

## Soli Deo Gloria – The Books of Esther and Ruth

Welcome to Soli Deo Gloria, an in-depth Bible Study that aims to enrich and strengthen the faith of those who participate while laying a foundation of “sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1, 2 Timothy 4:3). The Latin phrase, Soli Deo Gloria, comes from the reformation and means, “To God alone be the Glory.” St. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:31, *“Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”* As we grow in our faith and understanding of God’s Word and put what we have learned into action, God’s name is certainly glorified. May all who participate glorify His holy name and use what is learned to expand His Kingdom.

### Guidelines:

- Each week we will cover one lesson. Please do your lesson in advance and come to class ready to share and discuss. If you have not completed your lesson, please come to class to listen to the discussion and stay up to date. However, since you have not completed the background work for the discussion we ask that you refrain from adding your comments to the discussion.
- Our discussions will be extensive and often times personal. Each study group is to see themselves as a family unit. All personal discussions are to be kept strictly confidential. Likewise, we must follow the command of Ephesians 4:29, *“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”* Bible Study time is not a time for gossip or talk about other churches and struggles that they may be experiencing.
- Bring your Bible with you and be ready to use it. A good study Bible is recommended. Bible Quotations in this study will come from the ESV. You may want to consider purchasing one of these Bibles for your study. We strongly recommend that you do not use a paraphrase translation such as *The Message* or *The Good News* for this study.
- Pray before you begin your study, whenever you experience difficulty in understanding a verse, prior to coming to the class session and for each person in your study group each and every day.
- Be ready to grow and use what you learn.

*SDG – Ruth and Esther*  
*Zion Lutheran Church*

Fall Calendar 2018

The week of September 9	Lesson #1
The week of September 16	Lesson #2
The week of September 23	Lesson #3
The week of September 30	Lesson #4
The week of October 7	Columbus Day
The week of October 14	Lesson #5
The week of October 21	Lesson #6
The week of October 28	Lesson #7
The week of November 4	Lesson #8
The week of November 11	Lesson #9

Winter Break – Classes resume the week of January 6, 2019

Study guides for the winter quarter will be available in the Church office beginning on Monday, December 17, 2018.

Class Times:

- Sunday Evening @ 6:30 p.m. in the Fireside Room
- Monday Morning @ 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room

If you are unable to attend a particular class, you are free to join with the other class. For instance, if you normally attend the Sunday evening class and you find that you can't make it one week, you are welcome to join the Monday class for that week. All groups will be doing the same lesson each week.

**SDG – Lesson #1**  
**An Introduction to the Book of Ruth**  
**Ruth Chapter 1**

A Brief Overview:

**Author:** Tradition has it that Samuel is the author of the book of Ruth. There are some rabbinical writings that identify Naomi as the author.

**Setting:** This book was written sometime during the time of the judges which was a time of spiritual and moral decay.

**Significant Themes:** There are three themes present in this short book:

- 1) God desires all people to believe in Him and be saved.
- 2) God is a God of faithful/loyal love and His people are to exhibit that faithful/loyal love to Him and each other.
- 3) The concept of redemption is powerfully shown in this book.

1. What is meant by the phrase “When the judges ruled?” Who or what was a judge? (Judges 2:16-23)

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2. Challenge Question! How many Judges were there? What were their names?

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3. Where was the land of Moab? (See map at end of lesson) Where did the Moabites come from? (Genesis 19:30-38)

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4. Who went to live in the land of Moab? Why did they do this?

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5. What does it mean to sojourn in a country?

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6. Who or what was an Ephrathite? (Genesis 48:7; Micah 5:2)

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7. What tribe of Israel would an Ephrathite be from?

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8. Being forced to leave your country because of famine is certainly tragic. What was the second tragedy to hit this family?

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9. Normally this type of tragedy was devastating. What would have given Naomi hope? (John 19:26-27)

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10. What was the third tragedy to hit this this small family? Why was this especially tragic?

