUIDE**

Esther

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

This guide is designed to take you through the book of Esther in three weeks. As there are nine chapters in this book (Esther 9&10 are combined), my suggestion is that you read one chapter each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, then use the alternate days to study further.

SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

Each chapter provides you with questions to help you absorb what you're reading. **If you have trouble answering any of the questions, hop on over to my blog at www.timewarpwife.com where you'll find all of the answers you need.**

During the month of the study, I'll post my notes on facebook (www.facebook.com/timewarpwife) Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons. Every Friday I'll also post a recap on my blog. These notes will stay on the blog, so if you are choosing to do this study at a later date you can hop over there anytime to find them.

In addition to my notes, I'll post additional resources for you on the blog, such as coloring pages and worksheets, every Monday during the month of the study.

DIGGING DEEPER

At the end of each chapter, you'll find a recap section. This is where I prompt you to dig a bit deeper on your own. Here are a few ways to do that:

- Look up scripture in a commentary like *Matthew Henry's* or grab a different translation, and read it again. Is there anything that you missed the first time?

Is a commentary too much for you? Try *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* which is an abbreviated version.

- Look for other verses in the Bible that talk about the same topic. What can you learn from them?
- Cross reference key verses that stand out to you. You can cross reference any verse online at: <http://www.openbible.info/labs/cross-references/>
- Look for life application principles. Ask yourself how you can improve in this area.
- Use the Blue Letter Bible at <http://www.blueletterbible.org> where you'll find interlinear Greek and Hebrew translations, as well as other awesome Bible study tools.

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER

The book of Esther is a beautiful story of one woman who courageously gave of herself for the will of God and His people. The events in the story of Esther reveal the plot of an evil man who desired to have God's people destroyed, and the courage of one woman who stepped out in faith to turn that plan around. We can glean inspiration from her strength, her wisdom, and her dignity as we face our fears and boldly stand before the throne of God.

Esther gives us something to celebrate as it chronicles the deliverance of the Jews. The King at the center of this story is Xerxes (Ahasuerus), son of King Darius, and grandson of King Cyrus. During his reign, King Cyrus made a decree that allowed the Jews in exile to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. While many Jews returned, many remained in the Persian Empire, two of which were Mordecai and his cousin Esther. Their story inspires believers to trust God's wisdom and timing, and to stand strong in the face of persecution.

Throughout the book we see the providence of God as He orchestrates every detail of the story. We see how every aspect is perfectly timed, and how the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the scripture says:

“The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.” – Proverbs 21:1

The Book of Esther is the basis for the Jewish celebration of Purim—a feast that is still celebrated today. This festival commemorates the salvation of the Jews from the evil plot of Haman who sought to destroy them. Its full text, otherwise known as Megillah, or the “Scroll of Esther,” is read aloud twice during the celebration, in the evening and again the following morning.

ESTHER CHAPTER 1

In this chapter we read about three feasts. Two were hosted by King Ahasuerus himself. How long was the first one? How long was the second one?

What do we know from this chapter about the second feast that King Ahasuerus held? In particular, what do you learn about:

1. The location of the feast:

2. The decorations:

3. The drink:

4. The furnishings:

According to verses 4 and 11, what was the purpose of his feast? What might this reveal about his character?

Why was the king angry?

Although one can only speculate as to why Queen Vashti didn't answer the King's call, we do know that her decision resulted in a severe consequence. What was that?

What ripple effect did her choice have?

CHAPTER 1 RECAP

What role did pride play in this chapter? What does the Bible tell us about pride?

My thoughts on this chapter...

ESTHER CHAPTER 2

What did the king's attendants suggest?

Whose care would the women be under?

Why was Mordecai in Sushan (Susa)? Esther 2:5-6. Also see 2 Kings 25:8-11

What was Esther's original name?

What was Mordecai's relationship to Esther?

What special treatment did Hegai give Esther?

What preparations did the women have to go through before they could see the king?

What was the plan for each woman who went before the king?

Esther's approach was different from the others? Can you see a parallel here to the Christian life?

Throughout the book of Esther, we see the providence of God. What is the definition of “providence” according to the dictionary?

