

Message #6

Esther 2:19-23

In our text today, it appears to be an interesting, life-threatening crisis with positive results. However, when we read Esther 6:1-3 we realize that God was clearly directing this crisis because down the road He wanted to elevate Mordecai to a great level of power so He could preserve His people.

GOD SOVEREIGNLY DIRECTS AND WORKS IN CRISIS SITUATIONS AND IN THE RESPONSES OF HIS PEOPLE IN ORDER TO WORK OUT HIS FUTURE PROGRAM.

HISTORICAL FACT #1 – This crisis occurred when virgins were gathered. **2:19a**

Here is one of the most difficult verses in the entire book. It is not known for sure why the virgins were gathered a second time or what it means that they were gathered.

Some suggested interpretations are:

- 1) Ahasuerus was a polygamist who was looking for more women to add to his harem.
- 2) This was a second group of virgins who arrived after the appointment of Esther, who were dismissed and sent home.
- 3) This was another group of virgins who were trying to supplant Esther after her appointment to queen.
- 4) This was a final parade of all the women in order to honor Esther who had been named queen.

Certainly for Esther, the promotion to being queen was one of the highlights of her life. There must have been a remarkable elation and even a realization that God was remarkably using her. In the soon aftermath of all of this, Esther was once again faced with the hard-core reality of the real world, which featured many intimidating people and threatening situations. When you have just been named queen and you see many other virgins on the scene, she could not help but feel somewhat insecure.

HISTORICAL FACT #2 – This crisis occurred when Mordecai was elevated. **2:19b**

The words “sitting at the king’s gate” are words that mean more than just Mordecai’s location; they are words that refer to his position. H. A. Ironside said these words, according to Oriental custom, mean that Mordecai had been elevated to a key position of power and was sitting in a high position acting as a judge, something that corresponds to biblical truth (Prov. 31:23) (p. 30).

This fact becomes a key feature repeated several times in this book: 2:21; 3:2-3; 5:9, 13; 6:10, 12. It is very clear that the writer wants to emphasize that one of the immediate things that happened when Esther was named queen was that Mordecai, a Jew, was elevated to a key position of power. This is an amazing demonstration of God’s sovereignty because this was a Persian world, with a Jew now sitting in a key political position of power.

HISTORICAL FACT #3 – The crisis occurred when Esther's nationality was not known.

2:20

Esther had still not informed the king of her Jewish nationality. The reason was not because she was ashamed, but because she was obedient. Esther obeyed Mordecai. She obeyed him when he was raising her as his daughter and she obeyed him now that she was the reigning queen.

Being elevated to queen did not change Esther's attitude. She was a submissive woman, who still sought the counsel of Mordecai. Dr. F. B. Huey says that Esther's "continued obedience to Mordecai becomes important to the plot" (p. 810).

Notoriety and fame did not change her and she still sought the counsel of Mordecai and it is this very quality that will eventually lead to the sparing of God's people.

HISTORICAL FACT #4 – The crisis occurred when two officials decided to kill the king.

2:21

In direct contrast to the submissive spirit of Esther, we learn of a subversive spirit in Bigthan and Teresh.

Leadership is a lonely and oft times perilous position. Even though Ahasuerus had done everything he could to make people happy, with parties and reduction of taxes, there were still some who hated him.

In the world of political ambition, human life is oft times subservient to political ambition.

HISTORICAL FACT #5 – The crisis was made known to Mordecai. **2:22**

It is not stated how Mordecai learned of the plot to assassinate the king. Some have suggested he may have overheard a conversation between the two or others, and some have suggested that God specifically revealed it to him. We may safely assume that it may have been a combination of both. God was certainly sovereign and in His sovereignty, He allowed Mordecai to learn of the plot to kill the king.

There is no question that Mordecai saw this plot as something that could hurt Esther. If King Ahasuerus were killed, it could mean Esther would be removed and they might find themselves in a perilous position. Certainly Mordecai wanted to protect Esther and himself, so he reported this plot to Esther, who told the king.

Neither Mordecai nor Esther had any idea how important this would be later. But it was this very act of loyalty that God would later use to promote Mordecai to a high level in order to preserve His people (6:1-3).

HISTORICAL FACT #6 – The crisis was swiftly resolved. **2:23**

1) The report was thoroughly investigated. **2:23a**

Even though the report came from Esther, the king still thoroughly did his homework and carefully ascertained all of the facts, which did line up with the report.

2) The culprits were immediately punished. **2:23b**

Both of the men were hanged on a gallows, which sent a strong message to the rest of the kingdom; namely, you do not rebel against this authority unless you are prepared to pay the price of losing your own life.

3) This action was carefully reported. **2:23c**

This is a critical point to this story; a careful historical log was kept and written down before the king, which described this entire matter.

4) Mordecai was not immediately rewarded.

There is no letter of commendation or promotion. There is no thank you even given at this time. Mordecai had literally been responsible for saving the king's life and yet he is not even personally thanked.

God was sovereignly directing this entire program. There is no question that this was a crisis situation and God was in it. He was working out His will His way in order to care for His people in the future.

The promotion of Esther and Mordecai, the rebellion of Bigthan and Teresh and their execution were all part of the sovereign plan of God, designed to protect His own people.

If you are in the family of God, you are the most cared for person in this universe. No matter what crisis you are facing, no matter how bizarre or negative the circumstances, God is sovereignly caring for you.