

ESTHER

A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

STUDY NINE

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

Esther 8

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

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

No wall looms larger 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 mass of concrete seemed immovable. But on November 9, 1989, the wall was pulled down—collapsed without a bullet fired.

No matter how intimidating or long-standing, every wall will ultimately fall. Some less tangible walls, however, seem impossible to budge—as unyielding as the Berlin Wall. The wall of a stubborn will. The wall of a bitter, unforgiving spirit. The wall of an unbelieving heart. We try our best to push them over with clever arguments or pleading manipulation, but nothing works. The barrier is stubbornly immovable, so we wait. We fast and pray and wait some more.

Then, almost overnight, a foundational shift happens. To our delight and amazement, the impossible occurs. God steps in and the thing we thought would never happen takes place right before our eyes! No thrill can match our joy when walls come tumbling down.

In the passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, the impossible happened. The wall of genocide came down when God turned an unchangeable heart, conquered an irrevocable edict, and lightened an impenetrable gloom. God is in the business of bringing down walls, no matter how big!



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

We “do not live by bread alone,” Moses told the Israelites in the wilderness, “rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 8:3). Our souls need God’s truth to survive in this world. God’s Word gives life. Enjoy His presence and receive His gifts of truth which are His joy to give us.

Take a moment to quiet your mind, marvel at this privilege we have, and ask for His aid as you study His Word.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

King Ahasuerus’ empire was vast, and his word was law. His power over his people was absolute, and his authority was unquestioned. When he promoted Haman, he gave him the right to rule on the king’s behalf. He even handed Haman his signet ring—the symbol of his authority. Taking revenge against Jewish Mordecai, who refused to bow to Haman, Haman devised a scheme not just to kill Mordecai but also to exterminate the entire race of Jews. With the king’s consent, Haman dictated a deadly edict, which stated:

All Jews—young and old, including women and children—must be killed, slaughtered, and annihilated on a single day. . . . The property of the Jews would be given to those who killed them. (Esther 3:13)

Haman cast lots, called *purim*, to determine the day of genocide for the Jews—March 7 of the following year. He sealed the edict with the king’s signet ring and dispatched messengers to deliver it throughout the empire.

This decree of death loomed over God’s people. Any law sealed by the king was irrevocable. How could it be overturned? Only God can accomplish the impossible—which He did through Esther and Mordecai.

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Observation and Interpretation: Mordecai's Counterplan



As you read the passages in the charts below, use your skills of observation and interpretation to explore the meaning of the narrative as the account unfolds.¹ Slowly read *Esther 8*. In the tables below, answer the questions in the observation column before moving to interpretation.

An Unchangeable Heart Esther 8:1-4	
Observation	Interpretation
Observe five details in <i>Esther 8:1-4</i> and note them.	What happened to Haman's property after his death? How is this a form of irony?
When did Haman receive the signet ring (<i>Esther 3:1-10</i>) compared to Mordecai (8:1-4)?	What indicated the king's heart toward Mordecai and Esther had softened?
How was Haman viewed by the author in 8:1-4, and what threat remained for the Jews?	How did God work on behalf of the Jews in Esther 8:1-4?

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Some individuals may be making your life miserable. You may work alongside them, or you may have. You may have schooled with them or roomed with them. They are dogging your steps. You may have once been married to them. There is no wall so strong that He is not stronger still. If God can change the heart of Ahasuerus, He can change any heart! —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

An Irrevocable Edict Esther 8:5–14	
 Observation	 Interpretation
Note the significant details you see in Esther 8:5–14 using observation.	How did the new edict in Esther 8:8–11 protect the Jews from the first edict?
According to 8:11, what were the Jews allowed to do to their attackers? How does this language compare to the first edict in 3:13 ?	How does 8:12–14 demonstrate God granting favor to Esther? How did God use Esther to initiate the protection of the Jews?

God worked through the politics of this world to allow the Jews to retaliate against their attackers. In this reversal, we see that God not only softened hard hearts, He also revoked irrevocable edicts—and He’s able to do the same with unjust edicts against you.

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An Impenetrable Gloom Esther 8:15–17	
 Observation	 Interpretation
Record the most significant details you see in <i>Esther 8:15–17</i> .	Why is the response of the Jews and non-Jews to Mordecai's decree important?
Contrast the people of Susa's response to Mordecai's decree (Esther 8:16) with their response to Haman's decree (3:15).	Do you think the people who converted to Judaism in Esther 8:17 were sincere? Why would the author of Esther include this interesting fact in the account?
Contrast the Jews' response to Mordecai's decree (8:16) as well as their response to Haman's decree (4:2).	What theological truth about God was the author intending to communicate in this passage?

Haman's wall was built on the bedrock of hate and cemented together with the mortar of pride. It seemed impenetrable until God burst through it, beaming in His light of grace and stretching out His providential hand.

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Correlation: David's Prayer

Sometimes God breaks down the walls that intimidate and isolate us. At other times, He lets them stand for a season. One such wall in David's life developed when murderers sought to kill him. With arms outstretched to heaven, he pleaded:

*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.* (Psalm 139:19–22)

Strong language from the pen of the king. His plea appears in one of his most cherished psalms. Earlier, David extolled God's omniscience ("O LORD, you . . . know everything about me," 139:1), His omnipresence ("even in darkness I cannot hide from you," 139:12), and omnipotence ("You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body," 139:13).

David upheld his *integrity* even when hotly pursued by enemies (139:1, 23–24a). He took comfort in God's providential care and comforting presence, showing his godward *devotion* in that pressing time. Lastly, David sought after God's everlasting way, demonstrating *hope* in God's provision of grace and goodness even as bloodthirsty murderers chased after him (139:24b).

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

Something written against you—some magazine article, some newspaper article, some transcript, some occupational report, some lawsuit—looks so intimidating, so inerasable. You're thinking, Yeah, if you only knew who's behind that. I don't care who's behind that. I happen to serve a sovereign God. Nothing we read frightens Him. We live under the hand of the Almighty.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Application: Your Walls and God's Power

Walls take many forms—a stubborn will that seems unchangeable, a damaging document that seems permanent, or a depression that seems inescapable. Walls can be 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?

The toppling of the Berlin Wall was an answered prayer for many. 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. From these meetings spilled the enormous demonstrations that demanded action from the political powers that had erected the wall.²

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. No wall is so strong that He is not stronger still.

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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, no wall barricades Your power. No wall in my life obstructs my prayers to You. Keep me running hard after You, confident in Your rich supply of grace and generous in my display of love. As Your Son conquered death 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.

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. B. Clayton Bell, Sr. "Revolution by Candlelight," *Christianity Today*, April 23, 1990, 16.

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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