

Esther 2:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. The phrase "in those days" connects this event to the timeline of Esther's elevation, suggesting it occurred soon after her coronation. Two royal chamberlains, "Bigthan and Teresh," planned to assassinate Ahasuerus. The cause of their wrath (qatsaph, קצף) isn't specified—perhaps perceived slight, political disagreement, or other grievance. That they "kept the door" (shomrei hasaph, שומרי הסף) indicates trusted positions guarding the king's private chambers, giving them access necessary for assassination. Mordecai's providential discovery of this plot and his loyalty in reporting it (v. 22) established crucial precedent for later events. This seemingly minor incident becomes pivotal in chapter 6.

Historical Context

Court eunuchs sometimes plotted against kings throughout ancient Near Eastern history. Their positions combined unusual access with potential grievances (castration, dependent status, blocked advancement). Herodotus and other ancient historians describe Persian court intrigues, including assassination plots. The "door keepers" held crucial security positions, making their conspiracy particularly

dangerous. Mordecai's position in the king's gate apparently gave him access to overhear or learn of the plot—perhaps through palace gossip, direct observation, or informants. That he reported it rather than ignoring it or using it for personal advantage demonstrated loyalty to the Persian government despite being a Jew in exile. This loyalty would later contrast with Haman's treachery.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Mordecai's loyalty to the Persian king despite being a Jewish exile model faithful service even to imperfect earthly authorities?
2. What does God's providence in positioning Mordecai to overhear this plot teach about how He orchestrates seemingly minor events for crucial future purposes?

Interlinear Text

בְּמִם יְמִים	בְּמִלְאָכָל	בְּשַׁעַר	וַיֵּשֶׁב	וּמְרֹדְכָא	בְּהַמִּלְאָכָל	בְּמִלְאָכָל
In those days	H1992	while Mordecai	sat	gate	in the king's	were wroth
H3117		H4782	H3427	H8179	H4428	H7107
Bigthan	and Teresh	two	chamberlains	in the king's	of those which kept	
H904	H8657	H8147	H5631	H4428	H8104	
בְּפָנָי	אֶחָשָׁוּרֶשׁ:	לְשָׁלַח	יִבְקַשׁוּ	לְדִין	לְרֹאשׁ	מִשְׁמָרֵי
the door	and sought	to lay	hand	in the king's	Ahasuerus	בְּגַתְתִּים
H5592	H1245	H7971	H3027	H4428	H325	

Additional Cross-References

Esther 6:2 (Kingdom): And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

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