

## 26.02 Haman's Plot (Esther 2:21–3:15)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] Brackets indicate a remark to the teacher that will not be read aloud; they also show answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional needed materials. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- A journal-type notebook (optional)
- A current calendar plus the two pictured at the end of this story
- A five-pound sack of flour
- Sealing wax and a signet ring or some ring with an embossed top. If unavailable, use the picture at the end of this lesson. Another alternative is to use soft clay such as Play Doh® for the sealing wax and rubber stamps for the signet ring. The Play Doh® dries and seals the paper as wax does. (A homemade “Play Dough” recipe follows this lesson.)

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print on colorful cardstock and cut apart.

- *king's gate*: the entrance to the king's house or palace. Men who were allowed to be near the king's gate were trusted servants and officials of the king.
- *chamberlains*: servants who served within the house, even in the bedroom, of a master. They were the most trusted of servants.
- *Amalekites*: enemies of Israel who attacked the feeble (sick and/or old) who were trailing the rest of the people as the Israelites were going from Egypt to Canaan. God told King Saul to destroy them utterly, but he didn't.
- *bowing to the king's officials*: To bow respectfully to an official was not against God's law, ✓ but in Shushan/Susa, the king's official was considered to be some sort of a god. Therefore, to bow to such a person, who was supposedly a god, was to disobey God's law [John Gill's Exposition on Esther 3:2].
- *casting lots*: In our classroom we *draw* lots from a jar, but first of all, we need to put our “lots” into the jar. That is casting lots—casting them into the jar to be pulled out later. Is it just luck that determines which lot is taken? No, for God says in Proverbs 16:33, “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.”
- *calendars*: the chart that tells us the time of year. For example, [show current calendar and today's date] today is \_\_\_\_\_ (month, day, year). Other calendars look different from ours. [Show Egyptian calendar.] This Jewish calendar [show picture of Jewish calendar] would normally look like ours with pages for each month. This chart, however, shows how the Jewish calendar compares to ours. Notice that their months are not the same names as ours, nor are their first, second, etc., months at the same time as our January, February, etc. Rather, their first month, Nisan, is during our March and April.
- *king's ring* or *royal signet*: Having the king's ring was a great honor and responsibility, for with it a person could give a king's decree. The king's seal was on the ring. When melted wax was dripped on a document and the king's ring pushed into the wax, that gave the king's permission for whatever was on the document. [If the teacher has sealing wax and a ring, let the students use it now.]

### Scripture: (ESV)

Esther 2:21 In those days, as Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, became angry and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. 22 And this

came to the knowledge of Mordecai, and he told it to Queen Esther, and Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai. 23 When the affair was investigated and found to be so, the men were both hanged on the gallows. And it was recorded in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

3:1 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, and advanced him and set his throne above all the officials who were with him. 2 And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage. 3 Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" 4 And 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 stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew. 5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or pay homage to him, Haman was filled with fury. 6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So, as they had made known to him the people of Mordecai, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

7 In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that is, they cast lots) before Haman day after day; and they cast it month after month till the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. 8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed 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 to the king's profit to tolerate them. 9 If it please the king, let it be decreed that they be destroyed, and I will pay 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, that they may put it into the king's treasuries." 10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. 11 And the king said to Haman, "The money is given to you, the people also, to do with them as it seems good to you."

12 Then the king's scribes 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 signet ring. 13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with instruction 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. 14 A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation to all the peoples to be ready for that day. 15 The couriers went out hurriedly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the citadel. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

### **Introduction/Review:**

Mordecai had taken care of Esther like a father when her birth mother and father had died. Now he worked at the palace in Susa (also called Shushan) for King Xerxes. When King Xerxes sought a new queen, Esther was his choice. However, King Xerxes did not know that Esther was a Jew, for Mordecai had said, "Do not tell the king or anyone that you are a Jew."

### **Story:**

#### ***Mordecai discovers a plot***

Mordecai sat at the king's gate. This means he was a trusted official of King Xerxes. One day while he was at the king's gate, Mordecai learned that two of the king's chamberlains were very angry with Xerxes. They were so angry that they planned to take the king's life.

When Mordecai found this out, he informed Esther of the plot. Esther told the king, saying that Mordecai was the one who had learned of and reported the plot. Sure enough, when the king investigated, yes, it was true. Those chamberlains were guilty.

