

# ***ESTHER:*** ***A Cinderella Story***



**Bible Class Study Guide**

***by Ray Reynolds***

***Sources: Leslie Allen, Timothy Laniak, David Malick,  
Chuck Swindoll, Wade Webster, and Ron Williams***

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>COVER PAGE</b> . . . . .	1
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> . . . . .	2
<b>BIBLE CLASS LESSONS</b>	
Lesson One . . . . .	3
<i>THE PRIDE OF KING AHASUERUS (Chapter 1)</i>	
Lesson Two . . . . .	4
<i>THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD (Chapter 2)</i>	
Lesson Three . . . . .	5
<i>THE PLOT OF HAMAN (Chapter 3)</i>	
Lesson Four . . . . .	6
<i>THE PROPOSAL OF MORDECAI (Chapter 4)</i>	
Lesson Five . . . . .	7
<i>THE POSITION OF ESTHER (Chapter 5)</i>	
Lesson Six . . . . .	8
<i>THE PROMOTION OF MORDECAI (Chapter 6)</i>	
Lesson Seven . . . . .	9
<i>THE PUNISHMENT OF HAMAN (Chapter 7)</i>	
Lesson Eight . . . . .	10
<i>THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE JEWS (Chapter 8)</i>	
Lesson Nine . . . . .	11
<i>THE PEACE OF THE JEWS (Chapters 9-10)</i>	
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
Appendix A . . . . .	12
<i>Mordecai: A Type of Christ</i>	
Appendix B . . . . .	13
<i>Esther: A Type of Christ</i>	
Appendix C . . . . .	14
<i>Satan &amp; Haman (Father &amp; Son - John 8:44)</i>	
Appendix D . . . . .	15
<i>Comparisons and Contrasts Between the Feast of Purim &amp; The Lord's Supper</i>	

# **ESTHER: A CINDERELLA STORY**

## *THE PRIDE OF KING AHASUERUS*

### TEXT: Esther 1

Introduction: Few parties in history could equal the one thrown by Ahasuerus. For one hundred and eighty-seven days, approximately six months, the king celebrated the riches of his kingdom and the honor of his majesty (1:1-4). Although Esther isn't introduced in this chapter, inspiration does lay the groundwork for her introduction. Let's consider what this chapter says about the man who would become her husband.

### Discussion:

#### **The King's Drunkenness**

(1:1-10)

#### **The King's Desire**

(1:11-12)

#### **The King's Decree**

(1:13-22)

Conclusion: What can you learn from this part of the Cinderella story of Esther? The party which the king threw to demonstrate his honor ended up showing his shame (1:4). His drunkenness produced an ungodly desire and resulted in a foolish decree. We should learn from his mistakes.

# **ESTHER: A CINDERELLA STORY**

## *THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD*

### TEXT: Esther 2

Introduction: You and I plan ahead for vacations, jobs that need to be done, schoolwork, and a host of other things. There would be a major move to wipe out the whole Jewish race. In these next few chapters we see God making advance plans to save His nation from extinction. The main difference between the story of Cinderella and the story of Esther is the fact that the story of Cinderella is a fairy tale and the story of Esther is an inspired account. As you might imagine, this chapter is crucial to our understanding the woman as well as the book called Esther.

### Discussion:

#### **Esther's Supervision**

(2:1-7)

#### **Esther's Spirit**

(2:8-9)

#### **Esther's Secret**

(2:10-11)

#### **Esther's Selection**

(2:12-23)

Conclusion: What can you learn from this part of the Cinderella story of Esther? Although Esther won the favor of an earthly king by her physical beauty, she won the favor of the heavenly King by her spiritual beauty. May we learn from this lovely lady how to pass the test of the final Judge when we are called before Him (**II Corinthians 5:10**).

# **ESTHER: A CINDERELLA STORY**

## *THE PLOT OF HAMAN*

### TEXT: Esther 3

Introduction: Long before Hitler tried to annihilate the Jews it was attempted by a man named Haman. However, God had chosen vessels, Mordecai and Esther in the right place to help defeat this wicked man. In order to appreciate this story we have to go back to the time of Agag and get the history of the Agagite people.

