



Esther Bible study guide

A clear 5-session guide for personal study, small groups, and churches

Read Esther as a whole before working through the sessions. Let its own structure set the agenda.

Every question sends you back to the biblical text. The guide helps you observe the passage, follow the author's argument, interpret it in context, and respond faithfully.

CHOOSE YOUR DEPTH

- Short: Read the book overview and discuss the first and final question in a session.
- Study: Work through all 5 sessions and answer each question from the passage.
- Deep: Open the free chapter commentary and dictionary links while you study.

protos-app.com/commentary/esther

Esther at a glance

BIG IDEA

Esther's rags-to-riches drama tells the story of a woman with wisdom, courage, and willingness who affected the lives of thousands. [1]

HISTORICAL SETTING

Author: Unknown. Date: Records events that occurred around 483-473 BC. Setting: The Persian capital, Susa, during the reign of Xerxes, after a number of Jews had returned to Judea. [1]

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Read this book as a shaped narrative. Follow plot, repeated scenes, turning points, and the narrator's choices before turning events into personal lessons.

MAJOR THEMES

- To demonstrate God's providential care of his people and to trace the origin of the Festivalfeast of Purim
- The book's literary movement and central claims
- Faithful response within the people of God
- Hope, judgment, grace, and obedience in their proper context

INTERPRETIVE CARE

- Let the narrator establish the point before treating an event as a general rule.
- Do not assume every action recorded in the story is commended.

Esther 1

22 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Vashti · Media · Persia · Susa · Cush · Women

Questions

- Before anyone explains it, walk through what actually happens here. Who does what, in what order?
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- Vashti turns up in this section. What does the passage actually show, as opposed to what you already assumed?
- The word women is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- What did the writer choose to include here, and why that detail?
- Where does this cut against something you already believe or already do?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Esther 2-3

38 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Mordecai · Haman · Esther · Susa · Vashti · Nebuchadnezzar

Questions

- Tell the story back in your own words. What is easy to skip over?
- Who is being addressed here, and what do they already know that we do not?
- What is assumed rather than argued? Those assumptions are often the real claim.
- Read this section from where Nebuchadnezzar was standing. What changes?
- Define gate from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- This is a story, not a lesson with a moral attached. What is it showing rather than telling?
- What would actually be different this week if you took this seriously?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Esther 4-5

31 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Esther · Mordecai · Haman · Hathach · Susa · Banquet

Questions

- What happens in this section that you would struggle to explain to someone who has never read it?
- Which single verse carries the weight of this section?
- What is left unsaid that you expected to be said?
- What does the writer tell us about Hathach, and what is deliberately left out?
- Where else have you heard banquet used, and is it being used that way here?
- Whose perspective are we given, and whose are we denied?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this, and what stops you saying it?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Esther 6-8

41 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Haman · Mordecai · Esther · Susa · Adar · Hammedatha

Questions

- Read it once more, slowly. What do you notice the second time that you missed the first?
- Where does the tone shift, and what causes it?
- What question does this section answer that you had not thought to ask?
- What would this section sound like if Hammedatha were telling it?
- The word jews is doing real work here. What did you assume it meant, and does the passage agree?
- What would you have written differently if you wanted to make a point?
- What is the hardest thing in this passage to accept, and why that one?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Esther 9-10

35 verses. Read it aloud together before anyone talks about it.

Who and what appears

Mordecai · Susa · Adar · Esther · Haman · Chronicles

Questions

- If this were the only part of the book you had, what would you conclude about Jesus?
- What does the writer repeat? Repetition is usually the point, not a habit.
- What surprised you, or what did you have to read twice?
- Chronicles turns up in this section. What does the passage actually show, as opposed to what you already assumed?
- Define jews from this passage alone, without reaching for what you already know.
- What did the writer choose to include here, and why that detail?
- If this is true, what have you been getting wrong?

[Stuck on a word or name? Open the free Bible dictionary.](#)

NOTES AND PRAYER

Sources, method, and reuse

Protos created this guide to help readers understand Esther in its literary and historical context. Questions are designed to be answered from the passage, not from guesswork or personal opinion alone.

REFERENCES

[1] Tyndale Open Study Notes

Tyndale House Publishers. Book background, purpose, setting, and structural orientation. CC BY-SA 4.0.

<https://tyndaleopenresources.com/>

[2] Protos study guide editorial

Protos. Reading structure, discussion questions, and application prompts. CC BY-SA 4.0.

<https://protos-app.com/free-bible-study-tools>

Edition 2026.1. Editorial status: source-grounded. Scripture references identify passages but do not reproduce a licensed Bible translation.

Keep studying for free

Background and context for Esther [_protos-app.com/commentary/esther](https://protos-app.com/commentary/esther)

A Bible dictionary, 1,129 entries [_protos-app.com/bible-dictionary](https://protos-app.com/bible-dictionary)

Printable Bible reading plans [_protos-app.com/reading-plans](https://protos-app.com/reading-plans)

Protos is also available on iPhone and Android, with verse-by-verse study help beside the passage you are reading.

This guide is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. You may copy, print, adapt, and share it with attribution under the same license.