✓“Hang them!” cried Xerxes. “Now, write it down in the history book: [Teacher, pretend to write in a journal as you say the words.] Quote: ‘Two door keepers attempted to kill King Xerxes. Mordecai, who sits at the king’s gate, uncovered the plot. He told Queen Esther; Queen Esther told King Xerxes. The door-keepers were hanged.’ Unquote. There. That’s now history that is preserved.”

Xerxes had many important advisors in his court. One of these officials was named Haman, and he was called an Agagite. ✓This term informs us that he was probably a descendant of the Amalekites, whom Israel’s King Saul had been told to destroy; however, he never had finished the job. This Agagite, Haman, became a favorite of Xerxes, so the king made him chief of all the princes, worthy of being bowed to ✓as a god.

God’s first and second commandments state, “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not bow down to them.” Oh! Oh! What would Mordecai, a true servant of the most high God, do? Well, he would not bow to Haman, and that was that! All the officials at the king’s gate bowed and revered Haman but not Mordecai.

### ***Haman discovers Mordecai***

“Why aren’t you obeying the king’s commandment, Mordecai?” asked other servants.

“I am a Jew. ✓My God’s<sup>1</sup> law states, ‘You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not bow down to them.’ I cannot bow to a man who proclaims he is god.”

Day after day the same scene played over and over. Haman would come out of the king’s house through the king’s gate. All the servants except Mordecai would bow to him at the king’s gate.

“Why don’t you bow?” the servants kept asking Mordecai.

✓“I cannot bow to a man who claims he is a god,” answered Mordecai.

✓It seems as if Haman hadn’t really noticed Mordecai until the other servants asked him one day, “Is it okay that Mordecai does not bow to you? He says that because he is a Jew, he cannot bow to a man, for the law of his God forbids it.”

### ***Haman plots extermination***

After that, Haman was careful to notice Mordecai. ✓“Why, he did not bow! How dare he! I’ll take care of him! No, wait a minute! I’ll do more. I’ll take care of all the Jews! That will teach him!!”

Haman made plans to destroy, not just Mordecai, but all the Jews of the Persian kingdom. Remember, that Persian kingdom extended from India to Ethiopia. [Locate.] ✓That means nearly every single Jew on earth at that time would be exterminated. Which important woman would that include? [Esther.]

✓Haman gathered his friends together. He said, “Here, let’s cast lots to see on which month and day we will destroy all the Jews. [Show the Jewish calendar.] We are in the first month of the year. ✓Let’s hope the day of destruction is soon. Okay, draw out a lot. Which month is it? ✓[Disappointed.] Oh, the twelfth month? That’s a long time to wait! Now let’s draw for the day of the month. Okay; the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. Well, at least I have a date so that I may talk to the king about this matter.”

When Haman went to the king, this is what he said: “There is a certain people scattered among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different, and they do not keep the king’s laws.”

Just a minute! “They don’t keep the king’s laws”? Mordecai merely didn’t bow. Was he disobeying *all* the king’s laws? No! What else did Haman say?

“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. I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work.”

Let’s stop here a minute. What did Haman want to do to the Jews? [Destroy them.] How much money was Haman personally willing to give to destroy these people? [10,000 talents of silver.]

Let me tell you about this amount of money. [See chart that follows this lesson.] ✓ A silver talent weighed 75 pounds; that would be the total weight of 15 five-pound sacks of flour. That's just *one* talent of silver! In the United States of America today [as of 8-20-24], each talent was worth almost \$30,000.00!<sup>2</sup> That's more than some people earn in a whole year—just in one talent of silver. If Haman would give 10,000 talents of silver, how much money was that? [Older students might do the math, moving the decimal point four places to the right.] The answer is this: Haman was willing to give \$300,000,000.00! That's a LOT of money! If a person earned \$30,000 a year, it would take 1000 years to make that amount.

### *Xerxes grants permission*

Now, let's get back to the story. When Xerxes heard Haman, the Bible doesn't tell about his asking any questions at all. He just took off his signet ring, gave it to Haman, and said, "I'll give you the money you need. I'll also give these people to you. Do with them as you wish."

Haman wasted no time. By the thirteenth day of that very same first month, Haman had prepared letters to send to all the governors of all 127 provinces, to all the rulers of every nation, and in all the languages of the provinces. These documents were decrees in the name of Xerxes, ruler of the kingdom, and sealed with the king's signet ring. Messengers hurried to take these letters to all parts of the vast kingdom.

