

ESTHER

A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

STUDY EIGHT

God's Surprising Sovereignty

Esther 7

The periods of God's silence are just as significant as the times in which He speaks.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THE seasons of God's silence can feel like we're stranded in the middle of a lake swimming blindly in a thick fog. No voice from shore. No certainty we're swimming in the right direction. Just dense cloud cover and water before our eyes in all directions. But God's silence does not mean He's unaware or indifferent. Neither does His hidden nature imply His absence. He is always present and always moving.

In the fog, our perception is limited. We see life in still frames, viewed one experience after the other, and all we know is our current hardship. But God resides above time. He sees our entire existence all at once. He knows our past, present, and future. That's why He can remain silent in Act 1 of our life's drama because He knows a Christian's life story has a good ending.

Similarly, we can't know what lies outside of our physical space. But God is everywhere. He governs details unseen to us and hears the secrets that people whisper in the shadows. So when He seems absent or silent, we can trust He is there and He is working. His hand is always moving in ways we can't see. Our part is to simply do what we know to do and leave the outcome with Him—like Esther.

Esther had no guarantee her plea would be well received by King Ahasuerus. But she acted in faith as she approached the king, arranged the banquet, and waited for the moment to speak for her people. She trusted God to be at work outside the fog of her perception, and so can you. Invite the Lord to increase your confidence in Him as you see His surprising sovereignty revealed in Esther 7.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you internalize biblical truth so you might follow Jesus more closely. “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him” (Colossians 2:6 NASB). Take a moment to express this command as a request to God.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Before venturing into Esther 7, let's glance back at where we've come. Write a one-sentence summary of each chapter you've studied so far. Consult Chuck Swindoll's [overview and chart](#) if you need to.

Esther 1	
Esther 2	
Esther 3	
Esther 4	
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In each chapter, do you notice God's silence? When Haman was promoted over Mordecai, God stayed silent (Esther 3:1). When Haman plotted to kill all the Jews and when the king issued his decree, God stayed silent (3:6–8). When Haman set up the pole on which Mordecai would be executed, God stayed silent (5:14).

In Esther 6, however, a pivotal turn of events occurred. In the quiet hours of the night, the tide flowing against the Jews silently shifted. The king couldn't sleep! He asked for the history book to be read, and Mordecai's heroism came to his attention. He appointed Haman to herald Mordecai's praise (6:10–12). Suddenly, Haman was caught in the undertow of God's providence at work.

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Observation: Esther's Second Banquet

When Haman returned home, his wife forecasted his doom: “Since Mordecai—this man who has humiliated you—is of Jewish birth, you will never succeed in your plans against him. It will be fatal to continue opposing him” (Esther 6:13). At that moment, the king’s eunuchs arrived to take Haman to Esther’s banquet. Use your skills of observation to put yourself in the room along with the servants as King Ahasuerus, Esther, and Haman settle at the table.¹

Esther's Request and Accusation—Esther 7:1–6

What question did the king ask Esther in [Esther 7:1–2](#)? How many times had he asked this question, according to [5:3–6](#)? Why was the timing right for Esther to answer now? What had changed?

What was Esther’s request in [7:3–4](#)? What character qualities did she show in her request?

How does her explanation compare to the edict presented in [3:13](#)? Why was this important? Why do you think she didn’t accuse Haman immediately?

What happened next, according to [7:5–6](#)? If you were in the room, what shift in tone do you sense? What do you see?

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Haman's Panic and Downfall—Esther 7:7–10

How did Haman's reaction seal his fate in *Esther 7:7–10*? What key role did the servant Harbona play in 7:9?



Interpretation: God's Providential Timing

What do you learn from Esther's request? What principle can you draw from the way she handled the moment?

When Esther accused Haman of being “our adversary” (Esther 7:6), the king suddenly realized that Esther was Jewish and that his edict Haman designed would kill his own wife! Commentator Mervin Breneman describes what Haman probably did next: “Haman, in typical Near Eastern form, probably grabbed the feet of Esther, kissed them, and begged for forgiveness.”² What violation did Haman commit in Esther 7:7–8?

What do you think the author intended his readers to know about God from this account?

God has no night. God has no day. God has no month. God has no year. God has no past, present, or future. He transcends it all. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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In a moment of poetic justice, Haman was impaled upon the stake he had built for Mordecai. What principle about God's sovereignty was the author teaching his readers?

Later, Esther must have looked back on her situation and realized how God marvelously handled the details she couldn't see. Such as it is with us. Often, only in hindsight are we able to see God's surprising sovereignty as we view our lives through 20/20 spiritual lenses.

*God can move in the heart of a king. He can change the mind of your mate.
He can move in your neighborhood. He can alter decisions of presidents.
None of His world is limited by space, time, the visible, or the tangible.
He is all powerful. When He's ready to move, He makes things beautiful.*
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: The Theme of Deliverance

Israel's King David recorded in [Psalm 40](#) an expression of praise to God for God's care and deliverance. David said he was in the pit of despair as he waited upon God who eventually lifted him out of the miry bog.

Psalm 40 complements Esther 7 in which God delivered His people from Haman's plot. Take a moment to reflect on David's prayer.

Why did David praise God?

How did David respond to God's deliverance?

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What did David request from God?

While waiting, look beyond the present. You know the best way to do that? Pray! Tell God, in anguish if necessary, the horror of waiting. Express your panic. Tell Him you're trapped right here. You don't know how you can stay afloat much longer. Prayer helps me see beyond the pain of the present. It helps me when I can't quite grasp the meaning of something I'm struggling with, when I'm dealing with big decisions, when I'm working with difficult people. When something in my own life is sort of twisted and a struggle, I find prayer gives me a calming perspective. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Accepting God's Delays

With three concluding applications, let's summarize the principles that emerge in Esther's life from God's silence, His delays, and then His sudden surprising turn of events.

1. *Remember that the fog in your life is not accidental.* God's silence doesn't mean He's absent. Be sensitive to what He might be saying to you through His Word.
2. *The workings of God are related to our crises but unrelated to our clocks.* While waiting, find His peace in the present as you trust Him for the future.
3. *The surprises in store are not merely coincidental but sovereignly designed.* While anticipating them, leave justice with Him.

Can you recall a time when you believed God's delay meant He was late, but you realized later His timing was perfect? If so, what happened? What message was God giving you about Himself and how He works?

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Are you going through a season of God's silence? If so, how do Esther's and Mordecai's experiences help you? If they could speak, what advice do you think they might give you?

Do you know someone who's wandering through the fog of God's silence? If so, what is a simple, meaningful way you can encourage him or her? Go ahead and schedule this act of kindness now so you can follow through later.

You will experience seasons when it feels like the volume knob of God's voice has been turned down—or maybe even switched off! Surely, Esther felt similarly that afternoon before the banquet. At times, God's silence is confusing. But God invites us to trust Him. Have confidence that no system, whether Persian or Roman or any in the world as we know it, will thwart His perfect providence that works for your spiritual and eternal good.

Reflective Wrap-Up

Write one sentence to *summarize* this lesson.

Write one thing to *remember* about God.

Write one way you can *respond* to God's Word.

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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I trust that You are the governor of my life. Even when You seem absent or silent, I know You are there, that You see me, and that Your plan will unfold into something beautiful. I pray for strength and courage like Esther's that my life may glorify Your Son. It's in His name I pray, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"
2. Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, vol. 10, electronic ed., *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 350.

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and revised by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1989, 2018, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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