

# THE BOOK OF ESTHER



**“WHO KNOWS WHETHER YOU HAVE  
COME TO THE KINGDOM FOR SUCH A  
TIME AS THIS?”**

Scripture taken from the New American Standard Bible®,  
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### **Dedication and Motivation For This Series**

I'd like to offer my thanks for the work of two evangelists which inspired the development of this material. First, I'd like to thank Berry Kercheville for his "Enjoy Your Bible" lesson series which taught me to do more textual analysis and careful observation during my study of Scripture. This type of Bible study is also known as the inductive method. After being exposed to this method of study, my eyes were opened to the fact that most Bible class materials don't encourage the practice of careful observation skills. As a result of such material, many students don't learn the importance of carefully observing Scripture. Instead, they jump directly into questions about the text. Furthermore, many Bible lessons do not take the most important step of helping students consider personal application of the Scriptures.

My search for better Bible class material led me to "A Study of the Book of Nehemiah" developed by evangelist Olin Hudson. In his material, Olin does a good job of using the inductive method to lead the student through three important and progressive stages of learning: careful observation, meaning, and application. The format and organization of the following lessons are inspired by his work in Nehemiah.

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our study of the book of Esther. It the goal of this study to first get familiar with the Scriptures and then make practical applications to our own lives. This can be called a textual study and in order for it to be successful, YOU will play a very important role. As a part of our Bible class, your input will be needed to provide beneficial instruction and guidance for everyone involved. It is important that you take the time to study the text and answer the questions PRIOR to each class period. This will prepare you to contribute during our time together.

You will notice that this series of lessons is designed to help facilitate your own study of the text. Each lesson contains a section of Scripture and questions related to the text. These questions are divided into three sections. The first group of questions are labeled “**Textual Analysis**”. This section is designed to help the student carefully consider the question “What does the passage say?”. In order to answer these questions, you will be practicing your observation skills. You’ll be asked to summarize the passage and develop your own title for the section based on your understanding of the text. Then, you will be asked to look very carefully for such things as repeating words, phrases, themes, contrasts, pivotal points in the text, etc. Careful observation of what the Scripture says (and how it is said) will aid you in your understanding of what it means.

The second group of questions is titled “**Meaning**”. Now that we know what the passage says, we want to know “What does the passage mean?”. The “Meaning” questions are designed to aid in our determination of what the Scriptures mean after we have performed our careful observation of what it says. If we misunderstand what the passage says because of poor observation, then we’re also likely to misunderstand what it means because of poor conclusions. Many false doctrines are the result of poor conclusions resting upon poor observation of Scripture.

The third group of questions are “**Application**” questions. Now that we have an understanding of what the Scriptures mean, we want to ask the question “How does the meaning apply to me?”. This is often the most neglected part of Bible study. If we know what the Bible says, but don’t apply it to our own lives, then our study has little value. We want to be a “doer” of God’s word, and not just a “hearer” of it (James 1:22-25). Hopefully, these application questions will help us apply the Scriptures to our own lives.

Disclaimer: I do not claim to have perfect understanding of the Scriptures. I believe in the infallibility of God's Word, but I do not believe my understanding of it is infallible. Therefore, my goal here is two fold: 1) to help each student gain a base understanding of the Scriptures through first hand observation. 2) to help each student develop good Bible study skills that will aid in our collective understanding of Scripture. As we study together, God's Word will be teaching us and we will be teaching each other. You are encouraged to bring your own discoveries, observations and questions to class for discussion.

I believe that God has revealed His Truth to us in the form of divinely inspired Scripture. The very meaning of the word "revelation" means that God intended to "reveal" it to us, not keep it a mystery. In order for God to reveal His will to man, He would have to do it in a way that we can understand. And for that reason, I believe that we can study God's Word and come to an understanding of His revealed Truth. Don't let anyone tell you that God's Truth cannot be known. The only way that Christians can achieve the "unity of the Spirit" is to unify ourselves around the "one faith" that God delivered (Ephesians 4:1-6). Jesus prayed that all who believe in Him would be sanctified "in Truth" (John 17:17-20). The better we understand God's Truth, the easier it will be for us to "speak the same thing", remove divisions, and be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10)

My prayer is that these lessons will challenge us to grow together in our relationship with God and each other. May God get all the glory!

-Joe Hamm

# LESSON 1 - FIRST SURVEY & SECOND READING

In this first lesson, we will be reading the whole book of Esther twice (once at home and a second time together in class). After all, the original intent was for the letter to be read all at once. This will give us a “big picture” view of the book and will serve as a good introduction for our more in-depth study of each chapter in the coming lessons.

