

ESTHER: A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

Esther 8



LET'S BEGIN HERE

No wall looms so large in our minds from recent decades than the Berlin Wall. For twenty-eight years it divided East and West Berlin, communism and capitalism. It stretched across the city like an ugly gash with barbed wire forming cruel stitches. Its great masses of concrete seemed immovable. But on November 9, 1989, the wall was pulled down—collapsed without a bullet fired.

Even though it was unthinkable at the time, the wall came down. Spiritual “walls” also fell throughout Esther 8 in which God turned an unchangeable heart, conquered an irrevocable edict, and lightened an impenetrable gloom. God’s in the business of bringing down walls no matter how big they may be. In this study of Esther 8, we’ll join Chuck Swindoll to learn that the walls in our life are no match for God.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

As Moses prepared the wandering people of Israel for their chosen inheritance—to enter the promised land after their exodus from Egypt—he delivered sermons to reaffirm the Sinai covenant and reconstitute their identity as Yahweh’s people. In the first of Moses’ sermons, he uttered the remarkable statement interpreting the reason God gave them manna:

“Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”
(Deuteronomy 8:3)

God’s Word nourishes us spiritually as nutritious food nourishes us physically. With a plethora of Bible study gismos and gadgets, remember the reason for them all—to encounter the living God, to enjoy His presence, and to receive His gifts which are His joy to give us.

Quotable

There is no wall so strong that God is not stronger still.

— Charles R. Swindoll





ESTHER: A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

Esther 8

Take a moment to quiet your mind, marvel at this privilege we have, and ask for the Lord's aid as you study His Word. Record your prayer below if you wish.

Now take a moment to slowly read *Esther 8*. Also, as you study each of the following tables, remember to complete the observation column before moving to interpretation.

An Unchangeable Heart Esther 8:1-4	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Use your observation study method to note the top five details in <i>Esther 8:1-4</i>.</p>	<p>2a. What significant event happened to Haman's property in this scene?</p>
<p>1b. When did Haman receive the signet ring (<i>Esther 3:1-10</i>)? When did Mordecai receive it (8:1-2)?</p>	<p>2b. What tells us that the king's heart toward Mordecai and Esther had softened?</p>
<p>1c. How was Haman viewed by the author in 8:1-4, and what threat remained for the Jews?</p>	<p>2c. How did God work on behalf of the Jews in Esther 8:1-4?</p>



No heart is so hard that God cannot penetrate it. In Esther's life, God swayed the heart of the most powerful man in the world, which proves He can do the same for that friend, colleague, or spouse in your life.



ESTHER: A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

Esther 8

An Irrevocable Edict Esther 8:5–14	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Now note the significant details you see in <i>Esther 8:5–14</i> using observation.</p>	<p>2a. How did the new edict in 8:8–11 protect the Jews from the first edict?</p>
<p>1b. According to the new edict (Esther 8:11), what were the Jews allowed to do to their attackers? How does this language compare to the first edict (3:13)?</p>	<p>2b. In this passage, how did God specifically use Esther to initiate the protection of the Jews? How does 8:12–14 demonstrate God granting favor to Esther in the sight of Ahasuerus?</p>

Coupled with the death of Haman, God worked through the political pragmatics of this world, allowing a second edict to protect His chosen people. Ahasuerus granted the Jews the opportunity to take every retaliatory action against their attackers. In this passage, we see that God not only softens unchangeable hearts, He also reverses the most irrevocable of edicts—even those unjust edicts against *you*.





ESTHER: A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

Esther 8

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY

An Impenetrable Gloom Esther 8:15–17	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Finally, record the top five most significant details you see in <i>Esther 8:15–17</i>.</p> <p>1b. Contrast the people of Susa’s response to Mordecai’s decree (Esther 8:16) with their response to Haman’s decree (3:15).</p> <p>1c. Contrast the Jews’ response to Mordecai’s decree (8:16) as well as their response to Haman’s decree (4:2).</p>	<p>2a. Why is the response of the Jews—and the non-Jews—to Mordecai’s decree important?</p> <p>2b. Do you think the people who converted to Judaism in 8:17 were sincere? Why did the author of Esther include this in the story?</p> <p>2c. Summarize the theological point of this chapter with a clear sentence specifying the author’s subject and what he said about it.</p>

The cold wall of impenetrable gloom loomed over the Jews until God burst through it with His light of grace and His outstretched, providential hand.



