

Mordecai And Haman

Esther 2:19-3:15

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 4:10

“For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A small ball.

Construction paper, scissors, and markers.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Simon Says

Play a simple game of Simon Says. Have some fun and do some variations to be silly with the class. After playing for a few minutes, stop and have the children come together. Ask them if it was easy to do what was being said or “commanded.” It is often easy to do what everyone else in the group is doing and not pay attention to the command.

Ask the children if they think it would be easy or hard to not do what everyone else was doing. Today, a Jewish man, Mordecai, took a stand for what was right. The pressure to compromise was strong, yet he stood tall, obeying the law of his God. Ask the children to tell about a time in their lives when they stood for what is right. What happened?

LESSON TIME!

Remember Esther and the story of how she became Queen? The King ordered that all the beautiful, young women of the kingdom be gathered. The young woman who pleased the King most would be made Queen, replacing Vashti, the former Queen who had been banished. Esther, a young Jewish girl, who had been raised by her cousin Mordecai, was taken from her home to be among the

women who were gathered. After a year of preparation, the time finally came for her to be presented to the King; he was so pleased with Esther that she became the new Queen. Esther was a young woman caught up in events that were really outside of her control. But, God was in control. God had a plan to deliver His people from danger. Esther and her cousin, Mordecai, would be God's instruments in His incredible plan.

Now, the Jewish people, living in captivity in Babylon, were no longer free to be governed by God's laws. They had to obey the laws of the King of Persia; to disobey the king's law meant immediate punishment. Many Jewish people would need to make a choice to obey God or to obey man. Mordecai would need to make that difficult choice in our lesson, today. If you were faced with such a choice, what would you do? **Let us take a stand for God.**

ESTHER 2:19-23

When virgins were gathered together a second time, Mordecai sat within the king's gate.

Now Esther had not revealed her family and her people, just as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai as when she was brought up by him.

In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus.

So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name.

And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. He probably held an official position as a judge or a person handling legal matters. While on duty, Mordecai discovered that two of the king's officials were plotting to kill King Ahasuerus.

Mordecai quickly revealed the plot to Queen Esther who reported the assassination attempt to the king, giving credit to Mordecai for uncovering the scheme. The investigation led to the execution of both men who were hung on a gallows.

A record of this assassination attempt was recorded in the official royal record books. Note! A record was made—that's all. One would think Mordecai should have been rewarded for his heroic work on behalf of the king, yet nothing is mentioned. It seems to have been forgotten. Later on this neglect surprised the king, and he sought to correct it (Esther 6:1-3).

Can you think of a time when you did something special for someone, and they failed to thank you or show appreciation to you? It is good to remember that God does not forget. Kind and unselfish acts done to please God will reap rewards—here on this earth and in heaven.

ESTHER 3:1-3

After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him.

And all the king's servants who were within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage.

Then the king's servants who were within the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?"

Shortly after the assassination plot, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman to the highest position possible. Haman was a proud man. He loved to see the people bow and pay homage as he passed. One man, however, did not bow; Mordecai refused to bow, for it was against God's law; he would only bow to God. Though in Persia, kings and their chief officials were considered to be like gods and demanded to be treated like such, Mordecai knew only the true and living God deserved worship.

What an example of courage and commitment! Mordecai did not compromise. He did not give in under pressure. He certainly knew he was endangering his standing and position with the king and perhaps his life; yet, though alone, he took a stand and stayed standing! **Let us take a stand for God.**

When faced with a choice between man's law or God's law, the right decision is clear. Acts 5:29 states, "...We ought to obey God rather than men." Doing what is right in God's eyes is not always popular or easy--those who follow God's ways will be the minority. Though not popular, it is extremely wise to obey God's Word; for in so doing, one has built his house upon a rock (Matthew 7:24). Let us take a stand to obey and follow God, without compromise.

ESTHER 3:4-6

Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told it to Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew.

When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath.

But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus; the people of Mordecai.

Haman loved his power and authority and the reverence shown him. The Jews, however, looked to God as their final authority, not to any man. When Haman realized Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, all his enjoyment of the pomp and prestige he experienced while riding through palace streets ceased. Anger consumed him--anger, not only against Mordecai, but toward all the Jewish people; for he knew they, too, would honor the laws of their God, rather than honor him.

Haman conceived that the only way to fulfill his prideful desires was to kill all those who worshiped and honored their God rather than himself and the king. Imagine! Haman was willing to kill an entire people just so he could have everyone bow down to him. Pride is at the root of much sin. Watch out for pride.