## Materials Needed:

1) A print out copy of the text (preferably in a Bible version that you don't normally read)

Reading the Bible in a different version often helps us see the text with a fresh pair of eyes. If you've never read Esther before, this won't matter as much and you might as well use whatever version you prefer. To create a printout of the text, you can go to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) or a similar website to copy the text of this book. Then you can paste this text into a document editor for printing. I will also have copies of the text available as well. We need a printout of the text because this first lesson will require that we mark on the text.

2) Color Pencils

No, you're not being sent back to Kindergarten. We will use these throughout our lesson series to aid in our first hand observation of the text. In this first lesson, we will be using them as well. Hint: You may purchase these very cheaply at The Dollar Tree (yes, everything is \$1). I will have some that you can borrow during our classes, but you will want your own set for your study at home.

## Survey The Book (VERY IMPORTANT!)

Read the entire book of Esther at home **before coming to class**. Do this reading all at once. It's very important for us to do a survey study of the book before moving into an analytical study of a book. This will help us put our later analytical study in the proper context. Don't spend too much time getting hung up on all of the small details during this first reading. If you encounter questions for later study, just place a question mark in the text and move on. Again, we don't want to get bogged down in the details during this reading. Just sit back and enjoy the letter. Here are some questions to think about while you are reading:

“What is the purpose of this book?”

“How does this letter make me feel as the reader?”

“What is the main message being communicated?”

## Second Reading (Classroom Activity)

Read the entire book of Esther a second time. During this second reading, we will be looking for details such as organization of the book, how the message progresses, how the author reaches his goal, and outline of the book. We will also take note of repeating words, phrase, themes, pivotal points, contrasts, tensions, and other literary devices that capture our attention. Please resist the temptation at this point to get into the details. We want to first develop a good “big picture” of the book as a whole.

After reading the book together in class, discuss the “big picture” of the book, key verses, themes, etc.

# LESSON 2 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 1

1:1 Now it took place in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces,

2 in those days as King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne which was at the citadel in Susa,

3 in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his princes and attendants, the army officers of Persia and Media, the nobles and the princes of his provinces being in his presence.

4 And he displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty for many days, 180 days.

5 When these days were completed, the king gave a banquet lasting seven days for all the people who were present at the citadel in Susa, from the greatest to the least, in the court of the garden of the king's palace.

6 There were hangings of fine white and violet linen held by cords of fine purple linen on silver rings and marble columns, and couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and precious stones.

7 Drinks were served in golden vessels of various kinds, and the royal wine was plentiful according to the king's bounty.

8 The drinking was done according to the law, there was no compulsion, for so the king had given orders to each official of his household that he should do according to the desires of each person.

9 Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the palace which belonged to King Ahasuerus.

10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus,

11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown in order to display her beauty to the people and the princes, for she was beautiful.

12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. Then the king became very angry and his wrath burned within him.

13 Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times—for it was the custom of the king so to speak before all who knew law and justice

14 and were close to him: Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media who had access to the king's presence and sat in the first place in the kingdom—

15 "According to law, what is to be done with Queen Vashti, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus delivered by the eunuchs?"

16 In the presence of the king and the princes, Memucan said, "Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king but also all the princes and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.

17 For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women causing them to look with contempt on their husbands by saying, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in to his presence, but she did not come.'

18 This day the ladies of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's conduct will speak in the same way to all the king's princes, and there will be plenty of contempt and anger.

19 If it pleases the king, let a royal edict be issued by him and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be repealed, that Vashti may no longer come into the presence of King Ahasuerus, and let the king give her royal position to another who is more worthy than she.

20 When the king's edict which he will make is heard throughout all his kingdom, great as it is, then all women will give honor to their husbands, great and small."

21 This word pleased the king and the princes, and the king did as Memucan proposed.

22 So he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province according to its script and to every people according to their language, that every man should be the master in his own house and the one who speaks in the language of his own people.

## Textual Analysis

1. Read the Scriptures carefully and summarize the contents by creating a title for this text.
2. Can you find any other Bible references to Ahasuerus? If so, please list here.
3. Highlight all of the following:
  - a. Time references
  - b. pairs of events
  - c. The number seven
  - d. References to law

## Meaning

4. Describe the banquet given by Ahasuerus. What was his motivation?
5. Why did the king request his eunuchs to bring Queen Vashti? What was her response?
6. Was the king justified in his anger?
7. What was the king's custom regarding advice and counsel?
8. What was the motivation behind the king's edict?
9. Why should the king be very careful about issuing royal edicts?

## Application

10. How can pride, disobedience, anger, worldly counsel, and rash decisions affect our relationships with our spouse? With others?
11. Compare voluntary vs compulsory submission. Be prepared to discuss in class using your own experiences.

