



**Book of Esther / Lesson 3
Mordecai and Haman**

Mordecai And Haman

Esther 2:19-3:15

Servants Preparation instructions:

- Pray, read the chapters in the bible and the lesson thoroughly.
- Within the lesson you will find actual verses of the chapter and explanation of the part
- Make sure to use the maps and the intro info [from lesson1] for all the upcoming lessons as reminder.
- **Attention gritter** is an ice breaker and intro to the lesson, use your discretion for age appropriation; if it does not suit your class age try tweaking it a bit to fit
- There are **activities and crafts**; they are meant to engage the class and have them pay more attention; , use your discretion for age appropriation; if it does not suit your class age try tweaking it a bit to fit
- Announce the **Lesson goal** and have the kids point out where is the goal in the passages you read together.
- There are video resources/ games resources at the intro [from lesson1] make sure to incorporate some for each lesson.
- Questions and assignment at the end: you don't need to do all of them, but you can use them either during class for checking on comprehension/ or at the beginning of the next class for revision/ as a home work or at the end of the book as a competition assignment with rewards.

	Part	Chapters
2	The banquet of Queen Esther	3 - 7

Chapter outline:

Chapter 2	Mordecai saves king Ahasuerus [this part would be taught in the next lesson]	Verses 21 – 23
Chapter 3	Haman and Mordecai	Verses 1-6
	The royal decree to annihilate the Jewish people	Verses 7-14
	The king and Haman sat down to drink	Verse 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!

Lesson Goal: Let us take a stand for God.

Review of previous lessons:

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

Mordecai Discovers a Plot [Conspiracy against the king]

¹⁹ When virgins were gathered together a second time, Mordecai sat within the king’s gate. ²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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. ²² So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. ²³ 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

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 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).

This was part of God's plan, if he got rewarded now, it may spoil God's plan. He will be rewarded on time and it would be part of the plan to save his people.

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 Chapter 3:

The banquet of queen Esther	3 - 7
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Esther 3:1-3

Haman's Conspiracy Against the Jews

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. ² 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. ³ 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

Haman and Mordecai

⁴ 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. ⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. ⁶ 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.

How did the trouble start?

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.**

According to **St. Jerome**, [as the word 'Haman' means (Oppression), Haman was burnt by the fire of his wrath he himself kindled] / Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty.

Esther 3:7-11

The royal decree to annihilate the Jewish people

⁷In 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.

⁸Then 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. ⁹If 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."

¹⁰So 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. ¹¹And the king said to Haman, "The money and the people *are* given to you, to do with them as seems good to you."

Haman's Plan:

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

¹² 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. ¹³ 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, in one day, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month of Adar, and to plunder their ^apossessions. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ The couriers went out, hastened by the king's command; and the decree was proclaimed in ^bShushan the ^ccitadel. So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was ^dperplexed

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!**

Mordecai 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).* Mordecai 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 Mordecai and his people. **Let us take a stand for God.** We *will* be blessed!

The Decree [from Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty]: Mentioned in Chapter 16

The annex to the book of Esther, which came in the Septuagint version, presents to us a copy of the royal decree, sent in the name of Ahasuerus to all the 127 provinces of the kingdom; the following are its most important points:

(1) It accused the Jews of betraying the trust of the king, who did them good, through breaking up his laws; and considered that their destruction would bring peace to the whole kingdom; saying: "When these wicked people go down to Hades in one day, peace which they have disturbed, will be restored to our kingdom" (13: 7).

(2) It called Haman, the second person after the king, who honors him as a father figure. Therefore, all are committed to consent to his counsel, concerning the destruction of that adversary people, together with their women and children.... Here, meditating a little in calling Haman 'a father figure'; he actually represents the devil who provides his followers with an evil fatherhood.; As, according to the Lord Christ, addressing the wicked Jews: "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father, you want to do" (john 8: 44). As God, presents to us His fatherhood, to make us carry, as children, the features of our father, and to enjoy the fellowship of His eternal glory; So does the devil, who presents his evil fatherhood to his followers, to make them carry his features, and partake of his eternal perdition.

Keep Away Game

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 [Activity]

Using some Voice of the Martyr's materials, or other materials that highlight the persecuted church, concentrate on a particular country [Maybe Egypt] 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

Why is Esther's identity as a Jew kept secret?

What does Haman propose to the king?

What is the result of Esther's meeting with the king?

Why does Haman hate the Jews?

Observation Questions

How did Mordecai find out about Haman's plot?

What did the king agree to do?

How did Esther find out about the plot?

What did Haman want the king to do?

When did Haman want the Jews to be destroyed?

What was Haman's plan for the Jews?

Why was Haman's anger so great?

Who did Haman go to speak to about his plot?

Group Discussion Questions

What did Esther request of the king? (v.7-9)

How did Mordecai react when he learned of the edict? (v.15-16)

Why was Haman so angry with Mordecai? (v.10-11)

What did Esther do when she learned of Haman's plot to destroy the Jews? (v.1-4)

When did the edict authorizing the destruction of the Jews to take place? (v.12-14)

What did Mordecai tell Esther to do? (v.5-6)

What did Esther do next? (v.17-18)

What did Haman persuade the king to do? (v.12-14)

Assignments on Esther 3

Please read Esther 3 and answer the following questions.

1. Who was Haman? What position was he given – 3:1?
2. How was he honored? Who refused to do this – 3:2?
3. Describe how firm Mordecai was in his stand. What reason is given for this – 3:3,4? (Think:

Was bowing to a ruler always wrong? For what reason might Mordecai have refused?)

4. **Application:** List some lessons we can learn from Mordecai's conduct?

5. How did Haman feel regarding Mordecai's conduct? What did he decide to do – 3:5,6?

(Think: What does this tell you about Haman's character?)

6. How did Haman decide the time for executing his plot – 3:7? Define "Pur."

7. What reason did Haman give for wanting to destroy "a certain people" – 3:8?

8. What did he offer to pay if the king would agree – 3:9?

9. How was the decree written and circulated to the people – 3:12-15?

10. What did the decree say?

11. Special Assignment: Why would such a decree be important in Bible history?