ESTHER 3:7-11

In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month, until it fell on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar.

Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain.

"If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king's treasuries."

So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

And the king said to Haman, "The money and the people are given to you, to do with them as seems good to you."

Haman did not waste any time in preparing a plan to destroy the Jewish people. The people in the Persian Empire were extremely superstitious; their religious system stressed fate and chance. So, Haman decided to cast lots by using a pur to determine when to begin his crusade to eliminate the Jews.

Haman needed only the king's approval. Officials in the ancient world used signet rings as personal signatures to make an imprint on the sealed document in order to certify it. Haman is given the king's ring, giving him the authority of the king to do whatever he wished. Little did the king realize that his own signature would sign the death warrant for his own wife, Esther! The king had no idea that Queen Esther was a Jew, for Mordecai had advised her to keep her nationality a secret (Esther 2:10).

This seemed to be a good day for Haman. Not only did Haman receive the king's approval, but it would cost him nothing. He could not have hoped for a better situation. Yet, he did not realize that God had a plan to protect His people. God has the power to overcome any evil plot against His children. In Isaiah 54:17, we read: "No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord,..."

Think about it! The Jews had no idea of what was brewing in Haman's heart and mind. They had no clue of the evil plan that threatened their nation with extinction. Sometimes, we can see the storm coming; other times, we are unaware of the trouble coming upon us. But, God knows what lies ahead; and because He does, we can rest. Psalm 121:4 says, "Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Nothing happens without His knowledge and permission.

ESTHER 3:12-15

Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and a decree was written according to all that Haman commanded; to the king's satraps, to the governors who were over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring.

And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, and to plunder their possessions.

A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province, being published for all people, that they should be ready for that day.

The couriers went out, hastened by the king's command; and the decree was proclaimed in Shushan the citadel. So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

Haman's death decree was against all Jews in the Persian Empire, which included Israel. Haman intended to rid the world of God's people. As the edict was being dispersed to all the king's provinces, Haman sat down to drink with the king, celebrating his act of revenge against Mordecai and the Jews.

The people of the city were full of fear and confusion. How could the king order such a decree, approving such a wicked law as this? All the men, women, and children of Israel would be annihilated. There would be great bloodshed in all the land.

The Jewish people appeared to be in great danger. The situation seemed out of control! Yet, God was still in control. God had a plan of deliverance *already* in motion! We can take courage that God is in control of our lives. We are His children, and He watches us carefully. No turn of events or actions of men can ever frustrate God--nothing catches Him by surprise. God can guide us through and out of any circumstances we face. It is a wise thing to put our hope in God. God's good plan for our lives cannot fail!

Mordicai took a stand to obey God, rather than man, though his stand was not popular and even threatened his life. The Bible says the man who delights in the law of Lord will be blessed! (Psalm One). Mordicai might not seem blessed now—he and his entire nation of people have been threatened with annihilation. Yet, the story is not over! God will deliver Mordicai and his people. **Let us take a stand for God.** We *will* be blessed!

Keep Away

You will need a small ball for this game. Choose the two tallest children in your class. Play “Keep Away” by having one child at a time be the one in the middle. Do not let the child in the middle catch the ball at all. Keep doing this with each child until all have had a turn, but do not allow any of the children to get the ball.

Ask the children if they had a good time playing “Keep Away.” Many will probably say, “no” because they never got to catch the ball or a turn to be the “thrower.” Have everyone sit in a circle and explain to them that you did that on purpose to prove a point. Haman treated the Jews unfairly and unkindly. How fair was the decree that all the Jews should be killed? Consider how Mordecai had just helped to keep the king from getting killed. How do you think the Jews felt about the decree?

Explain to the class that no one likes to be treated unfairly or unkindly. Let us be careful to treat others as Jesus would treat them. Play “Keep Away” again allowing others to have a turn.

Standing Up For Jesus

Using some Voice of the Martyr’s materials, or other materials that highlight the persecuted church, concentrate on a particular country where people are persecuted because of their stand for Jesus. Spend a few minutes talking about the country and what takes place when people refuse to reject Jesus.

Using construction paper, scissors, and markers, have your class make a flag of that nation or other reminder of the brothers and sisters who live there in persecution. Ask the children what they think it would be like to stand up for Jesus in that nation. Ask them if there was a time when they had to make a stand for what was right. Pray together for that nation and the believers who live there.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to take a stand for the Lord—to obey God rather than man. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.