### Discussion:

#### **Haman's Ancestry**

(3:1)

#### **Haman's Advancement**

(3:1-7)

#### **Haman's Anger**

(3:8-15)

Conclusion: What can you learn from this part of the Cinderella story of Esther? Although Haman's pernicious plot is in full swing as the third chapter comes to a close, so is God's providential plan. Haman's on top for the moment, but Mordecai will soon be in his seat. The pernicious plot will give way to the providential plan.

# **ESTHER: A CINDERELLA STORY**

## *THE PROPOSAL OF MORDECAI*

### TEXT: Esther 4

Introduction: There is much to say for being in the right place at the right time. By being in the right place at the right time, you can save hundreds of dollars on a purchase, bag a trophy deer, or catch a stringer of fish. Often, we arrive at the right place at the right time by accident. However, there were many occasions in history when men and women were in the right place at the right time because God had directed them to be there. A classic example of this is when an angel of God told Philip to go toward Gaza.

### Discussion:

#### **Esther's Concern**

(4:1-4)

#### **Esther's Consideration**

(4:5-14)

#### **Esther's Courage**

(4:15-17)

Conclusion: What can you learn from this part of the Cinderella story of Esther? Esther's presence in the palace was not an accident. It was, as I have named this chapter, a providential placement. She was in the right place at the right time because God put her there. He put her there so that she could make the difference that she made. What about you? Why has God put you where you are? No doubt, He has put you where you are for the same reason that He put Esther where she was. Like Esther, He has put you where you are to make a difference.

# **ESTHER: A CINDERELLA STORY**

## *THE POSITION OF ESTHER*

### TEXT: Esther 5

Introduction: Have you ever planned out how you were going to ask your boss for a raise or ask someone for forgiveness? Although getting a raise or finding forgiveness were important to you, it was probably not a matter of life or death as it was when Esther's petitions the king. Not only was her life at stake, but also the life of Mordecai and the Jews. She trusted that this was what God wanted her to do, she planned out how she would approach the king (**Esther 4:14**). Rather than directly asking for Haman's head and for the life of her people, Esther patiently won the favor of the king before making the petition. In the fifth chapter, we see the planned petition of Esther as it unfolds. Haman comes to center stage for his final performance.

### Discussion:

#### **Haman's Jubilation**

(5:1-9)

#### **Haman's Preoccupation**

(5:9-13)

#### **Haman's Retaliation**

(5:14)

Conclusion: What can you learn from this part of the Cinderella story of Esther? Although this chapter draws to a close without Esther having accomplished her mission, she still has her head and the king wants to help her. Through the providence of God, and her carefully planned petition, everything will work out in the end. Haman will be hanged, Mordecai will be promoted, and Esther and her people will be delivered.

# **ESTHER: A CINDERELLA STORY**

## *THE PROMOTION OF MORDECAI*

### TEXT: Esther 6

Introduction: The king's five-year delay in promoting or honoring Mordecai for saving his life worked in Mordecai's favor. After all, if the king had honored Mordecai immediately, then the events of the sixth chapter would not have occurred as they did. In His infinite wisdom, God knew the proper time for promotion. As was true in Joseph's life (**Genesis 40:23-41:1; Exodus 12:40-43; Genesis 15:13-16**) and in Jesus' life (**Galatians 4:4; Matthew 26:18; Luke 9:51; John 7:6-8**), things happened when the time was right. Mordecai and Esther didn't know God's timetable, but they waited on God rather than rushing ahead of Him (**Esther 4:14**). As a result of their willingness to wait, things fell right into place.

### Discussion:

#### **Mordecai's Heroics**

(6:1-3)

#### **Mordecai's Honor**

(6:4-11)

#### **Mordecai's Humility**

(6:12-14)

Conclusion: What can you learn from this part of the Cinderella story of Esther? Although Mordecai's promotion might have been late on human timetables, it was right on time on God's timetable. May we all learn from Mordecai and Esther to wait on God. If we will, then the events of our lives will turn out right in the end.

