

"Mordecai's Intervention"

Esther 2

Introduction: Last week in our study of Esther we looked at how Esther was chosen to replace Vashti. Out of all the young girls that were gathered in the 127 provinces, she was the one who pleased the king.

Notice Esther 2:16-17

This was the hand of God at work behind the scenes as He was preparing Esther to be the savior of her people.

Psalm 75:4-7

⁴ *I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:*

⁵ *Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.*

⁶ *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*

⁷ *But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

After Esther was chosen, Xerxes declared a holiday in his kingdom.

Notice Esther 2:18

Here was another feast called "Esther's Feast". The king was so pleased with Esther becoming the queen that we are told here that he "made a release to the provinces". There are several different thoughts about what this means. It could mean that all debts were forgiven, or it could mean that certain prisoners were released, but most likely it refers to remittance of taxes. Herodotus records in his history of the Persian Empire that it was customary in royal celebrations to remit taxes. Not only were taxes remitted but he also gave out royal gifts to the people.

Now as we move to the next verse the Holy Spirit is going to take our focus to the hand of God at work in the life of Mordecai.

Notice Esther 2:19

Here we see a second gathering of the virgins. We are not told why the young ladies were gathered together again. But we are told that it was THEN that Mordecai sat in the king's gate. Prior to this Mordecai was "in the palace".

Notice Esther 2:5

Now, in verse 19 Mordecai is in the king's gate. The king's gate was the place where the legal matters of the city were conducted.

Deuteronomy 16:18

¹⁸ *Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.*

Deuteronomy 17:8

⁸ *If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose;*

Deuteronomy 25:6-7

⁶ *And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.*

⁷ *And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.*

In the book of Ruth when Boaz wanted to offer Ruth to the near kinsman he went to the gate.

Ruth 4:1-4

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by: unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

² *And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, **Sit ye down here**. And they sat down.*

³ *And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's:*

⁴ And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.

Lot also was involved in the gate of Sodom.

Genesis 19:1

And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

Now let us get back to Mordecai. Sometime in the search for a queen, things were happening in Mordecai's life. God has taken him from the palace to the gate where he will assist in judging the matter of the people. We will come back to this in a moment.

Notice Esther 2:20

Here we are again reminded of how Esther was obedient to the orders of Mordecai. Apparently, Mordecai had also been silent as to the fact that he was a Jew also. In the next chapter we will see that he must have made it known to a few of those whom he knew but at this time it seems to be unknown in the kingdom.

Application:

There is a question which I want to consider here. "Why are we told this again?" We just read this in verse 10. Let us keep in mind how the enemies of the Jews in Jerusalem had sent word to the king that the Jews were a dangerous people. This is most likely why Mordecai was so set on keeping their ancestry a secret. So why is it important for me to read this again?

I believe God inspired the writer to record this to help us to see something very important. We have looked at how God is arranging the events so that Esther can be in a place to rescue the Jews and now we have seen that God has placed Mordecai in the gate of the city because of something that will happen. So, we can clearly see that God is sovereign over the affairs of life. But we are also told that Mordecai and Esther were silent about being Jews. I believe this help us to see that while God is sovereign over the affairs of our lives, we also have the responsibility of taking precautions and doing all we can on our end. We certainly are not to live in fear, but we are to walk by faith and obedience in God's Word and contribute whatever we can.

Let us notice the Words of our Lord when He was tempted by the Devil.

Matthew 4:5-7

⁵ Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

⁶ And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

⁷ Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Notice Esther 2:21

Here is the very reason why God had Mordecai moved to the king's gate. There was a plot to kill the king and Mordecai became aware of the plan.

Application:

We do not know if Mordecai wanted the position in the gate or if he was just ordered to serve there. But either way it was the hand of God that placed him there to uncover this event. Let us understand that there are times in life when we are moved, and it may be what we desire, or it may be completely against our will. God is behind the move, and he has allowed it or caused it to happen because He desires to use us at a later date so that we might bring glory to Him. Let us remember what happened to the Apostle John.

Revelation 1:9

⁹ I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Patmos was a like an Alcatraz Island in the Roman Empire. It was used as a prison island and functioned as a jail without bars. The island was rich in marble, and most of the prisoners were forced laborers in marble quarries. Patmos was a rocky, desolate island about 10 miles long and 6 miles wide.

Notice the words of Barnes concerning Patmos:

"Patmos was "Lonely, desolate, barren, uninhabited, seldom visited, it had all the requisites which could be desired for a place of punishment; and banishment to that place would accomplish all that a persecutor could wish in silencing the apostle, without putting him to death. Yet this exile didn't silence the Apostle John."

God often moves His people into places where they would not desire to be. Sometimes it is into a hospital, or it may be into a position of personal care for a loved one, or it may be into an unplanned pregnancy after the kids are already grown. Wherever it might be we must understand that God has a purpose.

Notice Esther 2:22

Word had reached the ears of Mordecai concerning the plot, and he carried the news to Esther who was able to inform the king. This would not only save the life of the king but most likely also the life of Esther. If Xerxes were killed, then the next king might possibly destroy all who were connected with the king.

Application:

I see within this verse the need for us to be willing to warn people of danger when we are given the opportunity. This is especially true when it come to sharing the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The news which Mordecai had received was very important and it would save many lives, but the Gospel saves souls. Just as Mordecai was made aware of the news of the plot so we have been given the news of the Gospel. I am reminded what God said to Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 3:17-19

¹⁷ Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

¹⁸ When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

¹⁹ Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

James 4:17

¹⁷ Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Notice Esther 2:23

When the matter was searched out it was found to be true, and the two men were hanged on a tree. This was not hanging as we know. This was something far more brutal. Notice the words of Clarke:

"A pointed stake is set upright in the ground, and the culprit is taken, placed on the sharp point, and then pulled down by his legs till the stake that went in at the fundament passes up through the body and comes out through the neck. A most dreadful species of punishment, in which revenge and cruelty may glut the utmost of their malice. The culprit lives a considerable time in excruciating agonies."

This would certainly be a deterrent for anyone else who was considering a plot against the king. Now there is something missing in this verse that we must consider. Mordecai should have been rewarded either by promotion or by some other means, but he was passed over. The common practice was when someone uncovered a plot such as this they were rewarded publicly and so the reward would be an encouragement for others to come forward if they ever new of something that was planned against the king. But Mordecai was skipped over and in the next chapter we will see the promotion of another man. Let us understand that God allowed Mordecai to be skipped over for a period of time only. This event was written to the book of the chronicles, and it will later come to the surface.

Application:

There will be times in life when we may be skipped over and from our perspective it appears as though we are being mistreated or ignored. You may make great sacrifices and not one person will seem to notice. It could even be that someone else may get the recognition for your sacrifice or someone under you will be promoted. When this happens let us remember Mordecai. He did not get recognized when he probably thought he should have, but God had a very good reason for skipping over him at the time. His reward would come later, and it would be by the hand of Almighty God.

Conclusion:

In our lives we can all agree that there are many times when God's people are not treated fairly. If this happens to you or me let us just continue to do what we are supposed to do and let the rewards with God.

1 Corinthians 15:58

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Hebrews 6:10

¹⁰ For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.