



*"The instruction of the LORD is perfect,
renewing one's life;
the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy,
making the inexperienced wise."*

Psalm 19:7

"Women in the Word of God every day" is our simple but significant mission. Even so, when the *She Reads Truth Bible* was a twinkle in our eyes, we trembled at the thought of interacting with God's Word in such an intimate way.

We believe there is nothing we or anyone else can add to Scripture to make it more relevant, more important, or more true. It is already all of those things. God's Word is living and active, and we confidently hold it higher than anything we do or say.

So why create a She Reads Truth Bible?

This Bible is our humble attempt to honor the inherently beautiful gospel with the aesthetic beauty it deserves. Scripture is a glorious collision of beauty, goodness, and truth, and we pray this book you hold in your hands represents that.

Our heart for the *She Reads Truth Bible* is not to add to or improve on the perfect and complete gift of Scripture God has given us. Rather, our heart is for everything we've included in this Bible to point back to God and His Word. Every human word and element in this book is an intentional invitation for you to both read Scripture and grow in your affection for it.

Each devotional seeks to show the gospel in every passage. We believe God is the main character of every story and it is our delight to find Him there.

The book introductions not only give cultural and geographical context, they place each book in context of the whole of Scripture. Each book also has its own reading plan with supplemental passages, intentionally making room for Scripture to interpret Scripture.

The Key Verse for each book was selected not simply as an artistic element, but as a tool to remember the theme of each individual book. Together, these 66 verses present the complete arc of Scripture, book by book.

Our earnest prayer is that our imperfect offerings on these pages highlight the perfection of Scripture, drawing you more deeply into the story of salvation. By the grace of God and the counsel of the Holy Spirit, may you become like the tree in Psalm 1, planted by streams of water, "that bears its fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither" (v. 3). May you grow in affection for this beautiful, good, and true Book, and may you be a woman in the Word of God every day.

Grace and Peace to you,

Rachel Myers Amanda Williams

She Reads Truth, 2017

KEY FEATURES



KEY VERSES

One theme verse was chosen for each individual book. Together, these 66 verses represent the complete arc of Scripture.

KEY VERSE ART: Each key verse has been beautifully hand-lettered by one of fifteen different artists. The key verse art serves to aid in memorization and celebrates the beauty of the gospel.

galatians



I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing. 2:21

A LITTLE BACKGROUND The term "Galatians" was used both ethnically and geographically in the NT era, making it unclear where the Galatian churches were actually located. If understood ethnically, the founding of the Galatian churches is only implied in the NT. Paul "went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia" (the 14:6), in north-central Asia Minor, during his second missionary journey and again later (Acts 18:23, 19:1). A group from Asia (probably Troas) reached Rome in the third century B.C., and it became known as Galatia.

Independently, "Galatians" can refer to those living in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia, a different area entirely. That region included the cities of Paphlagonia, Iconium, Lycaonia, and Derbe, where Paul ministered to great churches (Acts 13:14–14:23).

MESSAGE & PURPOSE Galatians, which may be the earliest of Paul's letters, is also his most mature, producing the truth that comes as justified and longed-for by trusting in Jesus alone. Paul wrote Galatians to clarify and defend "the truth of the gospel" (2:14–16) in the face of a false gospel. He did this by defending his authority as an apostle, considering the OT basis of the gospel message, and demonstrating how the gospel message related practically to daily Christian living.

WE CAN GIVE THANKS

Galatians includes several allusions about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Christian life. After the Spirit's role in the ministry of adoption (3:5–6), believers are commanded to "walk by the Spirit" (5:16), be "led by the Spirit" (5:18), and "follow the Spirit" (5:25), as well as "love to the Spirit" and "keep the commandments of the Spirit" (5:22–23).

GENRE INDICATOR

Because each literary style should be approached differently, we've color-coded the various genres to make them easy to locate and identify.

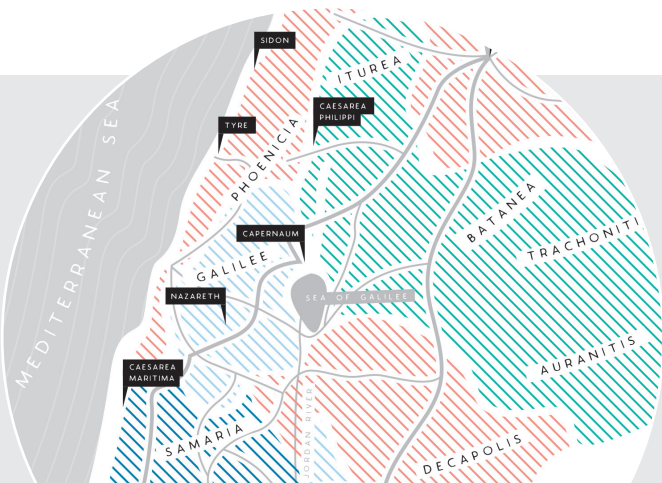
INTRODUCTION

CULTURAL CONTEXT: Each book introduction includes a brief overview of the approximate date of writing, authorship, historical context, and relevant geography.

MESSAGE & PURPOSE: Each introduction also identifies main themes of the writing.

BIBLICAL SIGNIFICANCE: This note identifies how we can give thanks for each book's unique contribution to the canon of Scripture.

MAPS Placing the book in its geographical context helps us understand its cultural context.



READ AND UNDERSTAND GENESIS

The Bible is a complex work in which many ancient authors tell us their story. As you read, look for the authors' underlying motives and the additional passages in Scripture that the authors of Genesis used to explain.

Volume 1	GENESIS 1-11
Genesis 1-3	John 1:1-9; Genesis 1:1-3
Genesis 4-5	Colossians 1:15-22; Hebrews 1:1-3
Genesis 6-8	Romans 1:18-25; Psalm 144:1-4
Genesis 9-10	John 1:4-9; Revelation 1:1-3
Genesis 11	John 1:10; Psalm 2
Volume 2	GENESIS 12-50
Genesis 12-14	Matthew 1:2-23; Galatians 3:23-25
Genesis 15-16	Galatians 1:6-7; Hebrews 7:1-12
Genesis 17-18	Hebrews 1:1-3; Mark 10:2-11
Genesis 19-20	1 Peter 1:1-12; Psalm 144:1-4
Genesis 21-22	Hebrews 11:17-19; James 1:1-4
Volume 3	GENESIS 51-50
Genesis 23-24	Romans 8:1-17; Genesis 23:1-20
Genesis 25-26	Hebrews 11:21-22; Psalm 113:1-2
Genesis 27-28	Psalm 104:1-16; Psalm 113:1-2
Genesis 29-30	Psalm 113:1-2; Song of Songs 1:1-7
Genesis 31-32	Psalm 113:1-2; Ephesians 3:1-12
Volume 4	GENESIS 33-50
Genesis 33-34	Hebrews 11:23-24; Psalm 113:1-2
Genesis 35-36	Isaiah 43:1-12; Psalm 113:1-2
Genesis 37-38	Matthew 21:21-22; Psalm 113:1-2
Genesis 39	Psalm 113:1-2; Psalm 113:1-2
Genesis 40-41	2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Psalm 113:1-2
Volume 5	GENESIS 42-50
Genesis 42-43	Romans 8:1-17; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3
Genesis 44-45	Galatians 3:1-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3
Genesis 46-47	Psalm 113:1-2; Psalm 113:1-2
Genesis 48-49	Hebrews 11:23-24; Psalm 113:1-2
Genesis 50-51	Psalm 113:1-2; Psalm 113:1-2

READING PLANS

Each book has its own custom reading plan, broken down into easy-to-read sections.