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11. Who were Orpah and Ruth?

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**Word Study: Hebrew Shub / return English**

This Hebrew word, which can also be translated as “go” or “bring back” occurs 12 times in this chapter and numerous times in the rest of the book. It reaches its climax in 4:15 where the women of Bethlehem tell Naomi that God would, “be to you a restorer of life.” Literally it reads, “He who causes life to return.” This is used within the context of a Redeemer and is seen as a foreshadow of Jesus who literally will cause life to return to us.

12. Why did Naomi decide to return to her homeland? What does this reveal? (There are two answers to this, one physical and one spiritual)

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13. What happened when Naomi set out to return to Judah?

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14. How did Naomi respond to this? Why?

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15. What was Naomi’s prayer for Orpah and Ruth?

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16. How did Orpah and Ruth respond to Naomi’s directions and prayer?

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17. What practical point did Naomi make that changed Orpah's mind?

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18. What is meant by Naomi's words, "it is exceedingly bitter for me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me?"

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19. According to Naomi, what had Orpah gone back to?

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20. Contrast what Orpah would do with what Ruth said she would do.

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21. What was Ruth doing when she said, "May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you?"

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22. Consider what it must have looked like to the people of Bethlehem when Naomi returned. She had left 10 years earlier with a husband and two fairly young men/boys. She returns with a Moabite daughter-in-law. How did the people respond to this?

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23. How did Naomi respond to the women? Why?

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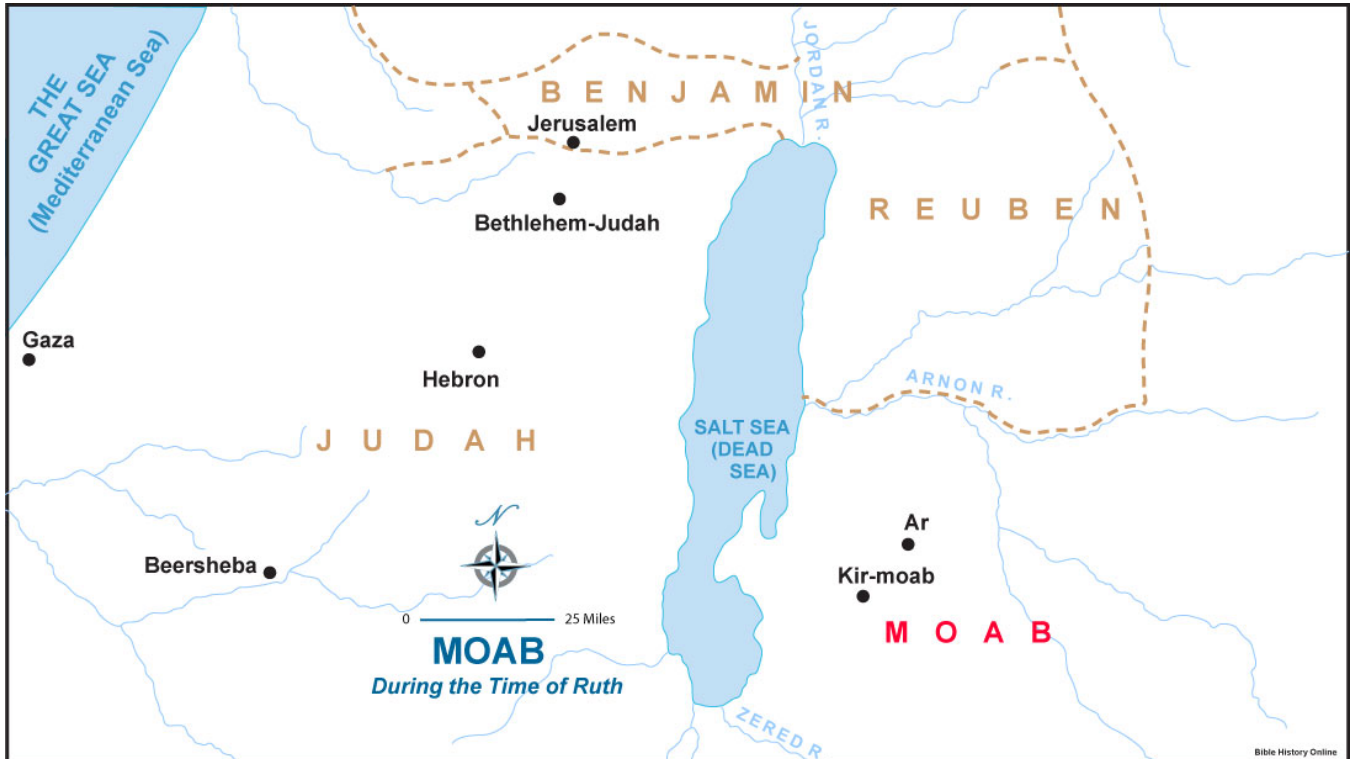
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24. When did Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem?

