

Explore the Bible Series for February 4: When Life Turns Upside Down

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When Life Turns Upside Down

- Esther 2:5-10, 16-17, 21-23

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Mordecai and his family including Esther faced unavoidable changes. Esther most likely had no choice in becoming a candidate for queen, but she chose to make a positive adjustment to this new challenge and won the favor of the official in charge of the process. King Ahasuerus made Esther his queen, and she used her position to give a warning from Mordecai that enabled the king to thwart a royal assassination plot

When life turns upside down the Christian is encouraged to trust God in the midst of trials and tribulations. We can trust God completely in life's situations by accepting unavoidable changes, by adjusting to new challenges, and by availing yourself of opportunities. When life turns upside down it is better to be with God, than to have life right side up without God.





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Accept Unavoidable Changes (Est. 2:5-7)

“Mordecai” was taken to Shushan, the winter capital of Persia, but Daniel and Ezekiel remained in Babylon. The name Mordecai is related to the name of Marduk, the principal Babylonian deity. Here he is called “a certain Jew,” proving that the term is used of any Israelite from any tribe and not Judah only. “Shimel” may refer to the man from the family of Saul who cursed David (2 Sam. 16:5-13). “Kish” may be the father of Saul (1 Sam. 9:1-2). If these figures are the ones intended, they are Mordecai’s remote ancestors from the tribe of Benjamin.

Verse six is difficult to interpret, as the Hebrew text does not indicate the subject of the verb “had been carried away.” The subject could not be Mordecai. If he had been among those carried away into captivity, he would not likely have lived until the time of Ahasuerus. The subject might be Mordecai’s ancestor Kish, understood to be a different person than the father of Saul. It is also possible that the original phrasing just means that Mordecai and his family were among those descended from the captives who were taken to Babylon in the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

“Hadassah” is a Hebrew name that means “myrtle.” “Esther” was related to that of a local deity, the goddess Ishtar. Jewish people in antiquity customarily had two names when they lived in regions distant from Israel. One would be their secular name, a name understandable in their adopted culture, and the other would be their sacred name given in Hebrew.

Hadassah was an orphan and her father was Mordecai's uncle and his father's brother. Mordecai raised his cousin Esther as his own daughter. She lived outside the palace with Mordecai and he carried on his duties in the palace.

Adjust to New Challenges (Est. 2:8-10)

Esther was brought to the king's palace to enter the context to determine who was the most beautiful and talented virgin in all the empire. Besides the influence of God upon Haggai it could be that there was a warm friendship between him and Mordecai, as palace servants that added to Esther's opportunities.

The phrase "obtained kindness of him" characterizes Esther's relationships with all who knew her, including the king. She received special favor from Haggai, keeper of the women, who gave her all things for her purification, seven maidens to be her attendants, and the best place in the entire harem. Esther found favor with many.

It was part of Mordecai's plan for Esther to keep secret her relationship to him and the fact that she is a Jewess—an important element in the plot—even though to do so she must eat unclean food and otherwise ignore the distinctive observances of the Jewish law. The time does come when Esther would identify herself and her people (Est. 7:3-5). The self-disclosure would come at the point when the danger to her person was higher.

Avail Yourself of Opportunities (Est. 2:16-17, 21-23)

Esther became the principal wife of the king four years after Vashti was divorced.

The month "Tebeth" corresponds to our December-January. The king

apparently was so delighted with Esther that he “made her queen” right away. The nouns “grace and favor” together mean “abundant favor.”

The phrase “sat in the king’s gate” means that Mordecai had an official position. Shortly after Esther became queen, she gave Mordecai a position within the king’s gate where official business took place (Deut. 22:13-15). Mordecai learned of a plot by “Bigthan and Teresh” to take the king’s life. He told Queen Esther about it and she told the king. After the investigation was completed the men were executed and the report of the saving of the king’s life by Mordecai was written in the records of the kings of Persia. Mordecai not only used this information to save the king, but eventually his own people.

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