# **ESTHER: A CINDERELLA STORY**

## *THE PUNISHMENT OF HAMAN*

### TEXT: Esther 7

Introduction: Today, we often see punishments handed out which do not fit the crime. For example, we see rapists, murderers, and child abusers slapped on the wrist and then released to commit their crimes again. As we examine this chapter, we will see divine justice. Haman will get what is coming to him.

### Discussion:

#### **Esther's Revelation**

(7:1-4)

#### **Haman's Desperation**

(7:5-6)

#### **Ahasuerus' Contemplation**

(7:7-8)

#### **Harbonah's Recommendation**

(7:9-10)

Conclusion: What can you learn from this part of the Cinderella story of Esther? Henry Wadsworth Longfellow observed that “the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small.” Although justice alluded Esther and Mordecai for a time, they eventually enjoyed it. No matter how much the wicked appear to be prospering and the righteous appear to be suffering in this life, the scales of justice will be balanced one day (**Ecclesiastes 8:11-13**). Justice will prevail.

# **ESTHER: A CINDERELLA STORY**

## *THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE JEWS*

### TEXT: Esther 8

Introduction: When the king sent a decree into the empire authorizing the Jews to defend themselves against those that he had seventy-days earlier authorized to kill them, Persian citizens must have been somewhat confused. In fact, they may have even asked the messenger to reread the decree. Not doubt, the document was of special interest to the Persian lawyers. After all, it seems that the king was breaking new ground legally.

### Discussion:

#### **Mordecai's Ironic Position**

(8:1-2)

#### **Esther's Intense Pleading**

(8:3-6)

#### **Ahasuerus's Incredible Proposition**

(8:7-14)

#### **Israel's Interesting Proselyting**

(8:15-17)

Conclusion: What can you learn from this part of the Cinderella story of Esther? God was always with Esther. He was providing for His people all along. In the end, God saved His people because He kept His promise to watch over them.

# **ESTHER: A CINDERELLA STORY**

## *THE PEACE OF THE JEWS*

### **TEXT: Esther 9-10**

**Introduction:** Sadly, many of us take peace for granted. If we are not careful, we will find ourselves in a situation like that of Esther and her people and unable to deal with the imminent danger.

### **Discussion:**

#### **The Fear of the People**

(9:1-4)

#### **The Fighting of the Jews**

(9:5-17)

#### **The Feasting of the Nation**

(9:18-32)

#### **The Favor of the King**

(10:1-2)

#### **The Favor of Mordecai**

(10:3)

**Conclusion:** What can you learn from this part of the Cinderella story of Esther? Isn't it interesting that as the book draws to a close, Esther is nowhere in sight. She rose to the occasion when need most, but now takes her place again in the background. For the moment, Mordecai is reluctantly in the limelight. Neither Esther nor Mordecai will ever be seen or mentioned again in sacred history, but their godly influence still has an impact today.

