

MORDECAI ... who kept his head by using it
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(ESTHER 4:13-14)

The book of Esther is the one book in the Bible where the name of God is unmentioned, yet nowhere is divine over-ruling so evident as in this ancient story. Constantly we are reminded of the glorious fact that, although God may seem to be absent, He is never far from His people. The chief character in this wonderful account is the heroine queen Esther; but the guiding genius behind every act is Mordecai-the man who kept his head by using it.

God Seeing

"Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai . . . Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity . . . And he brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter" (Esther 2 : 5-7). Surely, this magnificent act of kindness was well-pleasing to God. He who cares for the fatherless and the widow, probably implanted within the mind of Mordecai the desire to adopt the bereaved orphan. And so God commenced to prepare for the day when Israel would need a saviour. Elsewhere in the Scriptures God has promised, "Before they call, I will answer" (Isa. 65 : 24), and this is a classic example of that great promise.

God Suggesting

After the dethronement of queen Vashti, the king began to seek for her successor, and the search created excitement throughout the land. The most attractive of Babylon's maidens had to be presented at court, and in order to make this possible, emissaries went in search of candidates. "And Esther was brought also to the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him . . . Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it" (2:8-10). Mordecai's actions were unpredictable, for not only was this an act of presumption; it was against the entire teachings of Israel that a Jewess should seek marriage with a heathen. Yet the urge to send Esther to the palace deepened to conviction, and for better or for worse he committed himself to the plan. And God watched his every movement.

God Smiling

"In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains . . . sought to lay hands on the king . . . And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name . . . and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king" (2:21-23). This act of saving a king's life called for reward, yet in some mysterious way the thought never entered the king's mind; and the waiting Jew only smiled! He was satisfied. Later, when God's people were in danger, the monarch was unable to sleep, "and he commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles, and they were read before the king" (6:1). Poor Ahasuerus: how he tossed and turned-and all the time God calmly looked down

MORDECAI ... who kept his head by using it upon the royal bed and smiled! Perhaps He even whispered, "Sorry-but not tonight." Then the frustrated king developed an interest in the national records, and when the servant commenced to read, it happened that he read at the place which spoke of Mordecai's action in saving the king's life. When the listener's eyes opened in wonderment, God smiled again!

God Saving

In the hour of need, Mordecai had appealed to the queen urging her intervention on Israel's behalf. He had been clothed in sackcloth and had fasted, and since these were religious rites, it is certain that he had prayed to God. The great man prayed and worked, and success attended his efforts. The story reveals that on several occasions Esther risked her life; yet she was never in danger, for she lived in the shadow of the Almighty. And when the drama was played to its climax, "Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed" (10: 3). The historian omitted the name of God probably considering that it was unnecessary. God was everywhere in his story, and that would be sufficient!

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