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## Moab, Israel and Judah at the time of Ruth



SDG– Lesson #1 – Great Women of the Bible

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## SDG Lesson #2 Ruth Chapter 2

1. Who was Boaz? What is said about him? What does this mean?

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2. What is gleaning?

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3. What is meant by Ruth's statement, "after him in whose sight I shall find favor?"

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4. In verse three we read, "and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz." What does this indicate?

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5. What is the first thing that Boaz is recorded as saying? What can we learn from this?

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6. How did the reapers respond? Why?

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7. What is the second thing that Boaz is recorded as saying? What can we glean from this?

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8. How did the servant answer Boaz? What do we learn about Ruth from the servant's answer?

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9. How did Boaz address Ruth? What does this indicate?

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10. Boaz said, "keep close to my young women." Who were these young women? What two things did this do for Ruth?

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11. What three provisions did Boaz provide for Ruth?

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12. How did Ruth respond to the gracious acts of Boaz? Why did she do this?

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13. Why did Boaz provide for Ruth as he did?

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14. Look carefully at verse 12. In light of Boaz's words to Ruth in verse 12 re-answer question #13. How might this apply to us today?

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15. Why is Boaz's instruction/invitation for Ruth to eat with his servants and himself so significant?

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16. What further instructions did Boaz give to his young men concerning Ruth?

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17. How long did Ruth work? What was her take? What does this mean?

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18. How did Naomi respond to Ruth's return? Why?

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19. What two things did Naomi reveal when she heard that Boaz had been the one who treated Ruth so kindly?

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20. Who or what was a redeemer? What unique word did Naomi add to this term? Why would she do this? (Leviticus 25:24-53; Jeremiah 32:6-15; Numbers 35:11-32; Proverbs 23:11)

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21. What additional provision did Ruth reveal that Boaz had made for her?

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22. What was Naomi's concern for Ruth?

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## SDG Lesson #3

### Ruth Chapter 3

1. Chapter 3, verse 1 begins with the word “then.” What is this a reference to?

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2. What did Naomi mean when she said, “should I not seek rest for you?” What is meant by rest?

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3. Why was Naomi going to do this?

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4. Who did Naomi have in mind?

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5) What is meant by winnowing? What did winnowing have to do with the threshing floor?

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6. Why did Naomi tell Ruth to wash and anoint herself and to put on her cloak?

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7. Why would Naomi tell Ruth not to make herself known until after Boaz had finished eating and drinking?

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8. Why would Naomi tell Ruth to uncover Boaz's feet and lie down there?

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9. How did Ruth respond to these three instructions?

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10. What is meant by the phrase, "his heart was merry?" How do you know?

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11. Why did Ruth come "softly?"

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12. Why would Boaz be startled?

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13. Why would Boaz ask, "Who are you?" After all, he did know Ruth.

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14. How did Ruth identify herself? What was her request? What did this mean?

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15. Boaz said, “May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter.” Why is this significant?