# LESSON 3 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 2

2:1 After these things when the anger of King Ahasuerus had subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her.

2 Then the king's attendants, who served him, said, "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king.

3 Let the king appoint overseers in all the provinces of his kingdom that they may gather every beautiful young virgin to the citadel of Susa, to the harem, into the custody of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let their cosmetics be given them.

4 Then let the young lady who pleases the king be queen in place of Vashti." And the matter pleased the king, and he did accordingly.

5 Now there was at the citadel in Susa a Jew whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite,

6 who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the captives who had been exiled with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled.

7 He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

8 So it came about when the command and decree of the king were heard and many young ladies were gathered to the citadel of Susa into the custody of Hegai, that Esther was taken to the king's palace into the custody of Hegai, who was in charge of the women.

9 Now the young lady pleased him and found favor with him. So he quickly provided her with her cosmetics and food, gave her seven choice maids from the king's palace and transferred her and her maids to the best place in the harem. 10 Esther did not make known her people or her kindred, for Mordecai had instructed her that she should not make them known.

11 Every day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and how she fared.

12 Now when the turn of each young lady came to go in to King Ahasuerus, after the end of her twelve months under the regulations for the women—for the days of their beautification were completed as follows: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and the cosmetics for women—

13 the young lady would go in to the king in this way: anything that she desired was given her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace.

14 In the evening she would go in and in the morning she would return to the second harem, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would not again go in to the king unless the king delighted in her and she was summoned by name.

15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai who had taken her as his daughter, came to go in to the king, she did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women, advised. And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

16 So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus to his royal palace in the tenth month which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

## Textual Analysis

1. Read the Scriptures carefully and summarize the contents by creating a title for this text.
2. Highlight all of the references to the following:
  - a. Time references
  - b. Paired events (two of the same type event)
  - c. The number seven
  - d. References to law
  - e. The citadel of Susa
  - f. The king
  - g. Esther
  - h. Mordecai
3. What happened after King Ahasuerus' anger had subsided?
4. When and where does the action in this chapter take place?
5. Who is Mordecai? And where is he from?
6. What is Esther's Hebrew name? Do some research and see if you can find out what it means?
7. What was the relationship between Mordecai and Esther?
8. Describe the process of beautification for the young virgins?
9. What did King Ahasuerus do to celebrate the selection of Esther as the new queen?
10. How were the king's officials punished for plotting against him?



# LESSON 3 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 2

17 The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found favor and kindness with him more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

18 Then the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his princes and his servants; he also made a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts according to the king's bounty.

19 When the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.

20 Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her; for Esther did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care.

21 In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's officials from those who guarded the door, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

22 But the plot became known to Mordecai and he told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name.

23 Now when the plot was investigated and found to be so, they were both hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the Book of the Chronicles in the king's presence.

## Meaning

11. What is significant about Mordecai's lineage?
12. Who is Hegai? Who is Shaashgaz? What is the difference between their roles?
13. What do you think it was like to be chosen for the king's harem? Please think carefully and list any pros and cons.
14. Did Mordecai and Esther have a good or bad relationship? What in the text gives us clues?
15. Why did Esther hide her Jewish identity? Are there any clues in the text to indicate a possible motivation for this?
16. Verse 17 says that the king loved Esther. What do we know about King Ahasuerus' view of love from chapters 1-2? Compare this with God's definition of love found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.
17. How was the plot against King Ahasuerus discovered? What was he doing there? Who got the credit for reporting this to the king?
18. How was this event documented?
19. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter? Please explain.

## Application

20. How can our desire for love be based on selfish motives?
21. How can a false understanding of love determine how we choose a mate? Is this fair to the other person?
22. King Ahasuerus had stolen Mordecai's adopted daughter. Esther was forced to marry the king against her will. Despite this, they save his life by revealing the plot against him. What can this teach us about loyalty to those in authority over us?

# LESSON 4 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 3

3:1 After these events King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and established his authority over all the princes who were with him.

2 All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman; for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage.

3 Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?"

4 Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew.

5 When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage.

6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him who the people of Mordecai were; therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

7 In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, Pur, that is the lot, was cast before Haman from day to day and from month to month, until the twelfth month, that is the month Adar.

8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of all other people and they do not observe the king's laws, so it is not in the king's interest to let them remain.

9 If it is pleasing to the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who carry on the king's business, to put into the king's treasuries."

10 Then the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

11 The king said to Haman, "The silver is yours, and the people also, to do with them as you please."

12 Then the king's scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and it was written just as Haman commanded to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province and to the princes of each people, each province according to its script, each people according to its language, being written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet ring.

