

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 we will learn about Mordecai who took a stand for what is right. He didn’t compromise or just go along with what everyone else was doing. Ask the children to tell about a time in their lives when they stood for what is right. What happened?

LESSON TIME!

The Jews were not well liked and living in captivity among the people of Persia took courage. To disobey the king’s law meant immediate punishment. The Jews were no longer free to be governed by God’s laws, but by whatever laws the king of Persia made. This meant that many of the Jews would often have to make a choice to follow God or to follow man. Which do you think we

should do if we are given the same choice? **God wants us to make a stand for Him.**

In the previous lesson, we were introduced to a man named Mordecai. We will see today that he had to make some very hard decisions. Mordecai's life was filled with challenges which he turned into opportunities. Instead of bowing down to pressure (giving in), he made a stand for God. As we look at his life we learn that **God wants us to make a stand for Him.**

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.

Let's take a moment to review. The book of Esther begins with Queen Vashti refusing to obey an order from her husband, King Ahasuerus. She is then banished, and the search begins for a new

queen. Esther, a young Jewish woman, is one of those chosen to be in the royal harem. King Ahasuerus is so pleased with Esther that he makes her his new queen.

As our story unfolds, we can see the hand of God in the midst of His people. Later in our lesson, we see that the Jewish people will become victims of a wicked man who has the power to destroy them; but God is in control, placing chosen individuals such as Esther and Mordecai, her cousin, in positions that allow them to take action for Him. **God wants us to make a stand for Him.**

Mordecai was a man who accepted responsibility by adopting Esther as his own when her mother and father died. He committed to guide and protect her. Esther was a young woman caught up in events that were really outside of her control. But God was still in control. God used Mordecai to give her advice while comforting her fears.

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

Mordecai quickly reveals 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 impaled on a post, a record of this assassination attempt was recorded in the official royal record books.

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?"

King Ahasuerus promoted Haman to the highest position possible shortly after the plot to kill him. It would seem that Mordecai should have been rewarded for his heroic work on behalf of the king, yet nothing is mentioned, as though he was forgotten. Later on this neglect surprised the king and made him angry (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? This can bring about great disappointment, making us wonder if our efforts were worth the time. It is times like these when we need to remember that it is God who sees us and rewards us when we do all things as unto Him. He will recognize our kindness to others and reward us.

Haman is a man who is filled with pride. He wants everyone to bow down to him and pay homage to him. But Mordecai refuses to bow down to Haman. Mordecai would only bow to God. In Persia, kings and their chief officials were considered to be like gods, and they demanded to be treated like such. Mordecai knew only the true and living God deserved worship.

Mordecai was very strong in his faith and refused to give in. He did not compromise what he knew was right in order to make others feel good about themselves or to protect his standing and position with the king. He had the courage to stand alone. **God wants us to make a stand for Him.**

Doing what is right is not always popular or easy. Those who do right will be the minority, but to obey God is more important than to obey people. We need to make a stand for God when we are faced with a choice to compromise (give in) or obey man.

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 enjoyed the power of his position; he now was a powerful man who enjoyed having everyone bow down to him. When Mordecai did not respond, Haman became very angry. Haman's anger was not only directed towards Mordecai, but to everyone who was a Jew. He hated everything that Mordecai and the Jews stood for.

Our devotion and worship must be reserved for God alone. We should never let any person take the place of God. Mordecai stood alone, ignoring those around him who questioned his disobedience to the king's command. When people demand loyalties or other actions from you that do not honor God, do not give in. When you are given the opportunity, take a stand for God. **God wants us to make a stand for Him.**

Mordecai was different; he wanted everyone to know that he was under the control of God. It is God who he had to answer to and to worship anyone other than God was to break God's law. Obeying God's Word was more important than obeying man's rules.

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. Haman realized the only way to fulfill his prideful desires was to kill all those who looked to a higher authority rather than himself and the king. His consuming desire for power led him to hatred of an entire group of people.

It is sad that at the root of so much sin is pride. Now Haman was willing to kill an entire people just so he could have everyone bow down to him. It sounds kind of silly doesn't it? But pride in our lives can be very destructive, especially if it makes us want to hurt others or be unloving towards others in order to get what we want.

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. Ask the children how they think that Mordecai felt after the king read the proclamation that all of the Jews would be killed, especially after he had just helped to keep the king from getting killed. How do you think that the rest of the Jews felt about the decree?

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

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 didn't waste any time to prepare a plan to destroy the Jewish people. The people in the Persian Empire were extremely superstitious with a religious system that stressed fate and chance.

Haman decided to cast lots by using a pur to determine when to begin his crusade to eliminate the Jews.

Little did Haman know that he was playing into the hands of God, for the day of defeat was set for almost a year away, giving Esther time to make her plea to the king. Though Haman was planning to destroy the Jewish people, God was acting on behalf of His people to bring about judgment to Haman and for protection for His people.

Sometimes we can see the storm coming; but other times we are unaware of the trouble coming upon us. God knows. We are in His hands, in His loving care. Nothing happens without His knowledge and permission. The Jews had no idea of what was going on in Haman's heart and how he would carry out his hatred for their extinction.

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, which certified 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 it was Mordecai who advised her to keep her nationality to herself (Esther 2:10).

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 evil, so do not let your heart grow weary and afraid. **God wants us to make a stand for Him.**

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, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, 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 in his pride meets with the king to have a big party, celebrating his act of revenge against Mordecai and the Jews.

The people of the city are 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. Who would take a stand for God's people? **God wants us to make a stand for Him.**

With God in charge, we can take courage. He can guide us through the circumstances we face in our lives. Any turn of events or actions of man never frustrate God, nothing catches Him by surprise. We can put our hope in God, because He will carry out His plan.

God is able to save us from the evil in this world and deliver us from sin and death. As we take our stand with God to trust Him, we need not fear what men can do to us. Instead, we can be confident in God's care for us.

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 our brothers and sisters that are there in persecution. Ask the children what they think that it may be like in that nation to stand up for Jesus. Ask them if they have had a time when they had to make a stand for what was right. Pray together for that nation and for the believers in Jesus that live there.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to always make a stand for Jesus if and when it ever becomes necessary. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.