

Esther 2:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate.

Analysis

And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate. This cryptic verse likely indicates a second collection of virgins for the royal harem—either routine expansion or possibly related to Esther's elevation creating new vacancies. The transition to "Mordecai sat in the king's gate" establishes his official position. "Sitting in the gate" was technical language for holding official judicial or administrative authority (Ruth 4:1-2; Proverbs 31:23). The gate complex served as ancient Near Eastern cities' administrative and judicial center. Mordecai's position gave him access to information, official standing, and strategic positioning—all providentially important for the coming crisis. His presence at the gate enabled him to overhear the assassination plot (v. 21-22) and later monitor Haman's activities.

Historical Context

The "king's gate" (sha'ar hamelekh, שַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ) in Persian palaces was not merely an entrance but an administrative complex where officials conducted business, heard cases, and managed affairs. Archaeological excavations at Susa and Persepolis reveal massive gate structures with multiple rooms, chambers, and spaces for administration. Officials "sitting in the gate" exercised governmental authority. Mordecai's position indicates he held official rank in the Persian bureaucracy—not a menial servant but a recognized administrator. This position proved crucial: it gave him the access to overhear palace plots, the credibility to

report them, and the standing to later challenge Haman's promotion. God's providence positioned him precisely where needed.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Mordecai's official position in the king's gate illustrate God's providence positioning His servants in places of influence and access?
2. What does this teach about faithfully serving in secular positions as preparation for crucial kingdom service?

Interlinear Text

וּבִהְיוּ יָ	בְּתוֹל וְ	שֵׁנִי יֵ	וּמֹרְדֵכַי	יָשָׁב
were gathered together	And when the virgins	the second time	then Mordecai	sat
H6908	H1330	H8145	H4782	H3427
בְּשַׁעַר	הַמֶּלֶךְ:			
gate	in the king's			
H8179	H4428			

Additional Cross-References

Esther 2:21 (Kingdom): In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

Esther 5:13 (Kingdom): Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

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