GOING DEEPER: Reading plans also include supplementary passages for added context and deeper understanding.

DEVOTIONALS: Each day of the reading plan that features an in-text devotional is marked in bold.

CHARTS

The charts provided illustrate how different passages of the Bible connect and relate to one another, highlighting themes of a particular book and the whole canon of Scripture.

JOB QUESTIONS	JESUS ANSWERS
<p>JOB 9:32-33</p> <p>Who can help us approach God?</p>	<p>1 TIMOTHY 2:5</p> <p>"For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus."</p>
<p>JOB 14:14</p> <p>Is there life after death?</p>	<p>JOHN 11:25</p> <p>"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live."</p>
<p>JOB 16:19-21</p> <p>Is there anyone in heaven working on our behalf?</p>	<p>HEBREWS 9:24</p> <p>"For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with hands... but into heaven itself, so that He might now appear in the presence of God for us."</p>
<p>JOB 21:7-15</p> <p>What is the eternal importance in life?</p>	<p>JOHN 3:16</p> <p>"For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."</p>
<p>JOB 23:3-5</p> <p>Where do we find God?</p>	<p>JOHN 14:19</p> <p>"The one who has seen Me has seen the Father."</p>

GENESIS 2-3

THE CREATION

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.¹ The earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the waters.² Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.³ God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.⁴ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning—**one day.**

"Then God said, 'Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating the water from the water.' So God made the expanse and separated the waters under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse 'sky.' Evening came and then morning—the second day."

"Then God said, 'Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. "God collected the water 'seas,' and the gathering of the water he called 'salt water.' And God saw that it was good.⁵ "Then God said, 'Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.' And it was so. "The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the earth, and the seed-bearing plants and trees bore fruit according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.⁶ Evening came and then morning—the third day."

"Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons⁷ and for days and years.' There will be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light to the earth." And it was so. "God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—to give light to the earth." God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth. "The lights were to give light, and to separate the day from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.⁸ Evening came and then morning—the fourth day."

"Then God said, 'Let the water teem with life.' Bring creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.⁹ "So God created the large sea creatures¹⁰ and every living creature that moves and swims in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.¹¹ "God blessed the fruitful, multiply and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.¹² Evening came and then morning—the fifth day."

"Then God said, 'Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds.' And it was so.¹³ "God made the animals of the earth of every kind, and the creatures that crawl on the ground of every kind. And it was so.¹⁴ "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, and let them rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock on the earth, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground of every kind. Let them rule over every animal of the land.' "So God

¹1:1 On created the universe. ²1:8 On there. ³1:9 On let there be light. ⁴1:10 On let there be light. ⁵1:11 On let there be light. ⁶1:12 On let there be light. ⁷1:13 On let there be light. ⁸1:14 On let there be light. ⁹1:15 On let there be light. ¹⁰1:16 On let there be light. ¹¹1:17 On let there be light. ¹²1:18 On let there be light. ¹³1:19 On let there be light. ¹⁴1:20 On let there be light.

BREAKING BREAD

ACTS 2, LUKE 22:19, 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

My grandma was born two years before the Stock Market crashed in 1929. She spent her childhood in a home in Iowa in the middle of the Great Depression, raised in a family who knew what it was to have nothing, to go to bed hungry, to be too shy to ask for help. She worked hard, but still had to go through to get by. She was a strong, resilient woman who could go through anything and come out the other side.

Now, 80 years later, she still picks peaches, but has means for seeing an orchard that they were in the 1920s. The image of her going through, she goes home and usually because she is in a situation of adversity, I've never known her to think back before taking it fully on her own.

In the New Testament we find a group of leaders in the generation of Jesus' generation. One description of the early church found in a place of confidence and security, but that group would meet all their needs, instead of having their generation's light of life. They shared their lives with one another. I have a hard time looking at the way they lived without feeling convicted for being not what my generation asks to become my generation.

What was the secret? Every day, the early church devoted themselves to meeting together. Every day, they gathered together at the temple and each other's homes. Every day, they broke bread.

Every day.

At first glance, this may seem so warm, happy feelings and images of the early church gathered together for breakfast. But they weren't doing any good. They shared the meal. This simple thing seemed to be the only thing for grace, they were gathered at the Lord's Table for communion.

When Jesus broke bread at the Last Supper, He commanded His disciples to continue the practice (1 Cor 11:23-26). He wants us to continue to break bread together. Not just to remember Him and to practice His death and resurrection until the return (1 Cor 11:26-28).

In Acts, we see a group of believers who remained loyal, continue every day. Every day they broke bread, remembering how this body was broken on the cross for them on. Every day they remembered the resurrection (1 Cor 11:26-28) and the gift they received through Jesus, and it changed the way they lived.

Taking communion reminds us of the new covenant God established through Jesus. We remember that God keeps His promises, that He's generous and full of compassion through Jesus. We remember that through Jesus, after we are saved, all because of what Christ has done (1 Cor 11:26), let us be faithful to always remember His sacrifice, to model the generosity of the early church, and to praise God together with joyful and thankful hearts.

LAYOUT

GENEROUS MARGINS: Pages of biblical text include extra-wide margins for note taking.

CUSTOM BIBLE FONT: With the release of the CSB comes a custom font made specifically for optimum ease of Bible reading.

DEVOTIONALS

Throughout the text, find 189 written responses to Scripture. Each devotional focuses on a particular passage and seeks to point solely to God and the gospel.

TIMELINES Including significant biblical and world events, the timelines provide historical context for the action of the book.

2091

2085

Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

Abraham moves to Canaan

2066

2006

Birth of Jacob

For Such
A Time As
This

esther



If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's family will be destroyed. Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this. 4:14