How much time has passed since the beginning of chapter one, and the day that Esther was taken to the king?

How did Mordecai save the king’s life?

CHAPTER 2 RECAP

How might their beauty treatments symbolize the life of a Christian? What does the new testament teach us about outward beauty?

My thoughts on this chapter...

ESTHER CHAPTER 3

Who did the king promote?

Why was Haman angry with Mordecai?

What revenge was Haman plotting?

How much time has past from the beginning of chapter one?

What date did the lot fall on?

What did Haman ask of the king? And what did Haman offer him?

Who was Haman planning to annihilate, and when?

CHAPTER 3 RECAP

Mordecai refused to bow down to peer pressure. Can you remember a time when you stood up for what you believed regardless of the consequences that faced you?

My thoughts on this chapter...

CHAPTER 4

How did the Jews react to the news?

Who was Hatach/Hathak?

What instructions did Mordecai send to Esther?

What was Esther's initial response to Mordecai's request?

What was Mordecai's second message to Esther?

What was Esther's final reply?

CHAPTER 4 RECAP

What can verse 14 teach us about the providence of God and how He uses people for His glory?

My thoughts on this chapter...

CHAPTER 5

What was the king's response when he saw Esther enter the inner court?

What was Esther's first request of the king?

What did the king offer Esther at the banquet?

What was her request that first night?

In this chapter, we see that Haman had a false sense of security. What was he excited about?

What was the one thing that brought down Haman's spirit?

What did his wife and friends advise Haman to do about Mordecai?

How tall were the gallows to be? What might that compare to?

CHAPTER 5 RECAP

What does this chapter teach us about our hunger and thirst for this world? Where can we go to be quenched?

My thoughts on this chapter...

CHAPTER 6

What did the king discover in The Book of Chronicles?

What some might call coincidence, is clearly the providence of God throughout the book of Esther. List a few of the events that were clearly orchestrated by God in this story?

How was Haman's own pride used against him?

What does Proverbs 16 teach us about pride?

What did the king instruct Haman to do?

What attitude change do we find in both Haman and that of his family and friends?

CHAPTER 7

How many banquets are recorded in the book of Esther? Can you list them?

What did the king offer her? How might this be a temptation?

What was Esther's petition in this chapter?

Under what circumstance would Esther have held her tongue?

What was the king's reply?

Who did she accuse? And how did she refer to him?

What was the king's reaction and where did he go?

What was Haman's reaction?

What did the king see when he returned to the banquet?

What irony do you find in this chapter?

CHAPTER 7 RECAP

We see in this chapter how all things worked out together for good. Can you think of a time in your life when you had reason to be concerned, but God worked everything out?

My thoughts on this chapter...

CHAPTER 8

What gifts did the king give to Esther and Mordecai?

What final request did Esther make of the king?

What did the king tell Mordecai to do with his signet ring?

On what day did the scribes come in to write the letters?

How many provinces were the letters addressed to?

How were the letters delivered?

What were the Jews instructed to do on the 13th day of the twelfth month?

What was Mordecai wearing when he left the king's presence?

How did the Jews celebrate?

CHAPTER 8 RECAP

The symbolism between this chapter and salvation through Jesus Christ is rich in these verses.
Can you identify any of it?

My thoughts on this chapter...

CHAPTERS 9 & 10

What took place on the 13th day of the twelfth month?

Why did the rulers of the provinces and the officers of the king help the Jews?

How many men did the Jews kill in the palace of Shushan?

How were Haman's ten sons killed?

What was Esther's request regarding their bodies?

Read 1 Samuel 15:1-11. How were Esther's actions different from Saul's?

How many were killed on the 14th day of the month? How many were killed on the thirteenth?

When is the feast of Purim?

How were they instructed to celebrate?

What was in the final letter that Esther and Mordecai sent out?

What do we learn about Mordecai's fate in the final chapter?

CHAPTERS 9 & 10 RECAP

The feast of Purim celebrates the salvation of the Jews from the wicked hands of Haman who sought to destroy them. Their deliverance from impending death is symbolic of our salvation through Jesus Christ.

In what ways can we keep the feast of Purim alive within our hearts?

My thoughts on these chapters...