13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder.

14 A copy of the edict to be issued as law in every province was published to all the peoples so that they should be ready for this day.

15 The couriers went out impelled by the king's command while the decree was issued at the citadel in Susa; and while the king and Haman sat down to drink, the city of Susa was in confusion.

## Textual Analysis

1. Read the Scriptures carefully and summarize the contents by creating a title for this text.
2. Highlight all of the references to the following:
  - a. Time references
  - b. Paired events (two of the same type event)
  - c. References to law
  - d. The king
  - e. Mordecai
  - f. Haman
3. Who is Haman? What authority was he given by King Ahasuerus?
4. What had King Ahasuerus commanded concerning Haman?
5. What was Mordecai's reason for not obeying the king's command?
6. How did Haman react? Describe Haman's plan to get even with Mordecai.
7. How long did Haman wait before approaching the king? Why did he wait so long?
8. How did Haman convince King Ahasuerus to make the decree concerning the jews? Look carefully.
9. How much time would pass from the time Haman approached the king until the decree would be executed?
10. Describe the process of delivering the king's decree. What message did it contain?

# LESSON 4 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 3

## Meaning

11. What is interesting about Haman's lineage? What do we know from the Bible about his ancestor? Compare this to what we know about Mordecai's lineage from chapter 2.
  
12. Think about the method by which Haman deals with his anger toward Mordecai. What does this reveal about his character?
  
13. What is the significance of the king's signet ring?
  
14. What is the state of the city of Susa while the king and Haman sit down to enjoy a drink? Describe the contrast.
  
15. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter? (Proverbs 16:33) Please explain.

## Application

16. How can our feelings of anger cause us to be like Haman? What are some examples in which we might act inappropriately (sin) when others "dishonor" or disrespect us? Please share your own personal examples.
  
17. What are some more appropriate ways to deal with our anger towards others? How long should we wait to resolve it? What dangers exist for those who carry around unresolved anger?
  
17. Notice how a copy of the king's edict was sent to each province and written in their own language so they could understand the king's commands. Discuss the benefit of having God's commands written in a language that we can understand. If the Bible were only available in Greek and Hebrew, what are some problems that we might face as God's people?

# LESSON 5 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 4

4:1 When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.

2 He went as far as the king's gate, for no one was to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth.

3 In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.

4 Then Esther's maidens and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen writhed in great anguish. And she sent garments to clothe Mordecai that he might remove his sackcloth from him, but he did not accept them.

5 Then Esther summoned Hathach from the king's eunuchs, whom the king had appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was. 6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai to the city square in front of the king's gate.

7 Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.

8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict which had been issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show Esther and inform her, and to order her to go in to the king to implore his favor and to plead with him for her people.

9 Hathach came back and related Mordecai's words to Esther.

10 Then Esther spoke to Hathach and ordered him to reply to Mordecai:

11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that for any man or woman who comes to the king to the inner court who is not summoned, he has but one law, that he be put to death, unless the king holds out to him the golden scepter so that he may live. And I have not been summoned to come to the king for these thirty days."

12 They related Esther's words to Mordecai.

13 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews.

14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"

15 Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai,

16 "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."

17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

## Textual Analysis

1. Read the Scriptures carefully and summarize the contents by creating a title for this text.
2. Highlight all of the references to the following:
  - a. Mordecai
  - b. Esther
  - c. Signs of mourning
  - d. Paired events (two of the same type event)
  - e. References to law
  - f. the king
3. Please list all of the outward signs of mourning mentioned in this passage.

## Meaning

4. How does Mordecai respond to the king's edict? How does Esther respond?
5. Who is Hathach? What role does he and the other eunuchs play in this chapter?
6. Why did Esther send Hathach to Mordecai? What did he discover?
7. What proof did Mordecai provide for Esther? What did he intend for her to do?
8. What reason does Esther give for not immediately obeying the request of Mordecai?

# LESSON 5 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 4

## Meaning

9. How does Mordecai's response indicate the inner conflict she might have been experiencing? (verses 13-14)
  
10. What request did Esther make to Mordecai? What commitment did she make to him?
  
11. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter? (Verse 14) Please explain.

## Application

12. In this chapter, things look pretty bad for Mordecai and the jews. However, the story doesn't end there because God is in control. How should we respond when our enemies plot against us?
  
13. Why do we so often forget that God is in control and has dominion over the affairs of our lives?
  
14. Are we fully using our God given position in life to influence those around us? Consider how God has worked out the affairs of your own life so that you may better serve Him. Please share below.
  
