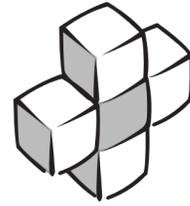




SMACC
Making Disciples of Jesus Christ



Bible Study Series:

Esther



Our Mission:

To glorify God together in response to his grace

by making disciples of Jesus Christ

About These Studies

These studies were written for use among university students. You are most welcome to use and adapt these studies for your own context. Where you do so please provide the following acknowledgment.

These studies are adapted from St Mary's Anglican Cathedral. Used with permission. Other Bible studies like these are available at: <https://stmaryscathedral.org.my/bible-studies/>

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Study 1: Overview of Esther

Context

Mostly during a single year of the reign of Xerxes (486-465 BC), a generation before the events of Ezra-Nehemiah

Digging In

Read the book of Esther out Loud

1:1-22, 2:1-18, 2:19-23, 3:1-15, 4:1-17, 5:1-8, 5:9-14, 6:1-14, 7:1-10, 8:1-17, 9:1-19, 9:20-32, 10:1-3

1. Write down your initial impressions. What is Esther about? What is interesting? What is strange?
2. After reading through aloud, choose a character to play and be interviewed
 - King Xerxes
 - Esther
 - Mordecai
 - Haman
 - Jew
3. If you were a Jew, how would you feel when you read this?
4. Where is God in the book of Esther?
5. Looking behind the scenes... how do the following passages help us understand the book of Esther?
 - Gen. 12:1-3
 - Exodus 17:8-16, Deut. 25:17-19 (cf. Esther 9:24)
 - 1 Samuel 15 (cf. Esther 2:5, 8:11, 9:10, 9:15-16)

Application

6. With this in mind, what does the Book of Esther teach us about God?
7. What are we missing out on if we don't have the book of Esther? (2 Tim. 3:16)

Matthew 6:26 Psalms 135:6 Psalms 104:21, 28	
Acts 17:26 Psalms 139:16 Matthew 10:30	

4. What does this mean for us in times of pain, suffering and sickness?

5. What does the world think about God and happenings around us? (i.e. their worldview)

6. What's our role if God controls everything anyway? How do we reconcile God's sovereignty and the fact that our actions have (eternal) consequences?

Application

In light of this, what are the implications for...

A. Evangelism? If God has chosen the elect, why evangelise?

B. Prayer? If God will accomplish His end anyway, why pray? Do our prayers change anything?

C. The Christian Life? If God is the One who makes us Christ-like, why must we actively pursue holiness?

D. Stewardship? Why work if God will provide? Why vote if God already knows which government will be put in

More to think about

Am I the lord of my life, or is Christ the Lord of my life?

Have we been participating in God's plan, even as we acknowledge His sovereignty?

What are some things in our lives that we can change so that we can account to God on the Final Day?

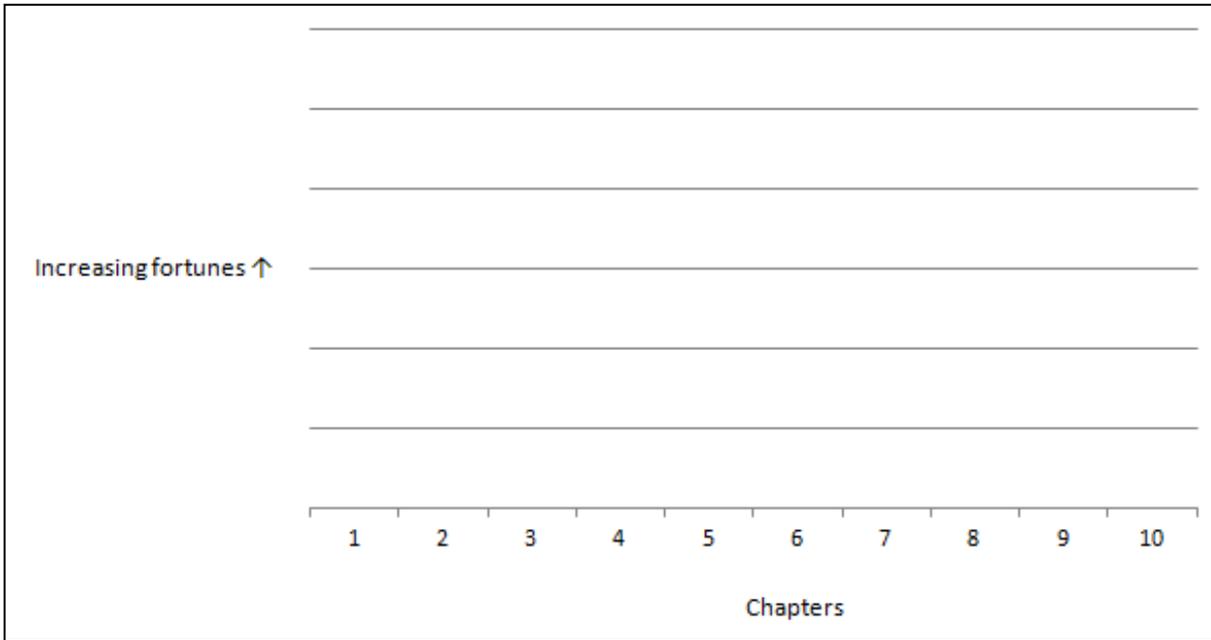
Study 3: Wisdom and Folly in the Book of Esther

