

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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

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	בַּאֲמָתָּה	מִ	אֶלְיוֹן	וְיֻמָּלֵת	אֵל
H1961	Now it came to pass when they spake	H559	H413	daily	H3808
			H3117	daily	H3117
עַל	שְׁמָעָה	מִ	הָגַדְתָּ	לְפָנָיו	לְרָאֹת
unto him and he hearkened	H413	אֶלְיוֹן	H5046	Haman	to see
H8085			H2001		H7200
בְּעִמָּדוֹת	דִּבְרָכָךְ	מִרְדָּכָא	יְ	הָגַדְתָּ	לְפָנָךְ
would stand	matters	whether Mordecai's	H3588	for he had told	H1992
H5975	H1697	H4782	H5046		H834
וְאֵלֶּה	וְהַזְּדִינָה				
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.

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