15. Esther took a big risk going before the king. Take a moment to consider what she was risking. How might we learn from her example?
  
16. What are some ways that we may be tempted to be self seeking while God's people are in danger of perishing?
  
17. We know that our position in the world cannot really protect us. Why do we often seek refuge in it?

# LESSON 6 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 5

5:1 Now it came about on the third day that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace in front of the king's rooms, and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room, opposite the entrance to the palace.

2 When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favor in his sight; and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter which was in his hand. So Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter.

3 Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you, Queen Esther? And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you."

4 Esther said, "If it pleases the king, may the king and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

5 Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly that we may do as Esther desires." So the king and Haman came to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

6 As they drank their wine at the banquet, the king said to Esther, "What is your petition, for it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."

7 So Esther replied, "My petition and my request is:

8 if I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and do what I request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king says."

9 Then Haman went out that day glad and pleased of heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate and that he did not stand up or tremble before him, Haman was filled with anger against Mordecai.

10 Haman controlled himself, however, went to his house and sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh.

11 Then Haman recounted to them the glory of his riches, and the number of his sons, and every instance where the king had magnified him and how he had promoted him above the princes and servants of the king.

12 Haman also said, "Even Esther the queen let no one but me come with the king to the banquet which she had prepared; and tomorrow also I am invited by her with the king.

13 Yet all of this does not satisfy me every time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

14 Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows fifty cubits high made and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai hanged on it; then go joyfully with the king to the banquet." And the advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows made.

## Textual Analysis

1. Read the Scriptures carefully and summarize the contents by creating a title for this text.
2. Highlight all of the references to the following:
  - a. Time references
  - b. Paired events (two of the same type event)
  - c. Esther
  - d. The king
  - e. Haman
  - f. Mordecai
3. Where was the king's throne in relation to the entrance of the palace? Draw a picture of what is represented in verse 1.
4. What does the king offer to Esther?
5. How does Esther respond to the king's question?
6. Describe Haman's response to Esther's generosity.
7. Describe Haman's response to Mordecai when he did not stand up or tremble before him.
8. Who is Zeresh? What advice did Haman receive from her and his friends?
9. How tall were the gallows to be constructed? Convert this into an approximate measure in feet.

# LESSON 6 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 5

## Meaning

10. What is the significance of the king extending his golden scepter? Please provide Scripture reference.
  
11. What does the king response to Esther reveal about his feelings toward her?
  
12. Why doesn't Esther make her request known to the king at her first opportunity?
  
13. What did Haman tell his wife and friends? What does this reveal about his character? What do you think are Haman's biggest character flaws?
  
14. Was Haman righteous in his anger towards Mordecai? Why or why not? What does his anger drive him to do?
  
15. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter? Please explain.

## Application

16. How can our own pride and arrogance get us into trouble? Please provide examples.
  
17. Think about a time when someone else honored you or was very generous to you in some way. How could such a situation be a temptation for sin?
  
18. Consider Haman's counselors and the advice they give him. Why is it important for our spouse and friends to be godly?

# LESSON 7 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 6

6:1 During that night the king could not sleep so he gave an order to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king.

2 It was found written what Mordecai had reported concerning Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who were doorkeepers, that they had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

3 The king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" Then the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

4 So the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace in order to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows which he had prepared for him.

5 The king's servants said to him, "Behold, Haman is standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in."

6 So Haman came in and the king said to him, "What is to be done for the man whom the king desires to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king desire to honor more than me?"

7 Then Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king desires to honor,

8 let them bring a royal robe which the king has worn, and the horse on which the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown has been placed;

9 and let the robe and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble princes and let them array the man whom the king desires to honor and lead him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him, 'Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor.'"

10 Then the king said to Haman, "Take quickly the robes and the horse as you have said, and do so for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the king's gate; do not fall short in anything of all that you have said."

11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus it shall be done to the man whom the king desires to honor."

12 Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried home, mourning, with his head covered.

13 Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him."

14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hastily brought Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

## Textual Analysis

1. Read the Scriptures carefully and summarize the contents by creating a title for this text.
2. Highlight all of the references to the following:
  - a. Honor
  - b. Paired events (two of the same type event)
  - c. The king
  - d. Mordecai
  - e. Haman
3. Who is Bigthana and Teresh? Where have we seen them before in this book?
4. How does the king treat his insomnia (inability to sleep)?
5. What was found written in the book of records?
6. How did the king react to this discovery? What does he ask and how do his servants reply?
7. Who is in the king's court at this time?
8. Who does Haman think the king wants to honor?
9. List the symbols of honor mentioned in this chapter.
10. How does Haman react after having to honor Mordecai?