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16. What was the last kindness that was greater? What was the first kindness?

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17. What is Boaz indicating when he commends Ruth for not going after young men?

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18. Why would Boaz tell Ruth not to fear? (Caution there are 3 answers)

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19. What fact did Boaz reveal to Ruth? What does this say about Boaz?

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20. Why did Boaz say, “remain tonight?”

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21. What was Boaz’s plan, in regard to Ruth’s request?

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22. Why did Ruth get up while it was dark and why did Boaz not want anyone to reveal that Ruth had come?

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23. Why did Boaz give Ruth six measures of barley?

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24. How did Naomi respond to this?

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## SDG Lesson #4

### Ruth Chapter 4

1. What was the gate that Boaz went up to? What is the significance of the gate? (See Job 29 for the use of the gate)

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2. Review Question: Who or what was a redeemer?

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3. Who or what were the elders?

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4. What is the significance of the phrase, “sit down here?”

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5. Consider your last answer while looking back to verse one. How did Boaz address his relative the redeemer? Why?

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6. Verse three is a challenging verse. In the ESV we read that Naomi “is selling” the property while the NKJV translated it as “sold” and the NASB reads “has to sell” the property. The Hebrew word is written in the perfect tense which is a straight forward way of saying “sold.” Verse nine holds the key to why there is a discrepancy in the translations. Why is there a difference? Do the different translations make a difference? Why or why not? (Leviticus 25:23-28)

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7. What was the initial proposition that Boaz made to his kinsman?

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8. What role were the elders playing in this dialog?

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Why was it important both then and now? (Matt. 18:15-18)

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9. How did the kinsman initially respond? How did Boaz respond to this?

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10. How did the kinsman respond to Boaz's second piece of information? Why?

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11. Verse seven together with verses 17 and 21 reveal something about when the book of Ruth was written. Why? What does it reveal?

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12. What was the significance of drawing off a sandal and handing giving it to another?

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13. What exactly did Boaz buy?

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14. What was the purpose in purchasing Ruth? Why was this important?

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15. Why would the elders invoke the names of Rachel and Leah? (Genesis 29-30)

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16. What is meant by “act worthily?” Why would the elders include this in their prayer/blessing?

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17. Why would the elders want the house of Boaz to be like the house of Perez? Who was Perez? Tamar? Judah? (Numbers 26:20-21; 1 Chron. 9:4; 27:2-3; Nehemiah 11:4-6; Matthew 1:12; Genesis 38:6-8)

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18. When Ruth bore her first son, what did the women say to Naomi? What was meant by this?

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19. Some people question why the book of Ruth was selected to be in the Old Testament. Consider your last answer as you read Matthew 1:5-6. Why is Ruth in the Bible?

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20. Who was Obed?

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21. The genealogy that is given is incomplete but contains the name of significant members of the house of Judah. Who was Nashon? (Numbers 7:12 & 17)

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Where does Boaz's name appear? Why?

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## SDG Lesson #5 Esther Chapters 1 & 2

### Introduction to Esther

**Author:** We do not know who wrote this book however, the authors intimate knowledge of what took place in the king's court which indicates it was someone close to the king. At the same time, the writer has a keen knowledge of the Hebrew beliefs and customs. This has led some to speculate the Mordecai or someone like him wrote this book. Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel are the others who could have authored the book.

**Date:** The events in this book took place during the reign of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) the son of Darius, the first Persian king. Darius was the king who threw Daniel into the lion's den. Xerxes reigned from 486-465 B.C.

**Purpose:** Esther is a book that is unique in the Bible because it never mentions the name of God or the Hebrew word for God. It is written in a Persian chronological form so that it may have been an actual historical record. It explains where the feast of Purim comes from.

1. According to the first verse, how large was the Persian Empire at the time of Esther? (See map at the end of lesson)

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2. Where was Susa, the capital?

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3. The king gave a feast. Who was invited? Who was in attendance? What was the purpose of this feast?