Digging In

1. How are the main characters (King Ahasuerus, Mordecai, Esther and Haman) depicted in the book of Esther? *Split up in 4 groups each taking 1 character and look at the passages in brackets to help you through this exercise.*

King Ahasuerus (<i>Chapters 1-3, 7:8, 8:7</i>)	Esther (<i>Chapter 2, 4:1-5:8, 7:1-8, 8:1-6, 9:13, 29-32</i>)
Mordecai (<i>Chapter 2:1-3:6, chapter 4, 10:1-3</i>)	Haman (<i>Chapter 3, 5, 6</i>)

2. Plot out the fortunes of the 4 characters on the graph below. (less than 5 minutes on this)



3. What is the turning point in the Narrative?

4. In Chapter 7:6 Esther points out to the King the wickedness of Haman. What qualities did Esther display in the whole process of saving her people from Haman’s edict?

5. What are the short and long term consequences for the wise and the foolish characters in Esther? How do the following Proverbs shed light on this? (Proverbs 1:7, 3:35, 11:2, 16:18, 17:24, 29:23)

	Short term	Long term
King Ahasuerus		
Mordecai		
Esther		
Haman		

Application – Learning from the characters

Select one of the following 4 examples to reflect on and share with the group:

1. **Mordecai** – ‘Mordecai thus demonstrates that one can be a faithful believer and trustworthy citizen, but matters of faith come first’. (BST, 29).

What implications might this have for how we live as believers? (Can look at NT references eg. Romans 13: 1, 1 Peter 2: 13-17, 1 Peter 5:5, Acts 5:29, Titus 3:1)

2. **Esther** – Esther was courageous in speaking up for her people, even though her life was at stake.

Are there times when we should speak, but because of shyness or fear, we fail to do so? How should we respond?

3. **King Ahasuerus** – The King shows how our foolish actions can have bad consequences for others.

a. How might the following tendencies affect those around us:

- 1) Irresponsible leadership
- 2) Impulsiveness
- 3) Self-indulgence
- 4) Undiscernment

b. What bad characteristics can you see in your life that might be adversely affecting those around you?

4. **Haman** – Arrogant, self-serving, vindictive and prideful! Although this was good for him in the short term, it ultimately led to his downfall. The opposite was true for Esther / Mordecai (and Jesus!).

How does this encourage us to behave in our own lives today?

Study 4: Esther & The True Saviour

Getting Started

Imagine your pet cat/dog/bird/fish/rhino keeps escaping your home and you have to keep searching for it to bring it back. How would you feel?

Digging In

1. What events in the book of Esther show God's saving work?

2. What do the following passages show us about how God saves in the Old Testament?

a. Deut. 8, 11:1-7;

b. Judges 2:16-23;

c. Isa 40:1-5, 52.

3. How does Jesus fulfil the Scriptures in Isa 42:1-9?

4. Looking back at questions 1 and 2, how is God's saving work in Jesus different to that in the book of Esther and the OT?

Application

5. In light of what we've learned, how does the book of Esther expand our view of God and challenge our faith in Him?