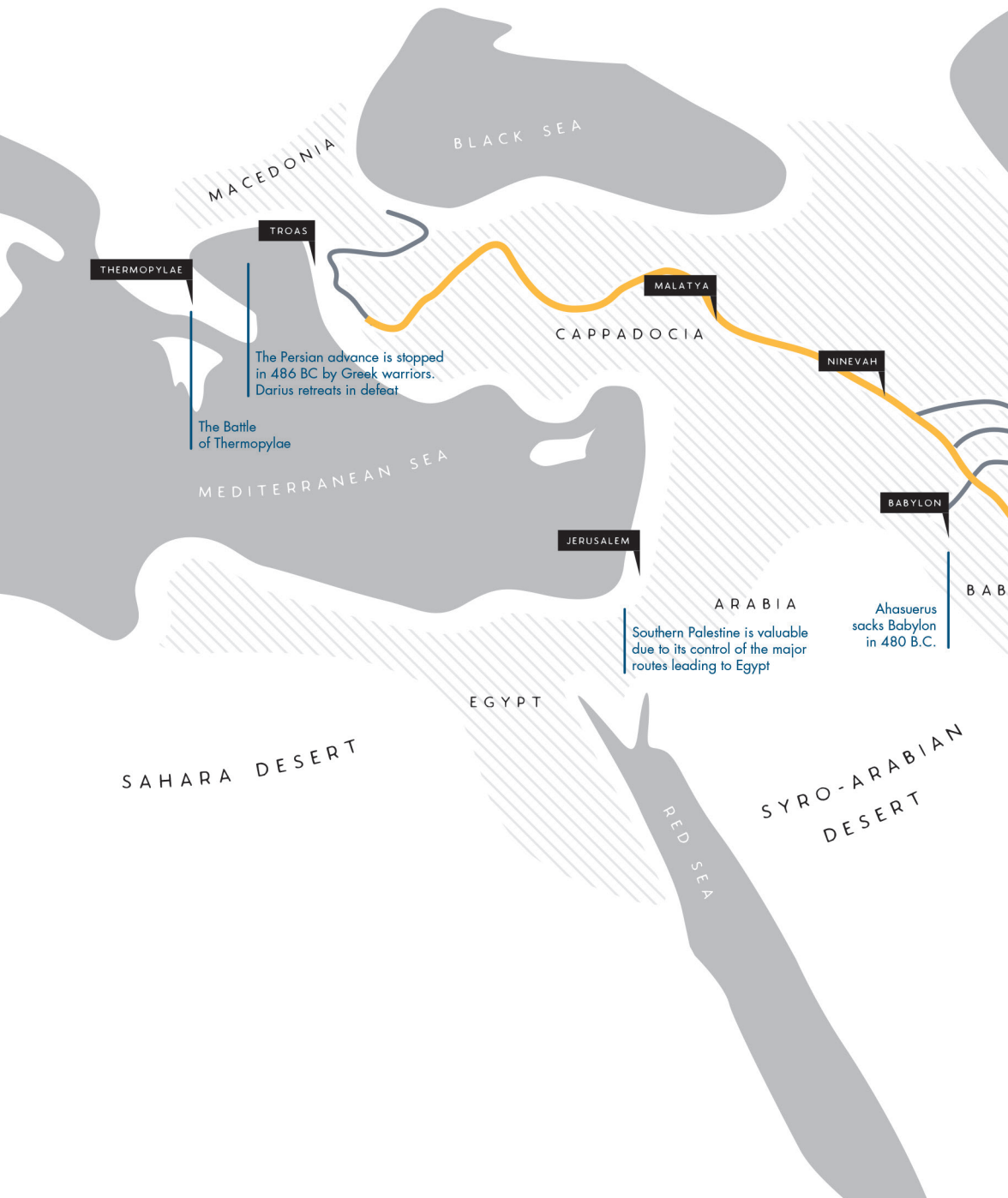
ON THE TIMELINE The story of Esther is rooted in the historical account of King Ahasuerus, who ruled as king of Persia from 486-465 BC. Esther is made queen of Persia in approximately 479 BC. Haman's plot to destroy the Jews occurs in 474 BC, and the first celebration of Purim occurs in 473 BC. The events in Esther occur before the events of Ezra and Nehemiah, but after the Decree of Cyrus had allowed the Jews in exile to return to Jerusalem. Most likely the book was written in the fourth century BC with Mordecai as its author.

A LITTLE BACKGROUND Esther is a unique book. It is the only book in the Bible that never mentions God, although His presence is implied in Mordecai's allusion to divine providence (4:14). The book of Esther is tightly connected with specific historical events, yet it is also a piece of literature, a narrative with all of the literary features necessary to make a great story. Esther is also unique in that its purposes are not always explicitly stated but are derived from the story as a whole.

MESSAGE & PURPOSE For the Jewish people scattered around the Persian Empire, the book of Esther was a story that gave encouragement and hope. It provided a model of how Jewish people could not just survive, but thrive in a Gentile environment. It displayed the work of God, evident but unseen, in the unfolding story of deliverance and redemption—making an orphan girl the queen and using her courage and influence to save the Jews from annihilation.

GIVE THANKS FOR THE BOOK OF ESTHER:

Without ever mentioning God directly, the book of Esther underscores the providence of God. God's promise to give the Jews an eternal ruler remained in place, even in the face of threatened annihilation. Esther shows us that many Jews remained faithful to their God even in exile. Some scholars believe they kept their identity as God's people through the synagogues that developed as centers of the Jewish community wherever Jews were dispersed. The synagogues would later play a significant role as the gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire.



MACEDONIA

BLACK SEA

TROAS

THERMOPYLAE

The Persian advance is stopped
in 486 BC by Greek warriors.
Darius retreats in defeat

The Battle
of Thermopylae

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

CAPPADOCIA

MALATYA

NINEVAH

BABYLON

JERUSALEM

ARABIA

Southern Palestine is valuable
due to its control of the major
routes leading to Egypt

Ahasuerus
sacks Babylon
in 480 B.C.

EGYPT

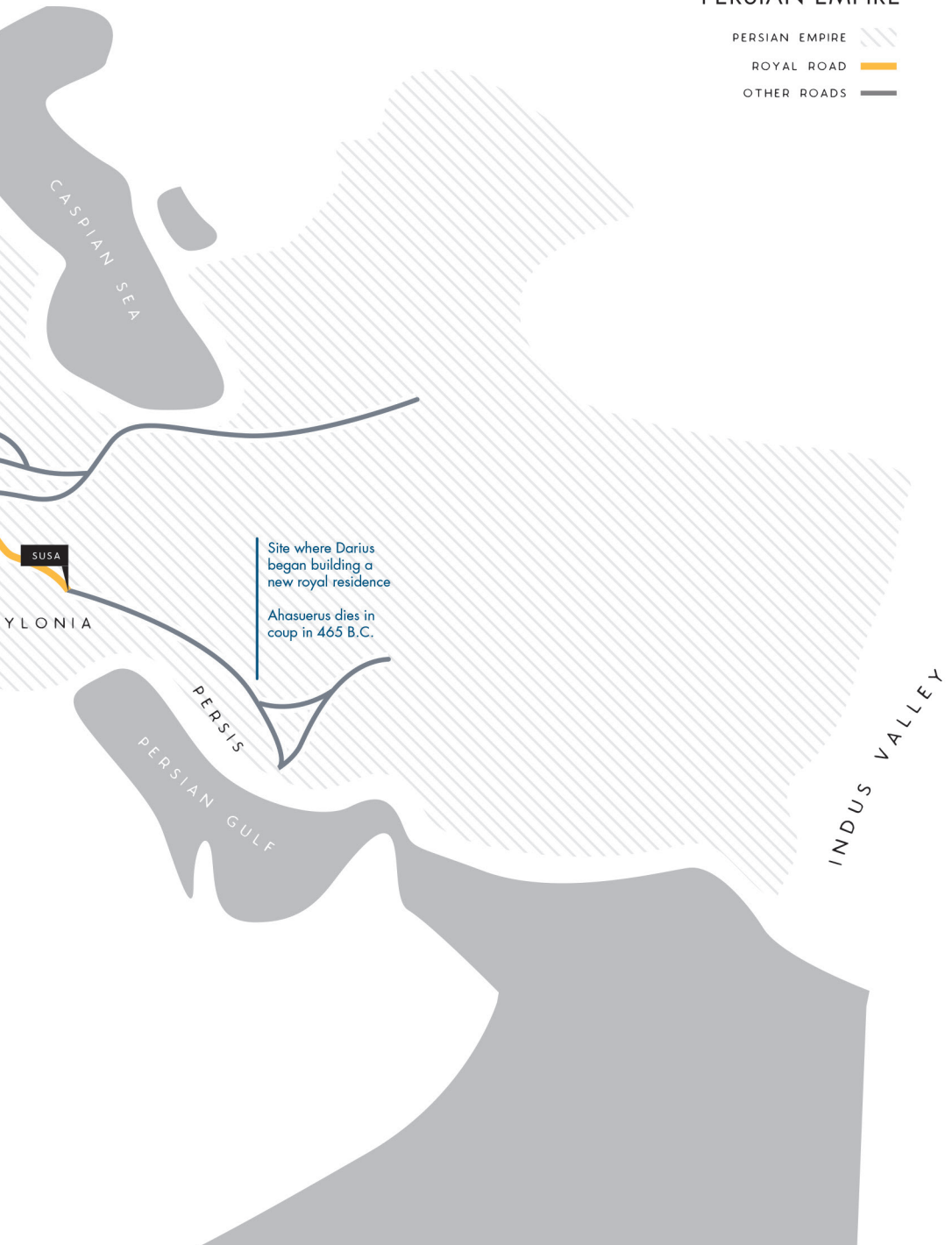
SAHARA DESERT

RED SEA

SYRO-ARABIAN
DESERT

PERSIAN EMPIRE

- PERSIAN EMPIRE 
- ROYAL ROAD 
- OTHER ROADS 



READ AND UNDERSTAND ESTHER

The Bible is a complete work in which many stories combine to tell one story. As you read the book of Esther, consider reading the additional passages to discover how the whole of Scripture works together.