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4. What took place at the end of the 180-day festival? Describe this event. What can we learn from this?

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5. What is meant by the phrase “there is no compulsion”?

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6. Who was Vashti? What did she do? Why?

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7. What is the significance of the seventh day? What did the king do on the seventh day? Why?

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8. “Queen Vashti refused to come.” No reason is given for her refusal to obey the king’s command. Why might she have refused to come?

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9. What was Ahasuerus’ initial reaction to Queen Vashti’s refusal? Why?

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10. Who were the wise men? What did they know? What does this mean?  
(Ezra 7:14; Daniel 2:48)

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11. What is meant by the phrase, “who saw the king’s face and sat first in the kingdom”?

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12. How were these seven men connected to Persia, Media and the law?

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13. What did the king ask the wise men?

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14. Who answered the king? What was his answer? What was his rationale?

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15. Some people might say the answer to the king’s question might be true, but it doesn’t mean it is right. Why would they say this? What does the Bible say about such a concept? (Numbers 16; Matthew 18:6; 25:41-46)

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16. What was the significance of the “laws of the Persians and Medes”?  
(Daniel 6:8)

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17. What law of the Persian and Mede variety, was proposed to the king? What suggested action was made to follow this law.

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18. How did the king respond to his counselor's advice?

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19. Why would the king add, "speak according to the language of his people"?

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20. What problem arises for the king following his issuance of the new law/decreed?

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21. What was proposed as an answer to this problem?

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22. What criteria was the basis for this proposal?

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23. Who was Mordecai? (carefully explore his ancestry as this will play a major role in understanding future events in this book)

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24. What noble thing had Mordecai done?

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25. What do we know or learn about Esther in verse 7?

Verses 8 & 9? \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 10? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Describe the selection process for Vashti's replacement.

27. What was a concubine?

28. What did Esther take with her when it was her turn to go before the king? What does this reveal about Esther?

29. What three things did Esther receive from the king?

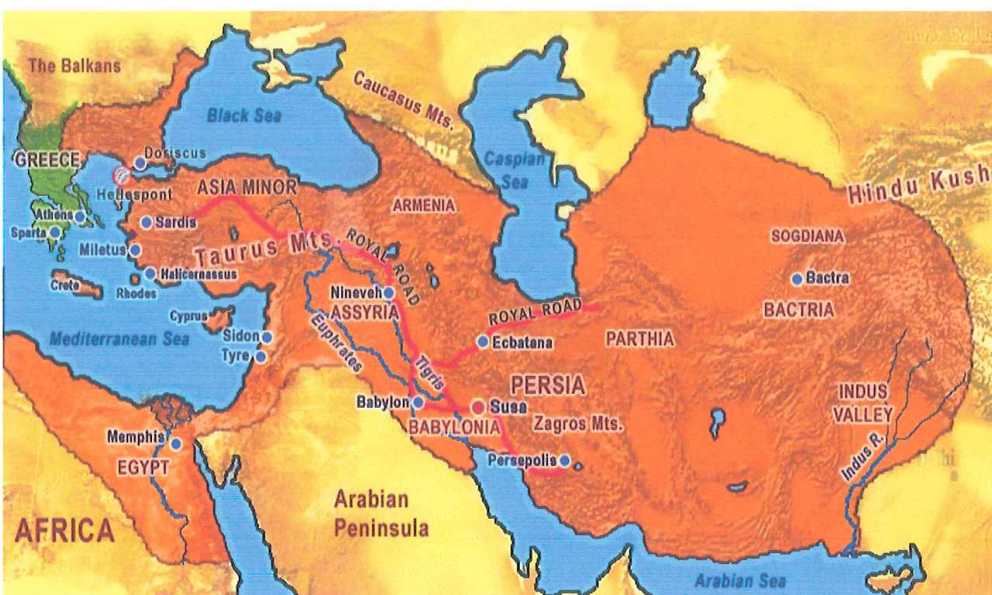
30. The king gave a great feast, "Esther's feast," to celebrate her coronation. How did the king get all the kingdom to celebrate?