# LESSON 7 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 6

## Meaning

11. Based on this chapter, how long can we infer that the king was listening to records being read?
12. How does the king's interaction with Haman in verses 4-6 relate to the king's custom? Compare with chapter 1:13
13. How does Haman's character lead him to believe that the king wants to honor him? How does this influence his answer to the king?
14. Haman mentioned several symbols of honor in this chapter. How would each one show that the king is honoring someone? Please be as detailed as possible.
15. Haman sought out honor for himself. Can you think of any other Scriptures (either old testament or new testament) that warn about seeking our own honor?
16. Compare the advice that Haman receives in this chapter with the counsel he received in the last chapter? Also compare Esther 6:13 with Esther 3:6. What is the reputation of the Jews and why do you think this is the case?
17. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter? Please explain.

## Application

18. Discuss the importance of the king's historical records. How can history be beneficial for us today?
19. How can our own selfish motives influence the advice that we give others? How can we prevent this from happening?
20. How can we prevent getting bad advice from others that might be motivated by selfish motives?
21. Was it wrong for Haman to desire honor from his king? Would it be wrong for us to desire honor from others? From God? Please explain.

# LESSON 8 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 7

7:1 Now the king and Haman came to drink wine with Esther the queen.

2 And the king said to Esther on the second day also as they drank their wine at the banquet, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."

3 Then Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request;

4 for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king."

5 Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would presume to do thus?"

6 Esther said, "A foe and an enemy is this wicked Haman!" Then Haman became terrified before the king and queen.

7 The king arose in his anger from drinking wine and went into the palace garden; but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm had been determined against him by the king.

8 Now when the king returned from the palace garden into the place where they were drinking wine, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he even assault the queen with me in the house?" As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

9 Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs who were before the king said, "Behold indeed, the gallows standing at Haman's house fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai who spoke good on behalf of the king!" And the king said, "Hang him on it."

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsided.

## Textual Analysis

1. Read the Scriptures carefully and summarize the contents by creating a title for this section of text.
2. Highlight all of the references to the following:
  - a. The king
  - b. Queen Esther
  - c. Haman
  - d. Mordecai
  - e. Time references
  - f. Paired events (two of the same type event)
3. When and where does the action in this chapter take place?
4. What does the king ask Queen Esther? This is not the first time he has asked her this. Please list the other references.
5. What does Esther request of the king? How does the king respond?
6. How does Haman immediately react? How does the king initially react?
7. Why does Haman stay to beg the from Esther rather than the king?
8. When the king returned, what did he see?
9. What did they do with Haman? Who suggested this to the king?

# LESSON 8 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 7

## Meaning

10. Summarize Esther's approach to persuading the king and granting her request. Describe the language that she uses in her request.
  
11. What in the text seems to indicate that Esther is sympathetic to the king's difficult position?
  
12. Do you think that Haman realized he was endangering Queen Esther by plotting against the Jews? Please explain your reasoning.
  
13. Do you believe that Haman was really trying to assault the queen? Why or why not?
  
14. How do you think the eunuchs knew about the gallows that Haman had built to hang Mordecai?
  
15. Discuss the irony of Haman being hung on his own gallows. Please include any passages you can find in the Bible that support this kind of poetic justice from God?
  
16. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter? Please explain.

## Application

17. How can drinking affect our judgement?
  
18. How can the events of this chapter give us confidence when evil people are plotting against us?
  
19. What lessons have you learned from the life of Haman? Please think carefully and list them below.

# LESSON 9 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 8

8:1 On that day King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther; and Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had disclosed what he was to her.

2 The king took off his signet ring which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3 Then Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept and implored him to avert the evil scheme of Haman the Agagite and his plot which he had devised against the Jews.

4 The king extended the golden scepter to Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king.

5 Then she said, "If it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him and the matter seems proper to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

6 For how can I endure to see the calamity which will befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"

7 So King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Behold, I have given the house of Haman to Esther, and him they have hanged on the gallows because he had stretched out his hands against the Jews.

8 Now you write to the Jews as you see fit, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for a decree which is written in the name of the king and sealed with the king's signet ring may not be revoked."

9 So the king's scribes were called at that time in the third month (that is, the month Sivan), on the twenty-third day; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews, the satraps, the governors and the princes of the provinces which extended from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to every province according to its script, and to every people according to their language as well as to the Jews according to their script and their language.

10 He wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horses, riding on steeds sired by the royal stud.

11 In them the king granted the Jews who were in each and every city the right to assemble and to defend their lives, to destroy, to kill and to annihilate the entire army of any people or province which might attack them, including children and women, and to plunder their spoil,

12 on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar).