Week 1	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 1	Psalms 32:7, Proverbs 27:15-16
<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 2	Proverbs 31:10-31, John 10:27-29
<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 3	Psalms 68:20, Proverbs 16:33
<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 4	Romans 5:6-1, Isaiah 15:1-3
<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 5	Proverbs 16:18, Mark 6:14-29
Week 2	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 6	Isaiah 52:1-2, Proverbs 26:27
<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 7	Psalms 91:2-3, Revelation 20:11-15
<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 8	Romans 8:10-11, Colossians 3:1-4
<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 9:1-22	Luke 1:46-55, Nehemiah 8:10
<input type="checkbox"/> Esther 9:23-10:3	Leviticus 16:29-31, Ephesians 1:3-14

VASHTI ANGERS THE KING

1 These events took place during the days of Ahasuerus, who ruled 127 provinces from India to Cush. ²In those days King Ahasuerus reigned from his royal throne in the fortress at Susa. ³He held a feast in the third year of his reign for all his officials and staff, the army of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the officials from the provinces. ⁴He displayed the glorious wealth of his kingdom and the magnificent splendor of his greatness for a total of 180 days.

⁵At the end of this time, the king held a week-long banquet in the garden courtyard of the royal palace for all the people, from the greatest to the least, who were present in the fortress of Susa. ⁶White and violet linen hangings were fastened with fine white and purple linen cords to silver rods on marble^A columns. Gold and silver couches were arranged on a mosaic pavement of red feldspar,^B marble, mother-of-pearl, and precious stones.

⁷Drinks were served in an array of gold goblets, each with a different design. Royal wine flowed freely, according to the king's bounty. ⁸The drinking was according to royal decree: "There are no restrictions." The king had ordered every wine steward in his household to serve whatever each person wanted.

⁹Queen Vashti also gave a feast for the women of King Ahasuerus's palace.

¹⁰On the seventh day, when the king was feeling good from the wine, Ahasuerus commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carkas — the seven eunuchs who personally served him — ¹¹to bring Queen Vashti before him with her royal crown. He wanted to show off her beauty to the people and the officials, because she was very beautiful. ¹²But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command that was delivered by his eunuchs. The king became furious and his anger burned within him.

THE KING'S DECREE

¹³The king consulted the wise men who understood the times,^C for it was his normal procedure to confer with experts in law and justice. ¹⁴The most trusted ones^D were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marse-na, and Memucan. They were the seven officials of Persia and Media who had personal access to the king and occupied the highest positions in the kingdom. ¹⁵The king asked, "According to the law, what should be done with Queen Vashti, since she refused to obey King Ahasuerus's command that was delivered by the eunuchs?"

¹⁶Memucan said in the presence of the king and his officials, "Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king, but all the officials and the peoples who are in every one of King Ahasuerus's provinces. ¹⁷For the queen's action will become public knowledge to all the women and cause them to despise their husbands and say, 'King Ahasuerus ordered Queen Vashti brought before him, but she did not come.' ¹⁸Before this day is over, the noble women of Persia and Media who hear about the queen's act will say the same thing to all the king's officials, resulting in more contempt and fury.

¹⁹"If it meets the king's approval, he should personally issue a royal decree. Let it be recorded in the laws of Persia and Media, so that it cannot be revoked: Vashti is not to enter King Ahasuerus's presence, and her royal position is to be given to another woman who is more worthy than she. ²⁰The

^A 1:6 Or *alabaster* ^B 1:6 Or *of porphyry* ^C 1:13 Or *understood propitious times*

^D 1:14 Lit *Those near him*

THE AUTHOR AND THE LEAD

ESTHER 1

Everyone has a strong response to this passage.

There are two main camps: Vashti the brave and Vashti the bad.

Vashti the brave: Some smart people think Ahasuerus (also called Xerxes) was a drunken voyeur who wanted to show off his gorgeous queen to his party guests. She refused. I call this the “Vashti, you go girl!” response.

Vashti the bad: On the other hand, some scholars argue Ahasuerus was calling his queen to perform a normal state function: show up at the party. Ahasuerus was planning to go to war with Greece, and he needed Vashti to show up to underscore to all the visiting dignitaries that he was powerful and magnificent enough to be the guy who could defeat the Greeks. It was embarrassing when she refused him. Ahasuerus and his wise men make an example of her to keep other women from undercutting their husbands as well.

Whether we interpret Vashti’s actions as brave or bad, this story is about God and His providential care for His chosen people in exile. Vashti is a side note in the book of Esther, but **God is the main character of every story.**

The easy response to this passage is to fall into the same trap as Ahasuerus and think the story is about him, or Vashti, or even Esther. Our temptation is to draw an easy moral here: if Vashti did right, it’s “stand up for your dignity,” and if she was wrong, it’s “submit to authority.”

But let’s push past those easy responses and consider wisdom rather than moralism. It’s hard to decipher what the people in this story are up

to, and Scripture doesn’t give us a final verdict on Vashti’s actions. What we do know is Queen Vashti had to come and go so Queen Esther could take her place. God would use Esther to save Israel from genocide in the Babylonian exile.

God doesn’t necessarily call us to understand everything that’s happening in Vashti’s story, or even in our own story! But He does call us to be faithful in the everyday things. He calls us to wisdom. When we look at Vashti, we aren’t going to find it. We have to look to the main character in every story: God.

Wisdom is a lamp shining in a dark place (2Pt 1:19). It is looking to God for our guidance rather than to the ways or expectations of man. Wisdom isn’t knowing all the answers—it’s knowing what’s important, and walking in light of that.

We don’t get all the details about the stories we read, and we don’t even get all the details about the stories we’re in. We do, however, get the bullet points from the author and star Himself: Do justice. Love mercy. Walk humbly (Mc 6:8).

Don’t be afraid of what you don’t know. God knows. Walk in His wisdom.

decree the king issues will be heard throughout his vast kingdom, so all women will honor their husbands, from the greatest to the least.”

²¹ The king and his counselors approved the proposal, and he followed Memucan’s advice. ²² He sent letters to all the royal provinces, to each province in its own script and to each ethnic group in its own language, that every man should be master of his own house and speak in the language of his own people.

THE SEARCH FOR A NEW QUEEN

2 Some time later, when King Ahasuerus’s rage had cooled down, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what was decided against her. ² The king’s personal attendants suggested, “Let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king. ³ Let the king appoint commissioners in each province of his kingdom, so that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to the harem at the fortress of Susa. Put them under the supervision of Hegai, the king’s eunuch, keeper of the women, and give them the required beauty treatments. ⁴ Then the young woman who pleases the king will become queen instead of Vashti.” This suggestion pleased the king, and he did accordingly.