31. Where was Mordecai during all these events?

32. Read Romans 8:28. How does this apply to Mordecai?

## The Persian Empire at the Time of Esther

### The Persian Empire at the Time of Esther



SDG- Lesson #5 – Esther 1&2

## SDG Lesson #6

### Esther Chapters 3 & 4

1. In our last lesson we saw that Mordecai was of the tribe of Benjamin, a descendant of Kish, the father of King Saul. In the first verse of chapter 3 we are given the lineage of Haman, the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha. What is meant by the term Agagite?

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2. Read 1 Samuel 15:1-33. What does this add to our understanding of Haman being an Agagite?

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3. Read Exodus 17:8-16. What does this add to our understanding of Haman being an Agagite?

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4. What had Haman become? What edict had the king given concerning him?

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5. How did Mordecai react to the king's decree? What reason had Mordecai given for his reaction?

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6. What was Haman's initial reaction to Mordecai's action/inaction?

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7. What is meant by the phrase, “he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone?”

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8. What was Haman’s plan for dealing with the Jewish people? How did he go about selling it to the king?

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9. What was a talent?

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10. Where would Haman get 10,000 talents of silver?

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11. Why did the king give Haman his signet ring?

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12. What is meant by the phrase, “The money is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you?”

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13. When was the law written? When was it to go into effect? Why the wait?

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14. Once the law was written and sent out, what did the king and Haman do? What happened in the capital city of Susa?

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15. How did Mordecai react to the new law? The Jewish people? Why?

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16. How did Esther react to the news that Mordecai was doing this?

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17. What was Mordecai's message to Esther?

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18. What problem did Esther have with Mordecai's message?

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19. Mordecai's response to Esther in 4:13-14. is probably the best-known passage of the whole book. What is Mordecai's first point in verse 13?

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What was Mordecai's second point? (14a)

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What was Mordecai's third point? (14b)

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20. How did Esther respond to Mordecai's message?

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**SDG Lesson #7**  
**Esther Chapters 5 & 6**

1. Chapter 5 begins, “On the third day.” What is meant by this?  
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2. What is the significance of Esther standing in the inner court of the king’s palace in her royal robes?  
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3. Why did the king hold out his golden scepter?  
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4. Why did Esther touch the tip of the scepter?  
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5. Based on the king’s words of verse three, what did he understand?  
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6. Compare the king’s words with those of Herod in Mark 6:23. What do you notice? What does this mean?  
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7. What was Esther’s request?  
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8. How did the king respond?  
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9. The king was no fool, he realized there must have been more on Esther's mind, so he asked a second time; "What is your wish?" How did Esther respond? Challenge Question! Why?

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10. Haman left the feast "joyful and glad of heart." Why?

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11. Why did his joy and gladness change to wrath?

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12. Haman "sent and brought his friends and his wife Zareh." What was the purpose of this gathering?

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13. What put a damper on Haman's recalling of his blessings?

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14. What was Haman's friend's and his wife's solution to his distress?

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15. This leads us into chapter six. What was the king doing (or not doing) while Haman was following his family and friend's advice? What was his solution?

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16. What was brought to the king's attention?

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17. The timing of the sequence of events in chapter 6 is impeccable. Who entered the outer court as soon as the king had been made aware of his oversight? Why had this person come to the outer court?

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18. Compare/Contrast Haman's entrance into the outer court with Esther's entrance in chapter four.

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19. Haman came to ask the king a question, but the king beats him to the punch. What question did the king ask Haman?

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20. Who did Haman think the king was referring to?

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21. How did Haman respond to the king's inquiry? Why?

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22. God sometimes uses irony to make a point and fulfill His will. What are the points of irony in the king's action?

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23. How did Mordecai respond to all of this? Haman?

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24. What insight did Haman's wife share with him? Why would she do this?