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 1989, 1990, 1997, 2005, 2018 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.
Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

ESTHER: A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

Esther 8

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



Correlation

Sometimes God breaks down the intimidating and isolating walls of our lives speedily while, at other times, He lets them linger. Israel's King David encountered this from time to time. One such wall developed when murderers sought to unjustly kill him. He wrote about these enemies in Psalm 139:19–22.

O God, if only you would destroy the wicked!

Get out of my life, you murderers!

They blaspheme you;

your enemies misuse your name.

O LORD, shouldn't I hate those who hate you?

Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you?

Yes, I hate them with total hatred,

for your enemies are my enemies.

Strong language from the pen of the king. Nevertheless, he wrote one of the most cherished psalms in his anger—Psalm 139. David's response to his wall of murderers guides us through how we should pray when facing our own walls, whatever they may be.

David wanted to uphold his *integrity* even when hotly pursued by enemies (Psalm 139:1, 23–24a). Of all places David could have turned, he took refuge in God's providential care and comforting presence showing his Godward *devotion* in that pressing time (139:2–18). Lastly, David sought God's everlasting way, demonstrating *hope* in God's provision of grace and goodness even as bloodthirsty murderers chased after him (139:24b).

Peruse [Psalm 139](#). Note how David prayed while in anguish. Record what you would like to remember for those seasons when you face formidable walls.



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 1989, 1990, 1997, 2005, 2018 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

S09
5

ESTHER: A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

Esther 8

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



Application

Walls take many different forms—spiritual, physical, financial, emotional, relational, racial, marital, or even religious. Are you facing a wall? If so, record how God’s work in the life of Esther might help you respond to it.

If you’re not facing a wall now, you have probably faced one in the past. Can you think of one? If so, reflect on how you navigated it. What did you learn from it? Would you do anything different when facing a similar wall in the future?

While not mentioned in the headlines, the toppling of the Berlin Wall was an answered prayer for many. In fact, Christians gathered for ten years at a church in Leipzig, East Germany, to pray for the wall to come down. In the final months before it fell, thousands of Christians met daily to pray. Many from these meetings participated in enormous demonstrations, calling for action from the political powers that had erected the wall.¹

Fervent prayer reminds us of our dependence upon God, of His care for us, and His involvement in our lives. Don’t let your wall dishearten you. Pray . . . and stay at it. God listens and will guide you.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, no wall barricades Your power. No wall in my life deafens Your ears from my prayers. Keep me running hard after You, confident in Your rich supply of grace and generous in my display of love. As Your Son conquered the cross by His victorious resurrection, I know You will eventually conquer all walls in my life. So I trust You. I pray this in Jesus’ name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. B. Clayton Bell, Sr. “Revolution by Candlelight,” *Christianity Today* (April 23, 1990): 16.



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 1989, 1990, 1997, 2005, 2018 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

S09
6

ESTHER: A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

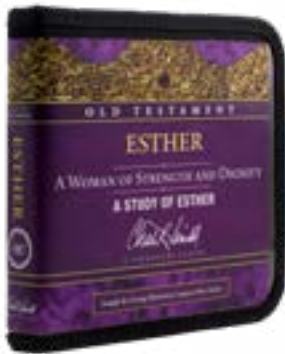
Esther 8

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

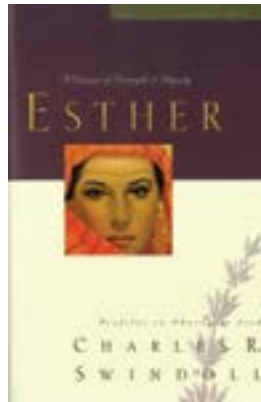
STUDY



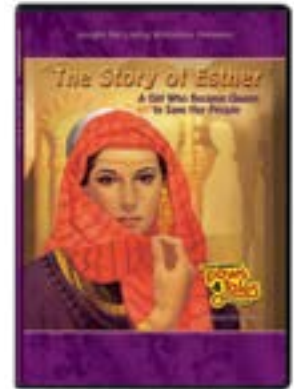
Tools for Digging Deeper



Esther: A Woman of Strength and Dignity
by Charles R. Swindoll
CD series



Esther: A Woman of Strength and Dignity
by Charles R. Swindoll
Softcover book



The Story of Esther: A Girl Who Became Queen to Save Her People
by Paws & Tales
CD set

For these and related resources, visit www.insightworld.org/store
or call USA 1-800-772-8888 • AUSTRALIA +61 3 9762 6613 • CANADA 1-800-663-7639 • UK +44 1306 640156

For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 1989, 1990, 1997, 2005, 2018 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.
Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application