13 A copy of the edict to be issued as law in each and every province was published to all the peoples, so that the Jews would be ready for this day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

14 The couriers, hastened and impelled by the king's command, went out, riding on the royal steeds; and the decree was given out at the citadel in Susa.

15 Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a large crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced.

16 For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor.

17 In each and every province and in each and every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree arrived, there was gladness and joy for the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many among the peoples of the land became Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them.

## Textual Analysis

1. Read the Scriptures carefully and summarize the contents by creating a title for this section of text.
2. Highlight all of the references to the following:
  - a. Time references
  - b. Paired events (two of the same type event)
  - c. References to law
  - d. Signet ring
  - e. The king
  - f. Haman
  - g. Esther
  - h. Mordecai
3. What happened to the house of Haman?
4. What did Esther disclose to the king?
5. What did the king give to Mordecai? What did Esther do for Mordecai?
6. What did Esther ask from the king? How did she ask? What does the king extend to Esther?
7. What authority does the king give to Queen Esther and Mordecai?
8. How many provinces would receive the letter? In what language were they written? How were they delivered?
9. What edict was contained in the letters? Who was to read these letters?
10. Describe the clothing that Mordecai is given by the king. How did the people of the city respond?
11. How did the Jews respond when they read the letters? What did they do to celebrate?

# LESSON 9 - A STUDY OF ESTHER CHAPTER 8

## Meaning

12. What is the significance of the king's signet ring? What does it represent? Where have we seen this previously in the book of Esther (please provide Scripture references).
  
13. What does the king's golden scepter represent? What does it mean when he extends it to Esther?
  
14. In this chapter, Haman is dead. Why are the jews still in danger? Why doesn't the king just pardon the jews? Provide Scripture references.
  
15. How many languages did each letter contain? Please look again carefully and explain.
  
16. What in the text seems to indicate that these messages had authority? What might also indicate the urgency of the message?
  
17. These letters granted certain rights and authority to the jews. How did these rights go above and beyond the basic right of self defense? How were these rights limited? How is the timing of this significant?
  
18. Describe the psychological affect this had on the peoples of the land? Where have we seen similar references in this book? Please provide Scripture references.
  
19. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter? Please explain.

## Application

20. Although God's name has not been directly mentioned in this book, we can see His Almighty hand at work in all of the events. What important lessons can we learn from this? Be as specific as possible with examples from your own life.
  
21. What does God's protection of the jews reveal about his feelings toward them? How does God's protection of us in our life reveal about his feelings toward us? What response should that create in us?

# LESSON 10 - ESTHER CHAPTER 9:1-19

9:1 Now in the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar), on the thirteenth day when the king's command and edict were about to be executed, on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain the mastery over them, it was turned to the contrary so that the Jews themselves gained the mastery over those who hated them.

2 The Jews assembled in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm; and no one could stand before them, for the dread of them had fallen on all the peoples.

3 Even all the princes of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and those who were doing the king's business assisted the Jews, because the dread of Mordecai had fallen on them.

4 Indeed, Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for the man Mordecai became greater and greater.

5 Thus the Jews struck all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying; and they did what they pleased to those who hated them.

6 At the citadel in Susa the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men,

7 and Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha,

8 Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,

9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha,

10 the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy; but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

11 On that day the number of those who were killed at the citadel in Susa was reported to the king.

12 The king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman at the citadel in Susa. What then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now what is your petition? It shall even be granted you. And what is your further request? It shall also be done."

13 Then said Esther, "If it pleases the king, let tomorrow also be granted to the Jews who are in Susa to do according to the edict of today; and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."

14 So the king commanded that it should be done so; and an edict was issued in Susa, and Haman's ten sons were hanged.

15 The Jews who were in Susa assembled also on the fourteenth day of the month Adar and killed three hundred men in Susa, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

16 Now the rest of the Jews who were in the king's provinces assembled, to defend their lives and rid themselves of their enemies, and kill 75,000 of those who hated them; but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

17 This was done on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.

18 But the Jews who were in Susa assembled on the thirteenth and the fourteenth of the same month, and they rested on the fifteenth day and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing.

19 Therefore the Jews of the rural areas, who live in the rural towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a holiday for rejoicing and feasting and sending portions of food to one another.

