

# Mordecai saves the King

**Storyteller:** *Hold Esther and Artaxerxes and show them to the children:* You have heard the story about Esther, the refugee girl who became Queen of Persia, and about King Artaxerxes who loved her above all other women. *Set up the Persia backstand still with the Gallows folded back.*

**Esther 2.19 -**

When the virgins were being gathered together, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. Now Esther had not revealed her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had charged her; for Esther obeyed Mordecai just as when she was brought up by him. In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Ahasuerus. But the matter came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. When the affair was investigated and found to be so, both the men were hanged on the gallows. It was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.

After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the officials who were with him. And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and did obeisance to Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow down or do obeisance. Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's command?" When they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's words would avail; for he had told them that he was a Jew. When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or do obeisance to him, Haman was infuriated. But he thought it beneath him to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So, having been told who Mordecai's people were, Haman plotted to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

Today's story is about two other people: Mordecai, Queen Esther's only relative – *place Mordecai in front of the central "palace" part of the backstand, to the right of the doorway;* and Haman, King Xerxes' most trusted friend – *place Haman in front of the central "palace" part of the backstand, to the left of the doorway.* King Xerxes trusted Haman so much, that he even let Haman make laws just as if he were king himself, and told his officials to bow down to Haman.

*Lift up Mordecai in your right hand and hold him out.* One day, Mordecai heard two people planning to kill King Xerxes.

*Lift up Esther with your left hand and hold her out.* Mordecai told Queen Esther about the plan.

*Put down Mordecai, and pick up Xerxes.* Queen Esther told King Xerxes, and so the King's life was saved. King Xerxes was very grateful to Mordecai for saving his life.

*Put down Esther and Xerxes, and pick up Haman instead.*

But Haman hated Mordecai, because even though all the king's officials bowed down to Haman, Mordecai would not bow down to anyone but God. The Jews, the Children of Israel, were scattered through all of the Persian Empire, and none of them would bow down to anyone but God. So Haman plotted to destroy all the Jews.

*Pick up Xerxes.* Haman went to King Xerxes and said, "There is a certain people in your kingdom, who rebel against your

**Story Materials**

- Esther
- Artaxerxes
- Mordecai
- Haman
- Persion backstand

Tray, basket or shallow open box to hold the story

laws. You should have them destroyed!” King Xerxes trusted Haman and told him “Go and do what you have said.” *Put down Xerxes.*

In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur—which means “the lot”—before Haman for the day and for the month, and the lot fell on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, “There is a certain people scattered and separated among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king’s laws, so that it is not appropriate for the king to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued for their destruction, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king’s business, so that they may put it into the king’s treasuries.” So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. The king said to Haman, “The money is given to you, and the people as well, to do with them as it seems good to you.”

Then the king’s secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king’s satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language; it was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king’s ring. Letters were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces, giving orders to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. A copy of the

Haman rolled some dice and the number '12' came up. Then he rolled the dice again, and the number '13' came up. So he made a law that, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the people of Persia should rise up and attack any of their neighbours who were Jews; to kill them all: men, women and children; and steal all their belongings.

But still Haman was bitterly angry against Mordecai. He told his wife “All my riches and honour does me no good, as long as the Jew Mordecai refuses to bow down to me!” His wife told him, “build a high gallows, and have Mordecai killed there!”

*Fold forward the Gallows portion of the backstand so that the children can see it.* So Haman built the gallows, and Haman had the new law read aloud in all the Persian Empire.

Then Haman and King Xerxes sat down to have a drink, while the people of Persia reeled in horror.

document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation, calling on all the peoples to be ready for that day. The couriers went quickly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

**Esther 5: 9-14**

Haman went out that day happy and in good spirits. But when Haman saw Mordecai in the king’s gate, and observed that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was infuriated with Mordecai; nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home. Then he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh, and Haman recounted to

them the splendor of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and the ministers of the king. Haman added, “Even Queen Esther let no one but myself come with the king to the banquet that she prepared. Tomorrow also I am invited by her, together with the king. Yet all this does me no good so long as I see the Jew Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate.” Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged on it; then go with the king to the banquet in good spirits.” This advice pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.