

Esther 2:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

Analysis

And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king. The investigation confirmed the conspiracy, resulting in both chamberlains' execution by hanging (talah, תָּלָה, literally "impalement" or "hanging on a stake/tree"). The crucial detail: "it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king" (yikkatev be-sepher divrei ha-yamim lifnei hamelekh, יִכָּתֵב בְּסֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי־הַיָּמִים לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ). This record proved providentially essential. Notably, Mordecai apparently received no immediate reward—an oversight that God's providence would remedy at precisely the right moment (6:1-3). The unrewarded good deed, officially recorded but forgotten, becomes the hinge of the entire narrative. God's providence operates through such overlooked details, positioning pieces on the board long before the crisis emerges.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kings maintained detailed chronicles recording significant events, as documented in biblical and extra-biblical sources (1 Kings 14:19; Ezra 4:15; Esther 10:2). Persian royal annals documented both threats to the king and servants' notable deeds. The execution by "hanging on a tree" might indicate impalement (a common Persian execution method) or hanging. Either way, it served as public warning against treason. That Mordecai went unrewarded initially seems unusual—ancient monarchs typically rewarded those who saved their lives.

This oversight, though, proved providentially perfect: the later discovery and reward came precisely when needed to counter Haman's plot and elevate Mordecai. The delayed gratification served God's larger purposes.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Mordecai's unrewarded faithfulness teach about serving without immediate recognition, trusting God's providence for proper timing?
2. What does this passage reveal about God's orchestration of details—recorded chronicles, overlooked good deeds, perfect timing—to accomplish His purposes?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּבְקַשׁ שׁ	דְּבַר י	וַמָּצָא א	וַתֵּל ו		
And when inquisition	of the chronicles	it was found out	hanged		
H1245	H1697	H4672	H8518		
שְׁנֵיהֶם	עַל	עַץ	וְכֵן ב	בְּסֵפֶר	
therefore they were both	on a tree	and it was written	in the book		
H8147	H5921	H6086	H3789	H5612	
דְּבַר י	הַמֵּי ים	לִפְנֵי י	הַמֶּלֶךְ:		
of the chronicles	before	the king			
H1697	H3117	H6440	H4428		

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 40:19 (Parallel theme): Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

Genesis 40:22 (Parallel theme): But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

Esther 10:2 (Kingdom): And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

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