⁵ In the fortress of Susa, there was a Jewish man named Mordecai son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite. ⁶ He had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the other captives when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took King Jeconiah of Judah into exile. ⁷ Mordecai was the legal guardian of his cousin^a Hadassah (that is, Esther), because she had no father or mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was extremely good-looking. When her father and mother died, Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter.

⁸ When the king’s command and edict became public knowledge and when many young women were gathered at the fortress of Susa under Hegai’s supervision, Esther was taken to the palace, into the supervision of Hegai, keeper of the women. ⁹ The young woman pleased him and gained his favor so that he accelerated the process of the beauty treatments and the special diet that she received. He assigned seven hand-picked female servants to her from the palace and transferred her and her servants to the harem’s best quarters.

¹⁰ Esther did not reveal her ethnicity or her family background, because Mordecai had ordered her not to make them known. ¹¹ Every day Mordecai took a walk in front of the harem’s courtyard to learn how Esther was doing and to see what was happening to her.

¹² During the year before each young woman’s turn to go to King Ahasuerus, the harem regulation required her to receive beauty treatments with oil of myrrh for six months and then with perfumes and cosmetics for another six months. ¹³ When the young woman would go to the king, she was given whatever she requested to take with her from the harem to the palace. ¹⁴ She would go in the evening, and in the morning she would return to a second harem under the supervision of the king’s eunuch Shaashgaz, keeper of the concubines. She never went to the king again, unless he desired her and summoned her by name.

^a **2:7** Lit *uncle’s daughter*

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

¹⁵ Esther was the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai who had adopted her as his own daughter. When her turn came to go to the king, she did not ask for anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch, keeper of the women, suggested. Esther gained favor in the eyes of everyone who saw her.

¹⁶ She was taken to King Ahasuerus in the palace in the tenth month, the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. ¹⁷ The king loved Esther more than all the other women. She won more favor and approval from him than did any of the other virgins. He placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti. ¹⁸ The king held a great banquet for all his officials and staff. It was Esther's banquet. He freed his provinces from tax payments and gave gifts worthy of the king's bounty.

MORDECAI SAVES THE KING

¹⁹ When the virgins were gathered a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the King's Gate. ²⁰ (Esther had not revealed her family background or her ethnicity, as Mordecai had directed. She obeyed Mordecai's orders, as she always had while he raised her.)

²¹ During those days while Mordecai was sitting at the King's Gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the entrance, became infuriated and planned to assassinate^a King Ahasuerus. ²² When Mordecai learned of the plot, he reported it to Queen Esther, and she told the king on Mordecai's behalf. ²³ When the report was investigated and verified, both men were hanged on the gallows. This event was recorded in the Historical Record in the king's presence.

HAMAN'S PLAN TO KILL THE JEWS

3 After all this took place, King Ahasuerus honored Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite. He promoted him in rank and gave him a higher position than all the other officials. ² The entire royal staff at the King's Gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, because the king had commanded this to be done for him. But Mordecai would not bow down or pay homage. ³ The members of the royal staff at the King's Gate asked Mordecai, "Why are you disobeying the king's command?" ⁴ When they had warned him day after day and he still would not listen to them, they told Haman in order to see if Mordecai's actions would be tolerated, since he had told them he was a Jew.

⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai was not bowing down or paying him homage, he was filled with rage. ⁶ And when he learned of Mordecai's ethnic identity, it seemed repugnant to Haman to do away with^b Mordecai alone. He planned to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout Ahasuerus's kingdom.

⁷ In the first month, the month of Nisan, in King Ahasuerus's twelfth year, the Pur — that is, the lot — was cast before Haman for each day in each month, and it fell on the twelfth month, the month Adar. ⁸ Then Haman informed King Ahasuerus, "There is one ethnic group, scattered throughout the peoples in every province of your kingdom, keeping themselves separate. Their laws are different from everyone else's and they do not obey

^a **2:21** Lit and they sought to stretch out a hand against ^b **3:6** Lit to stretch out a hand against

the king's laws. It is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. ⁹ If the king approves, let an order be drawn up authorizing their destruction, and I will pay 375 tons of silver to^A the officials for deposit in the royal treasury."

¹⁰ The king removed his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jewish people. ¹¹ Then the king told Haman, "The money and people are given to you to do with as you see fit."

¹² The royal scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and the order was written exactly as Haman commanded. It was intended for the royal satraps, the governors of each of the provinces, and the officials of each ethnic group and written for each province in its own script and to each ethnic group in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the royal signet ring. ¹³ Letters were sent by couriers to each of the royal provinces telling the officials to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jewish people — young and old, women and children — and plunder their possessions on a single day, the thirteenth day of Adar, the twelfth month.^B

¹⁴ A copy of the text, issued as law throughout every province, was distributed to all the peoples so that they might get ready for that day. ¹⁵ The couriers left, spurred on by royal command, and the law was issued in the fortress of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, while the city of Susa was in confusion.

MORDECAI APPEALS TO ESTHER

4 When Mordecai learned all that had occurred, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, went into the middle of the city, and cried loudly and bitterly. ² He went only as far as the King's Gate, since the law prohibited anyone wearing sackcloth from entering the King's Gate. ³ There was great mourning among the Jewish people in every province where the king's command and edict came. They fasted, wept, and lamented, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴ Esther's female servants and her eunuchs came and reported the news to her, and the queen was overcome with fear. She sent clothes for Mordecai to wear so that he would take off his sackcloth, but he did not accept them. ⁵ Esther summoned Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs who attended her, and dispatched him to Mordecai to learn what he was doing and why.^C

⁶ So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square in front of the King's Gate. ⁷ Mordecai told him everything that had happened as well as the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay the royal treasury for the slaughter of the Jews.

⁸ Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa ordering their destruction, so that Hathach might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and command her to approach the king, implore his favor, and plead with him personally for her people. ⁹ Hathach came and repeated Mordecai's response to Esther.

¹⁰ Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to tell Mordecai, ¹¹ "All the royal officials and the people of the royal provinces know that one law applies to every man or woman who approaches the king in the inner courtyard and who has not been summoned — the death penalty — unless the

^A **3:9** Lit will weigh 10,000 silver talents on the hands of ^B **3:13** LXX adds the text of Ahasuerus's letter here. ^C **4:5** Lit what is this and why is this

TAKING PART IN GOD'S WORK

ESTHER 4

Rachel is a scourge to the devil in Vienna.

Every time I saw her she was flushed with excitement over a recent chance to share the gospel. Any encounter on the subway, any phone call, and every relationship irresistibly impelled her to tell people the Good News. Although she was a gifted linguist with a degree from Cambridge, she carried Bible tracts in her pockets and she wasn't afraid to use them.

No amount of poor or sad or weird was enough to keep Rachel from befriending strangers and reaching out to them with hope and love. She is inspiring and a little overwhelming.

One afternoon Rachel invited me to a street music event she was staging on Kärntner Straße. She is a classical violinist and had gathered other string musicians to play a concert and share the gospel on that ancient, black-stone street.

Feeling both shy and peckish, I got a gelato and went antique shopping instead.

I missed an opportunity. God didn't need me to help share His gospel—His gospel will go forth whether I stand up and speak His name or not. In fact, if I can't muster a good word about the Lord, the very stones will cry out in my place (Lk 19:40).