## **Appendix A**

### ***Mordecai: A Type of Christ***

<b>Mordecai</b>	<b>Christ</b>
Possessed great wisdom (2:10)	Possessed great wisdom (Lk. 2:40, 52; 1 Cor. 1:24)
Appointed as a judge (2:19) Good deeds written down in history (2:21-23; 6:1-2) Refused to bow to one other than God (3:2, 5)	Appointed as a judge (Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10) Good deeds written down in history (Acts 1:1-2; 10:38) Refused to bow to one other than God (Mt. 4:8-10)
Put under a sentence of death by a wicked ruler (3:6)	Put under a sentence of death by a wicked ruler (Mt. 2)
Day of death selected in advance (3:7)	Day of death selected in advance (Rev. 13:8; cf. John 2:4; 7:30; 12:23, 27; Mt. 26:45)
Falsely accused by enemy to obtain permission for execution (3:8)  Sold for silver (3:9, 11)  Opposed by a very powerful prince (3:10-11)  Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (4:1)  Spent a period of time fasting (4:16)	Falsely accused by enemies to obtain permission for execution (Mt. 26:59; John 18:29-32).  Sold for silver (Zech. 11:12-13; Mt. 26:15; Mk. 14:10, 21)  Opposed by a very powerful prince (Eph. 2:2; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)  Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3).  Spent a period of time fasting (Mt. 4:2)
Hated without cause (5:9)	Hated without cause (John 15:25)
Served under a government that used crucifixion to punish offenders (5:14)	Served under a government that used crucifixion to punish offenders (John 19:15-16)
Rode through city streets triumphantly (6:7-11)	Rode through the city streets triumphantly (Mt. 21:1-10; John 12:14-16)
Abraham's seed (6:13)	Abraham's seed (6:13)
Issued laws that could not be altered (8:8)	Issued laws that cannot be altered (Rev. 22:18-10)
Brought life to those under the sentence of death (8:9)	Brought life to those under the sentence of death (John 10:10; 20:31)
Clothed in purple (8:15)	Clothed in purple (John 19:5)
Brought a new joy (8:15)	Brought a new joy (John 15:11)
Grew in favor and became greater and greater (9:4)	Grew in favor and became greater and greater (Lk. 2:52)
Exalted to a position of great authority (9:29; 10:2)  Left words of peace and truth (9:30)	Exalted to a position of great authority (Phil. 2:9-11)  Left words of peace and truth (John 14:26-7; 16:13, 33)
Sought the wealth of others (10:3)	Sought the wealth of others (2 Cor. 8:9)

## **Appendix B**

### ***Esther: A Type of Christ***

<b>Esther</b>	<b>Christ</b>
Had someone who prepared the way for her named Vashti (Est. 1). Vashti didn't know that she was preparing the way.	Had someone who prepared the way for him named John (Mt. 11:7-15). John knew that he was preparing the way.
Was raised by a godly man other than her father (Est. 2:5-7). Mordecai loved her and she obeyed him (Est. 2:10-11).	Was raised by a man other than His Father (Mt. 1:18-25). Joseph loved Jesus and Jesus was subject to Joseph and Mary (Lk. 2:51).
Underwent an elaborate test to establish her purity (2:12). Twelve months to make sure she was not pregnant before going in unto the king. She passed the test.	Underwent an elaborate test to establish His purity (Mt. 4:1-11). He was found to be perfect (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22).
Was come to the kingdom for just such a time (Est. 4:14). Joseph saved his people from starvation and she saved her people from extermination.	Was born when the fullness of time was come (Gal. 4:4; Dan. 2). The Babylonians gave the synagogue, the Medes & Persians gave a respect for law and order, the Greeks gave a universal and expressive language, and the Romans gave freedom of travel and communication.
Increased in favor in the sight of God and man (Est. 2:9, 17).	Increased in favor in the sight of God and man (Lk. 2:52; 5:1-3; Mt. 3:17; 17:5).
Had to overcome a powerful enemy named Haman (Est. 3:1, 10; 7:6). Haman fell because of pride (Est. 3:5).	Had to overcome a powerful enemy named Satan (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 13:8; 1 Cor. 15:17; Rom. 3:23). Satan fell because of pride (1 Tim. 3:6).
Was sold along with her people for ten thousand talents of silver (Est. 3:9). The silver went back to the one with whom the deal was struck.	Was sold for thirty pieces of silver (Mt. 26:15; 27:3, 9). The silver went back to the ones with whom the deal was struck.
Was willing to lay down her life for her people (4:11, 16). Demonstrates her love.	Was willing to lay down His life for us (1 John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8; Heb. 2:9; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 5:25). Demonstrates His love.
Sought another way to deliver her people but submitted to the will of God (Est. 4:11-12, 13-16).	Sought for the cup to pass from Him but was willing for God's will to be done (Mt. 26:39; Heb. 5:7-9).
Accepted the role of an advocate or intercessor (Est. 5:1-2). She had sympathy for her people and influence with the king.	Accepted the role of an advocate or intercessor (1 John 2:1-2). He has sympathy for us and influence with God (Heb. 4:15; Mt. 3:17; 17:5).
Brought life to those under the sentence of death (Est. 8:16-17).	Brought life to those under the sentence of death (John 20:30-31; Rom. 6:23; Jam. 1:13-15).
Nullified the law that was against her people (Est. 3:13; 8:4-6). The old decree still existed but was robbed of its force as a law.	Nullified the law that was against His people (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:15; Heb. 10:4). The Old Testament still exists but is robbed of its force as a law (Rom. 7:3-4).

