

Esther 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

Analysis

Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew. The officials pressured Mordecai "daily," but he refused to comply. Finally they reported him to Haman "to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand"—testing whether his stated reason (being Jewish) justified defiance. The phrase "he had told them that he was a Jew" reveals Mordecai explained his refusal by religious/ethnic identity. This disclosure contrasts with Esther's continued concealment (2:20) and raises questions about different responses to similar pressures. Mordecai's public Jewish identity and refusal to bow created the crisis, yet this very crisis would ultimately enable Jewish deliverance. God's providence uses even risky, potentially ill-advised human decisions to accomplish His purposes.

Historical Context

The daily pressure suggests sustained campaign to force compliance—Mordecai's defiance persisted despite repeated challenges. His explanation that Jewish identity prevented bowing might have referenced monotheistic convictions against human worship or specific enmity toward Amalekites (if Haman's Agagite identity was known). The officials' reporting to Haman made the personal conflict official

and dangerous. They wanted to "see whether Mordecai's matters would stand"—whether Jewish religious scruples could legitimately excuse disobeying royal commands. Persian law presumably allowed some religious accommodations, but the question was whether Mordecai's case qualified. The disclosure set up inevitable confrontation between Haman and Mordecai.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does the contrast between Esther's concealment and Mordecai's disclosure teach about wisdom, timing, and providence in revealing faith?
2. How should believers balance religious conviction with prudent discretion when facing hostile authorities?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי י	בָּאֵמֶךְ ׀	אֵלַי ׀	וַיְהִי ׀	וַיְהִי ׀	וַיְהִי ׀
H1961	Now it came to pass when they spake	H413	daily	daily	H3808
	H559		H3117	H3117	
שָׁמַע	אֵלָיו ׀	הָגִיד	לְהָמָן ׀	לְרֹאשׁוֹת	
unto him and he hearkened	H413	for he had told	Haman	to see	
H8085		H5046	H2001	H7200	
הִיָּעָמְדוּ	דְּבַר י	מִרְדֵּכַי י	כִּי	הָגִיד	לָהּ ׀
would stand	matters	whether Mordecai's	H3588	for he had told	H1992
H5975	H1697	H4782		H5046	H834
הָיָא	יְהוּדִי׃				
H1931	them that he was a Jew				
	H3064				

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 39:10 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.

Jonah 1:9 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.