God invites us to join His work, not for His sake, but for ours. God invited Esther to join Him in saving the Jewish nation. If Esther had refused to go to the king, God still would have saved His people, but she would have missed an opportunity. As Esther's cousin Mordecai said:

"If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's family will be destroyed. Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this."

- ESTHER 4:14

Our refusal to take part in God's work doesn't thwart God. It limits our privilege to take part in what He is doing. God can even use unrepentant sinners to achieve His good purposes. Consider Pharaoh, Caiaphas the high priest, and Pontius Pilate (Ex 19:12; Jn 18:14; Jn 19:5-16).

God's providence is comprehensive, wise, and holy. His timing and calling are no mistake, and He has placed us, like Esther, here, now, and for such a time as this.

We, like Esther, can have courage, comfort, and peace. From a human perspective our lives and circumstances can seem totally out of control and scary. But we can rest in God's providence, knowing that He is working.

Look for God's invitation to join Him in His work. Have courage, comfort, and peace—you can join Him! You can get a gelato later.

king extends the gold scepter, allowing that person to live. I have not been summoned to appear before the king for the last^c thirty days." ¹² Esther's response was reported to Mordecai.

¹³ Mordecai told the messenger to reply to Esther, "Don't think that you will escape the fate of all the Jews because you are in the king's palace. ¹⁴ If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's family will be destroyed. Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this."

¹⁵ Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ "Go and assemble all the Jews who can be found in Susa and fast for me. Don't eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my female servants will also fast in the same way. After that, I will go to the king even if it is against the law. If I perish, I perish." ¹⁷ So Mordecai went and did everything Esther had commanded him.

ESTHER APPROACHES THE KING

5 On the third day, Esther dressed in her royal clothing and stood in the inner courtyard of the palace facing it. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the royal courtroom,^b facing its entrance. ² As soon as the king saw Queen Esther standing in the courtyard, she gained favor in his eyes. The king extended the gold scepter in his hand toward Esther, and she approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

³ "What is it, Queen Esther?" the king asked her. "Whatever you want, even to half the kingdom, will be given to you."

⁴ "If it pleases the king," Esther replied, "may the king and Haman come today to the banquet I have prepared for them."

⁵ The king said, "Hurry, and get Haman so we can do as Esther has requested." So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared.

⁶ While drinking the^c wine, the king asked Esther, "Whatever you ask will be given to you. Whatever you want, even to half the kingdom, will be done."

⁷ Esther answered, "This is my petition and my request: ⁸ If I have found favor in the eyes of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and perform my request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet I will prepare for them. Tomorrow I will do what the king has asked."

⁹ That day Haman left full of joy and in good spirits.^d But when Haman saw Mordecai at the King's Gate, and Mordecai didn't rise or tremble in fear at his presence, Haman was filled with rage toward Mordecai. ¹⁰ Yet Haman controlled himself and went home. He sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh to join him. ¹¹ Then Haman described for them his glorious wealth and his many sons. He told them all how the king had honored him and promoted him in rank over the other officials and the royal staff. ¹² "What's more," Haman added, "Queen Esther invited no one but me to join the king at the banquet she had prepared. I am invited again tomorrow to join her with the king. ¹³ Still, none of this satisfies me since I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the King's Gate all the time."

¹⁴ His wife Zeresh and all his friends told him, "Have them build a gallows seventy-five feet^e tall. Ask the king in the morning to hang Mordecai on it. Then go to the banquet with the king and enjoy yourself." The advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows constructed.

^a 4:11 Lit king these ^b 5:1 Lit house ^c 5:6 Lit During the banquet of ^d 5:9 Lit left rejoicing and good of heart ^e 5:14 Lit 50 cubits

MORDECAI HONORED BY THE KING

6 That night sleep escaped the king, so he ordered the book recording daily events to be brought and read to the king.² They found the written report of how Mordecai had informed on Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the entrance, when they planned to assassinate King Ahasuerus.³ The king inquired, "What honor and special recognition have been given to Mordecai for this act?"

The king's personal attendants replied, "Nothing has been done for him."

⁴ The king asked, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman was just entering the outer court of the palace to ask the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had prepared for him.

⁵ The king's attendants answered him, "Haman is there, standing in the court."

"Have him enter," the king ordered. ⁶ Haman entered, and the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king wants to honor?"

Haman thought to himself, "Who is it the king would want to honor more than me?" ⁷ Haman told the king, "For the man the king wants to honor:⁸ Have them bring a royal garment that the king himself has worn and a horse the king himself has ridden, which has a royal crown on its head. ⁹ Put the garment and the horse under the charge of one of the king's most noble officials. Have them clothe the man the king wants to honor; parade him on the horse through the city square, and proclaim before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king wants to honor.'"

¹⁰ The king told Haman, "Hurry, and do just as you proposed. Take a garment and a horse for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the King's Gate. Do not leave out anything you have suggested."

¹¹ So Haman took the garment and the horse. He clothed Mordecai and paraded him through the city square, crying out before him, "This is what is done for the man the king wants to honor."

¹² Then Mordecai returned to the King's Gate, but Haman hurried off for home, mournful and with his head covered. ¹³ Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened. His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, "Since Mordecai is Jewish, and you have begun to fall before him, you won't overcome him, because your downfall is certain."

¹⁴ While they were still speaking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and rushed Haman to the banquet Esther had prepared.

HAMAN IS EXECUTED

7 The king and Haman came to feast^a with Esther the queen. ² Once again, on the second day while drinking wine, the king asked Esther, "Queen Esther, whatever you ask will be given to you. Whatever you seek, even to half the kingdom, will be done."

³ Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your eyes, Your Majesty, and if the king is pleased, spare my life; this is my request. And spare my people; this is my desire. ⁴ For my people and I have been sold to destruction, death, and extermination. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept silent. Indeed, the trouble wouldn't be worth burdening the king."

THE GREATEST REVERSAL

ESTHER 7, PSALM 37:1-15

Nighttime was hard for me. I was in the third trimester of pregnancy, and every night I dreaded the heartburn and wakefulness.

When you're awake at night, you start thinking. Everyone else is sleeping, so you're definitely mad at all those people, and you're really tired so your emotional state isn't great. I start thinking about all the loose ends in my life, and I worry that I won't manage to tie them up. Sleepless nights are a real existential crisis for me.

Ahasuerus couldn't sleep either.

I love that he went to the history books when he was restless. There is wisdom in looking back to our history to make sense of the present muddle. In the history books he read about good ol' cousin Mordecai, and how he saved the king's life. Ahasuerus had forgotten. (It seems like an important thing to have forgotten!) But when he remembered the truth, everything started to reverse and the unexpected happened.

God's hand of providence was moving to set things right, to tie up the loose ends before the story even began. We can see how it's all working out by looking at the reversals—

Vashti refuses to come when she is called, but then Esther shows up when she is not called.

The honor of the king goes to Mordecai instead of Haman.

Haman expects to be honored at a feast, but he is condemned instead.

The gallows intended for Mordecai are used for Haman.

All these reversals point us to the greatest reversal of all: Christ came to undo the fall. He took Adam's disaster—our disaster—and in a most unexpected way, He turned death on its head and gave us life (Rm 5:17).

Isn't this what the book of Esther is about? Like the rest of the Bible, the central character of the story is Christ. Here, in a book where the name of God is not even mentioned, God still reveals Himself. And are we surprised? This is, after all, a book about a kingdom troubled by deceit and the threat of death. It is remarkably like the story of all mankind. We should expect at such moments to see reflections of Christ's promised work.