## **Appendix C**

### **Satan & Haman**

#### **Father & Son (John 8:44)**

<b>HAMAN</b>	<b>SATAN</b>
Hated God's people and wanted to completely destroy them (Est. 3:1, 9; 4:7-8; 7:4)	Hates God's people and wants to completely destroy them.
Fell from high position because of pride (Est. 5:11-12; 6:6)	Fell from high position because of pride
Was extremely powerful, but not all powerful (Est. 3:1; Job 1)	Is extremely powerful, but not all-powerful
Sought for men to worship him (Est. 3:2)	Seeks for men to worship him
Used the love of money to secure his purposes (Est. 3:9; 4:7)	Uses the love of money to secure his purposes
Was a slanderer of brethren (Est. 3:8)	Slanders brethren
Was an enemy of God's people (Est. 3:10; 7:6).	Is the enemy of God's people (1 Pet. 5:8).
Used a king to pass laws that hurt God's people (Est. 3:8).	Uses kings (rulers) to pass laws that hurt God's people
Sought to destroy young and old without mercy (Est. 3:13, 15; 5:14)	Seeks to destroy young and old without mercy
Had victory snatched from him at the last moment (Est. 6:1)	Had victory snatched from him at the last moment
Fell to the seed of the Jews (Est. 6:13)	Fell to the seed of the Jews – Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16).
Disguised his schemes and actions (Est. 7:5)	Disguises his schemes and actions

## **Appendix D**

### **Comparisons and Contrasts**

#### **Between the Feast of Purim & The Lord's Supper**

<b>THE FEAST OF PURIM</b>	<b>THE LORD'S SUPPER</b>
A memorial feast for Jews (Est. 9:28).	A memorial feast for Christians- I Cor.11:24
Instituted by Mordecai –Esther 9:20-21).	Instituted by Jesus-1 Cor. 11:23
To be observed annually -The fourteenth and fifteenth day of Adar (Est. 9:21. 27).	To be observed weekly -The First Day of the Week (Acts 20:7; <i>kata</i> 1 Cor.16:1-2).
To be observed throughout the provinces of Persia (world ruling empire-Est. 9:28)	To be observed throughout the world (Mt. 28: 18-20)
To be observed by Jews in the kingdom of Persia (Est. 9:28-29)	To be observed by those in the kingdom of God (Mt. 26:29).
Recalls the defeat of Haman-Esther 9:24-25	Recalls the defeat of Satan (Genesis 3:15).
To commemorate the death of the Jew's enemy -Haman (Esther 9:24-25	To commemorate the death of Man's Friend - Jesus (1 Cor. 11:26).
A common meal (Est. 9: 18, 22)	Not a common meal (1 Cor. 11:21-22).
Rowdy Observance -Booing, hissing, stomping, shouting, and shaking of rattles when Haman's name is read.	Quiet, orderly observance (1 Cor. 14:40)
Called the Feast of Esther in secular history	Called the Table (feast, supper) of the Lord in sacred history ( 1 Cor. 10:21; 11:20)
Called Mordecai's day in secular history	Called the Lord's Day in sacred history-(Rev. 1: 10)
Involved the giving of gifts from man to man (Est. 9:19, 22)	Involves the ultimate gift from God to man (John 3: 16)
Old law robbed of force by giving of new law (Est. 9: 24-25)	Old law robbed of force by giving of new law (Col. 2: 14;Eph. 2:15)
A day of gladness because victory and a new life were given (Est. 9: 18)	A day of gladness because victory and a new life were given (John 20:31; 1 Cor. 15:58)