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25. What occurred while Zeresh was talking to Haman?

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## SDG Lesson #8

### Esther Chapters 7 & 8

Prior to reading Chapters 7 & 8, it would be profitable to read chapters 5 & 6 while paying close attention to the dialog between the king and both Esther and Haman. Then read chapter 7 and compare/contrast the dialog presented with the previous two chapters.

1. When, precisely, did this dialog between the king and Esther begin?

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2. How did the king address Esther? Esther address the king?

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3. Contrast this with Haman's address of the king in 6:7.

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4. What are the two questions the king asks of Esther? Why two? What does the king say about both? What does this mean?

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5. How does Esther reply to the two questions? Why?

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6. “We have been sold.” What is meant by “we”? How were they sold?

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7. What were they sold to?

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8. How did Esther emphasize how desperate the situation was?

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9. What is meant by Esther’s statement about it being a “loss to the king”?

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10. How did King Ahasureus respond to Esther’s wish/petition and request? Why did he respond this way?

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11. In what three ways did Esther describe Haman?

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12. What was Haman’s reaction to Esther’s request and revelation?

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13. How did the king respond to Esther’s revelation of Haman being the culprit behind the attempt to exterminate the Jews? Why?

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14. Haman's response to all of this was tragic. Why?

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15. Why did they cover Haman's face?

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16. It appears that Haman was not well liked by the king's attendants. What role did the king's eunuchs play in this event?

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17. What was Haman's fate?

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18. What was Esther's fate? Mordecai's?

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19. Haman was dead and gone but there was still a very big problem. What was this problem? How did Esther address it? The king?

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20. Why did they call on the king's scribes?

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21. How did the scribe's edict address the problem of the law that Haman had authored?

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22. How did the people in the capital city respond to seeing Mordecai in the royal robes? What do we learn from this?

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23. How did the Jews respond to Mordecai and the new edict?

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24. What is meant by the phrase, “a feast and a holiday”?

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25. Why would non-Jews declare themselves to be Jews?

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**SDG – Lesson #9**  
**Esther Chapters 9 & 10**

1. How much time has passed by between the events of chapter 8 and the beginning of chapter 9? (8:9; 9:1; see calendar)

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2. The 13<sup>th</sup> day of the twelfth month, Adar, had two laws, that were to be observed for 24 hours, going into effect. What were these two laws? The purpose of each?

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3. What happened in regard to these laws? How is this explained?

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4. What is said about Mordecai?

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5. What happened in the capital city of Susa on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month?

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6. What didn't happen on this same day? Why?

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7. What happened when the king heard the report of the day?

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8. In what two ways did Esther respond to the king's questions?

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9. In verses 9-10, we read that the Jews killed the 10 sons of Haman. But then we read that Esther asked for them to be hanged. Reconcile this. (1 Samuel 31:8-10)

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10. What, again, did not happen on the 14<sup>th</sup> day?

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11. What happened throughout the empire on the 13<sup>th</sup> day? What didn't happen.

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12. What happened as a result of the different rules for the people in the capital city of Susa and those throughout the rest of the empire?

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13. What was the focus of the feasting and celebration?

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14. How did Mordecai react to this?

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15. What is this holiday called? Why?

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16. How did Esther react to all these things?

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17. How did the king react to all these things?

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18. Mordecai became popular. Why?

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## The Jewish Calendar

Hebrew Months	Jewish Holidays	Secular Months
Nisan	Passover, Yom HaShoah	March-April
Iyar	Yom HaZikaron, Yom HaAtzmaut, Lag BaOmer	April-May
Sivan	Shavuot	May-June
Tammuz		June-July
Av	Tishah B'Av	July-August
Elul		August-September
Tishri	Selichot, Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah	September-October
Cheshvan		October-November
Kislev	Hanukkah	November-December
Tevet		December-January
Sh'vat	Tu Bishvat	January-February
Adar	Purim	February-March

SDG – Lesson #9 - Esther