Do you find yourself up late at night like Ahasuerus, wondering how it will all work out in the end? Look back over the history of God's providence: we can see Christ weaving all those threads of history according to His plan.

We don't always get to see the loose ends wrapped into handsome knots, but that doesn't mean things aren't coming together. It means that we are finite and we can't see the whole picture. God doesn't leave loose ends.

"Be silent before the LORD and wait expectantly for him."

- PSALM 37:7

⁵King Ahasuerus spoke up and asked Queen Esther, "Who is this, and where is the one who would devise such a scheme?"^A

⁶Esther answered, "The adversary and enemy is this evil Haman."

Haman stood terrified before the king and queen.⁷ The king arose in anger and went from where they were drinking wine to the palace garden.^B Haman remained to beg Queen Esther for his life because he realized the king was planning something terrible for him.⁸ Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall,^C Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, "Would he actually violate the queen while I am in the house?" As soon as the statement left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

⁹Harbona, one of the king's eunuchs, said: "There is a gallows seventy-five feet^D tall at Haman's house that he made for Mordecai, who gave the report that saved^E the king."

The king said, "Hang him on it."

¹⁰They hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's anger subsided.

ESTHER INTERVENES FOR THE JEWS

8 That same day King Ahasuerus awarded Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. Mordecai entered the king's presence because Esther had revealed her relationship to Mordecai.² The king removed his signet ring he had recovered from Haman and gave it to Mordecai, and Esther put him in charge of Haman's estate.

³Then Esther addressed the king again. She fell at his feet, wept, and begged him to revoke the evil of Haman the Agagite and his plot he had devised against the Jews.⁴ The king extended the gold scepter toward Esther, so she got up and stood before the king.

⁵She said, "If it pleases the king and I have found favor before him, if the matter seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let a royal edict be written. Let it revoke the documents the scheming Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.⁶ For how could I bear to see the disaster that would come on my people? How could I bear to see the destruction of my relatives?"

⁷King Ahasuerus said to Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, "Look, I have given Haman's estate to Esther, and he was hanged on the gallows because he attacked^F the Jews.⁸ Write in the king's name whatever pleases you concerning the Jews, and seal it with the royal signet ring. A document written in the king's name and sealed with the royal signet ring cannot be revoked."

⁹On the twenty-third day of the third month — that is, the month Sivan — the royal scribes were summoned. Everything was written exactly as Mordecai commanded for the Jews, to the satraps, the governors, and the officials of the 127 provinces from India to Cush. The edict was written for each province in its own script, for each ethnic group in its own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

^A7:5 Lit who would fill his heart to do this ^B7:7 Lit the garden of the house, also in

v. 8 ^C7:8 Or the house of wine ^D7:9 Lit 50 cubits ^E7:9 Lit who spoke good for

^F8:7 Lit stretched out his hand against

¹⁰ Mordecai wrote in King Ahasuerus's name and sealed the edicts with the royal signet ring. He sent the documents by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses bred in the royal stables.

¹¹ The king's edict gave the Jews in each and every city the right to assemble and defend themselves, to destroy, kill, and annihilate every ethnic and provincial army hostile to them, including women and children, and to take their possessions as spoils of war. ¹² This would take place on a single day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month Adar.

¹³ A copy of the text, issued as law throughout every province, was distributed to all the peoples so the Jews could be ready to avenge themselves against their enemies on that day. ¹⁴ The couriers rode out in haste on their royal horses at the king's urgent command. The law was also issued in the fortress of Susa.

¹⁵ Mordecai went from the king's presence clothed in royal purple and white, with a great gold crown and a purple robe of fine linen. The city of Susa shouted and rejoiced, ¹⁶ and the Jews celebrated^a with gladness, joy, and honor. ¹⁷ In every province and every city, wherever the king's command and his law reached, joy and rejoicing took place among the Jews. There was a celebration and a holiday.^b And many of the ethnic groups of the land professed themselves to be Jews because fear of the Jews had overcome them.

VICTORIES OF THE JEWS

9 The king's command and law went into effect on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month Adar. On the day when the Jews' enemies had hoped to overpower them, just the opposite happened. The Jews overpowered those who hated them. ² In each of King Ahasuerus's provinces the Jews assembled in their cities to attack those who intended to harm them.^c Not a single person could withstand them; fear of them fell on every nationality.

³ All the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the royal civil administrators^d aided the Jews because they feared Mordecai. ⁴ For Mordecai exercised great power in the palace, and his fame spread throughout the provinces as he became more and more powerful.

⁵ The Jews put all their enemies to the sword, killing and destroying them. They did what they pleased to those who hated them. ⁶ In the fortress of Susa the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men, ⁷ including Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, ⁸ Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, ⁹ Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha. ¹⁰ They killed these ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. However, they did not seize^e any plunder.

¹¹ On that day the number of people killed in the fortress of Susa was reported to the king. ¹² The king said to Queen Esther, "In the fortress of Susa the Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men, including Haman's ten sons. What have they done in the rest of the royal provinces? Whatever you ask will be given to you. Whatever you seek will also be done."

¹³ Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, may the Jews who are in Susa also have tomorrow to carry out today's law, and may the bodies of Haman's

^a 8:16 Lit had light ^b 8:17 Lit good day ^c 9:2 Lit cities to send out a hand against the seekers of their evil ^d 9:3 Lit and those who do the king's work; Est 3:9

^e 9:10 Lit not put their hands on, also in vv. 15, 16

ten sons be hung on the gallows." ¹⁴ The king gave the orders for this to be done, so a law was announced in Susa, and they hung the bodies of Haman's ten sons. ¹⁵ The Jews in Susa assembled again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men in Susa, but they did not seize any plunder.

¹⁶ The rest of the Jews in the royal provinces assembled, defended themselves, and gained relief from their enemies. They killed seventy-five thousand^A of those who hated them, but they did not seize any plunder. ¹⁷ They fought on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar and rested on the fourteenth, and it became a day of feasting and rejoicing.

¹⁸ But the Jews in Susa had assembled on the thirteenth and the fourteenth days of the month. They rested on the fifteenth day of the month, and it became a day of feasting and rejoicing. ¹⁹ This explains why the rural Jews who live in villages observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a time of rejoicing and feasting. It is a holiday when they send gifts to one another.

²⁰ Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters to all the Jews in all of King Ahasuerus's provinces, both near and far. ²¹ He ordered them to celebrate the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar every year ²² because during those days the Jews gained relief from their enemies. That was the month when their sorrow was turned into rejoicing and their mourning into a holiday. They were to be days of feasting, rejoicing, and of sending gifts to one another and to the poor.

²³ So the Jews agreed to continue the practice they had begun, as Mordecai had written them to do. ²⁴ For Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them. He cast the Pur — that is, the lot — to crush and destroy them. ²⁵ But when the matter was brought before the king, he commanded by letter that the evil plan Haman had devised against the Jews return on his own head and that he should be hanged with his sons on the gallows. ²⁶ For this reason these days are called Purim, from the word Pur. Because of all the instructions in this letter as well as what they had witnessed and what had happened to them, ²⁷ the Jews bound themselves, their descendants, and all who joined with them to a commitment that they would not fail to celebrate these two days each and every year according to the written instructions and according to the time appointed. ²⁸ These days are remembered and celebrated by every generation, family, province, and city, so that these days of Purim will not lose their significance in Jewish life^B and their memory will not fade from their descendants.