## Textual Analysis

1. Read the Scriptures carefully and summarize the contents by creating a title for this section of text.
2. Highlight all of the references to the following:
  - a. Time references
  - b. Paired events (two of the same type event)
  - c. References to law
  - d. The king
  - e. Mordecai
  - f. Haman
  - g. Enemies
  - h. Plunder
  - i. Assembled
  - j. Feasting and rejoicing
3. When and where does the action in this chapter take place?
4. What did the enemies of the Jews expect to happen? What happened instead?
5. According to the text, why were the Jews winning over their enemies?
6. Who was providing assistance to the Jews? According to the text, why did they do this?
7. Please describe Mordecai's reputation among the people.
8. What did the Jews do to their enemies who attacked them?
9. Which enemies are specifically mentioned by name?
10. Did the Jews seize possession of enemy property after their victory?

# LESSON 10 - ESTHER CHAPTER 9:1-19

## Textual Analysis

11. What report was immediately given to the king? What did he do with the report?
12. What does the king offer to Queen Esther? What was her two requests?
13. How many people did the jews kill during those two days?
14. How did the jews celebrate their victory over their enemies?

## Meaning

15. Compare Mordecai's reputation in this chapter with his reputation in previous chapters. Why did it change?
16. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter? Please explain.
17. Why did the jews in rural areas celebrate the feast on a different day than jews in Susa? Please explain.
18. Several times in this chapter, the text says that the jews assembled. What is significant about the jews assembling together in this chapter?
19. Why do you think the jews did not take the plunder? Was this against the law?
20. Why do you think the Queen requested a second day for the jews in Susa to destroy their enemies? What would be significant about hanging Haman's ten sons on the gallows?

## Application

21. What lessons can we learn from this chapter in regards to our own assembling together?
22. How might we follow the example of the jews when they refused to lay their hands on the plunder of their enemies?
23. What is our ultimate enemy and how can we feast and rejoice over its defeat?

# LESSON 11 - ESTHER CHAPTER 9:20-10:3

9:20 Then Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far,

21 obliging them to celebrate the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same month, annually,

22 because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies, and it was a month which was turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and rejoicing and sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

23 Thus the Jews undertook what they had started to do, and what Mordecai had written to them.

24 For Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the adversary of all the Jews, had schemed against the Jews to destroy them and had cast Pur, that is the lot, to disturb them and destroy them.

25 But when it came to the king's attention, he commanded by letter that his wicked scheme which he had devised against the Jews, should return on his own head and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26 Therefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. And because of the instructions in this letter, both what they had seen in this regard and what had happened to them,

27 the Jews established and made a custom for themselves and for their descendants and for all those who allied themselves with them, so that they would not fail to celebrate these two days according to their regulation and according to their appointed time annually.

28 So these days were to be remembered and celebrated throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city; and these days of Purim were not to fail from among the Jews, or their memory fade from their descendants.

29 Then Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim.

30 He sent letters to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, namely, words of peace and truth,

31 to establish these days of Purim at their appointed times, just as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had established for them, and just as they had established for themselves and for their descendants with instructions for their times of fasting and their lamentations.

32 The command of Esther established these customs for Purim, and it was written in the book.

10:1 Now King Ahasuerus laid a tribute on the land and on the coastlands of the sea.

2 And all the accomplishments of his authority and strength, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which the king advanced him, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia?

3 For Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and in favor with his many kinsmen, one who sought the good of his people and one who spoke for the welfare of his whole nation.

## Textual Analysis

1. Read the Scriptures carefully and summarize the contents by creating a title for this section of text.
2. Highlight all of the references to the following:
  - a. Time references
  - b. Paired events (two of the same type event)
  - c. Pur/Purim
  - d. Custom
  - e. References to law
  - f. The king
  - g. Mordecai
3. What was the reason for Mordecai's letter?
4. How does Mordecai describe these days in his letter?
5. What history is recounted in this chapter?
6. What is Pur? How does this relate to Haman? Please also provide a Scripture reference from earlier in Esther.
7. What is the name of the feast to be celebrated?
8. How long was the feast? How often was it to be celebrated?



# LESSON 11 - ESTHER CHAPTER 9:20- 10:3

## Textual Analysis

9. Why does Queen Esther write a second letter concerning Purim?
  
10. According to the text, who established this feast?
  
11. How was King Ahasuerus remembered? How was Mordecai remembered?

## Meaning

12. Was Mordecai's request in his letter optional? What about Esther's letter? Was this against the will of the people?
  
13. According to the text, what other customs had the Jews imposed on themselves?
  
14. How do you see God's hand at work in the events of this chapter? Please explain.

## Application

15. The Jews imposed times of fasting, lamentation, and feasting. What are the possible pros and cons of establishing and imposing religious customs on others?
  
16. As a Christian, at what point is our "sorrow turned into gladness" and "mourning into a holiday"? (Esther 9:22)
  
17. Read again Esther 10:3 concerning how Mordecai was remembered. How do you want to be remembered throughout history? If you died today, would you be remembered that way?