²⁹ Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote this second letter with full authority to confirm the letter about Purim. ³⁰ He sent letters with assurances of peace and security^C to all the Jews who were in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, ³¹ in order to confirm these days of Purim at their proper time just as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had established them and just as they had committed themselves and their descendants to the practices of fasting and lamentation. ³² So Esther's command confirmed these customs of Purim, which were then written into the record.

^A9:16 Some LXX mss read 10,107; other LXX mss read 15,000 ^B9:28 LXX reads *will be celebrated into all times* ^C9:30 *Or of peace and faithfulness*

REMEMBERING OUR RESCUE

ESTHER 9:23–10:3, PSALM 78:1-8

When I helped my parents move into their home a few years ago, I ran across a box of my mom's prayer journals. I spread them out on the floor, not to read them but to take in the sheer number of them. They were a legacy of faith, Ebenezers chronicling God's faithfulness through time—days and years and seasons of prayer and praise to God from His precious daughter (1Sm 7:12). I snuck a picture so I could remember.

As the book of Esther draws to a close, I'm struck by the care and determination with which Mordecai preserves the story—their story. The Feast of Purim would be observed from that time forward, on the same days each year, for all generations. The Lord delivered His people from their enemies; He turned their sorrow into gladness and their mourning into a holiday. And they vow, joyfully yet solemnly, to remember.

What a vivid picture of the restoration we experience in the gospel of Jesus. We were weeping and sorrowful, but now we're throwing a party! Is this not the mix of reverence and joy with which we should view our salvation? We have been rescued from our enemy, even from ourselves. We have been preserved and restored in the midst of threats to our very souls.

In these last chapters of Esther, we learn that remembering involves more than whimsical, fleeting thoughts. **Remembering is a spiritual discipline that reorients our hearts and minds to the gospel of Jesus.**

Memories are powerful. Regularly and intentionally recalling the goodness of our God is an act of faithfulness that restores the fullness and joy of our salvation. They connect us to the legacy of

God's people. It is the legacy of Mordecai and Esther, Abraham and Mary and Paul—a legacy that, by God's grace, will stretch far beyond us.

Remembering the past also gives us a new lens through which to view the future. How have you seen God's faithfulness in your life in the past week? The last year? What about in the lives of the generations that came before you? Like the prayers and praise that fill the pages of my mom's journals, remembering God's faithfulness in the past gives us courage to believe in His faithfulness for the future.

Our sovereign God is active in our lives today like He was active in the story of Queen Esther. Let's regularly remember and rejoice in God's rescue of His people, for ourselves and those who come after us, "so that they might put their confidence in God" (Ps 78:7).

"We will not hide them from their children, but will tell a future generation the praise-worthy acts of the LORD, his might, and the wondrous works he has performed."

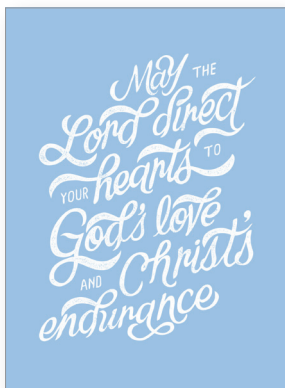
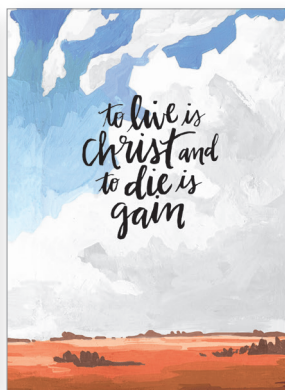
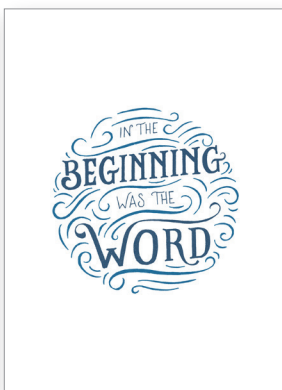
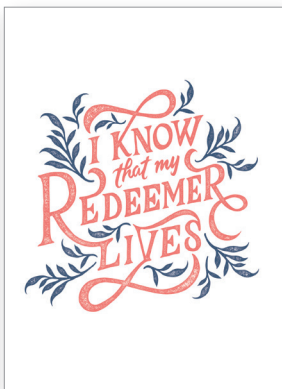
- PSALM 78:4

MORDECAI'S FAME

10 King Ahasuerus imposed a tax throughout the land even to the farthest shores.^{A 2} All of his powerful and magnificent accomplishments and the detailed account of Mordecai's great rank with which the king had honored him, have they not been written in the Book of the Historical Events of the Kings of Media and Persia?³ Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus. He was famous among the Jews and highly esteemed by many of his relatives. He continued to pursue prosperity for his people and to speak for the well-being of all his descendants.

^{A 10:1} Or *imposed forced labor on the land and the coasts of the sea*

BELOW IS A SAMPLE OF KEY VERSE ART
INCLUDED IN THE SHE READS TRUTH BIBLE.



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The She Reads Truth community seeks to be "Women in the Word of God every day," and the She Reads Truth Bible delivers the tools and insights we love. You're invited to connect with us further in several ways, including:

The website: SheReadsTruth.com offers devotionals provided by the She Reads Truth founders and contributors.

The app: Available for both iOS and Android, the She Reads Truth app conveniently provides beauty, goodness, and Truth on the go.

Social media: The #SheReadsTruth community is alive and well, actively sharing where they're reading Truth each day and what they're learning from God's Word.

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ABOUT THE SHE READS TRUTH EDITORS



RAECHEL MYERS is always on the lookout for beauty, goodness, and truth in everyday life. Co-founder and CEO of She Reads Truth, Raechel has a bachelor's degree in housing and environmental design, and is not afraid to paint a whole house over a long weekend. She longs to cook artisanal meals, but loves Chinese takeout. She lives south of Nashville, Tennessee, with her three favorite people.

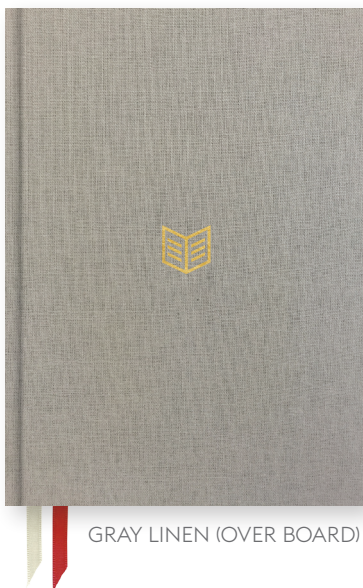


AMANDA BIBLE WILLIAMS likes words and books more than just about anything. She holds bachelor's degrees in English and psychology, nearly a master's in religion, and a deep love for a farmhouse east of Nashville, Tennessee, where she lives with her husband and their three children. Chief Content Officer of She Reads Truth, Amanda spends her days happily rearranging sentences and explaining that her maiden name really is Bible.

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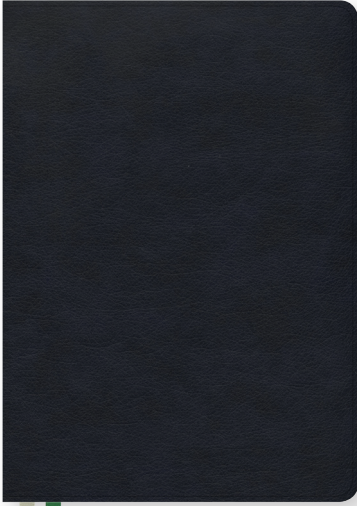
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