This is what the letter said. [Teacher, read from the letter, found below, which you have rolled into a scroll.] "Xerxes commands the people of his kingdom to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and to take their possessions. This document is to be law in every province, being published for all people so that they may prepare for that day."

Ah! Haman was satisfied with himself. His plan was working. In twelve months he would pay back Mordecai with the worst punishment possible. He celebrated with the king, sitting down to drink, while people of the city of Shushan/Susa were troubled and confused, pondering the fact that they would be exterminated—would be no more—in less than a year.

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<sup>1</sup>The word *God* is not found in the book of Esther, but Mordecai's being a faithful Jew indicates he followed God's law and might have used the word *God* in his answer.

<sup>2</sup>Price per "1 Pound of 925 Sterling Silver is currently valued at **\$396.32 USD** based off current silver market sterling spot price per troy oz of \$27.18 USD" ([Sterling Silver Price Per Pound \(Live\) | CoinBin.com](https://www.coinbin.com/sterling-silver-price-per-pound-live)). Therefore, 75 pounds x \$400/pound = \$30,000.

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- We see Jesus:  
"[Mordecai] was not rewarded presently, but a book of remembrance was written. Thus with respect to those who serve Christ, though their recompence is adjourned till the resurrection of the just, yet an account is kept of their work of faith and labour of love, which God is not unrighteous to forget, Heb 6 10" ([Esther 2 Commentary - Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible \(Complete\)](https://www.biblestudytools.com/esther-2-commentary-matthew-henry-commentary-on-the-whole-bible-complete/) ([biblestudytools.com](https://www.biblestudytools.com/))).
- Obey God's Law no matter what. God gives grace to believers to do His will.
- Jews have been the focus of extermination throughout history, e.g., Germany in World War II. Today Christians are the target by Muslims and others. [Read an article to older students from a magazine like *Voice of the Martyrs* in order to show the horrors of persecution.]

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: ring; hamantaschen [pronounced HAH mahn TAH shen] (Fold up 2 sides of a 3-inch circle, pinching a corner where the 2 sides meet. fold up the third side and pinch the 2 remaining corners.)

- Snack: Hamantaschen, a three-cornered filled cookie said to look like Haman’s supposed hat. A recipe may be found at [Easy Hamantaschen Recipe \(allrecipes.com\)](http://allrecipes.com).
- Sing (perhaps before the story) “The Ten Commandments,” and “Holding Up Hands,” found on the “Songs” page at [teachingthebibleto kids.org](http://teachingthebibleto kids.org).
- Cast (draw) lots for some simple thing such as a penny, or use the numbers at the end of this lesson to “cast/draw lots” for the day and month you would have chosen if you had been Haman.
- Arrange students’ chairs so that one is close to the teacher. If possible, elevate the teacher’s and the “favorite’s” chair. Draw lots to see which student is the “favorite” and let that one sit with the teacher for a time. This is to show how Haman was placed (but not by drawing lots) above all the other princes.
- Do a readers’ theater using students who can read. This skit is found at [Scene 1](#), and the skits to go with today’s story are Scenes 3 and 4. (More acts to this skit can be performed in coming lessons.)
- Review questions: (Game: A student who answers a question correctly may press a “signet ring” into a glob of wax or soft clay as described in the “Visuals and Tools” section above. Prepare for this game by placing 7 globs of wax or soft clay on one piece of paper or on 7 different document-like pages.)
  1. What was the plot against Xerxes that Mordecai reported? [Two trusted servants intended to murder Xerxes.]
  2. Who did Xerxes make the chief of all his princes? [Haman.]
  3. What were all the servants at the king’s gate supposed to do to Haman? [Bow to him.]
  4. Why didn’t Mordecai bow to Haman? [Because he obeyed God’s law.]
  5. When Haman discovered that Mordecai didn’t bow to him, what did he decide to do? [Kill all the Jews.]
  6. How did Haman and his friends determine on which date the Jews would be killed? [Drew/cast lots.]
  7. Would it be a few or a several months before the date? Explain your answer. [Several; lots were cast in the first month, and the date of destruction was the twelfth month.]

### Memory Verse[s]:

- Daniel 3:17: “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us.”

### Handwork:

- Make a Haman mask from the picture found at the end of this story. Print on card stock. Punch a hole on each side of the mask near the ear. String narrow elastic through the holes and tie to fit the student’s head.
- Or, color the picture found at the end of this lesson.

**king's gate**

**chamberlains**

**Amalekites**

**bowing to king's officials**

**casting lots**

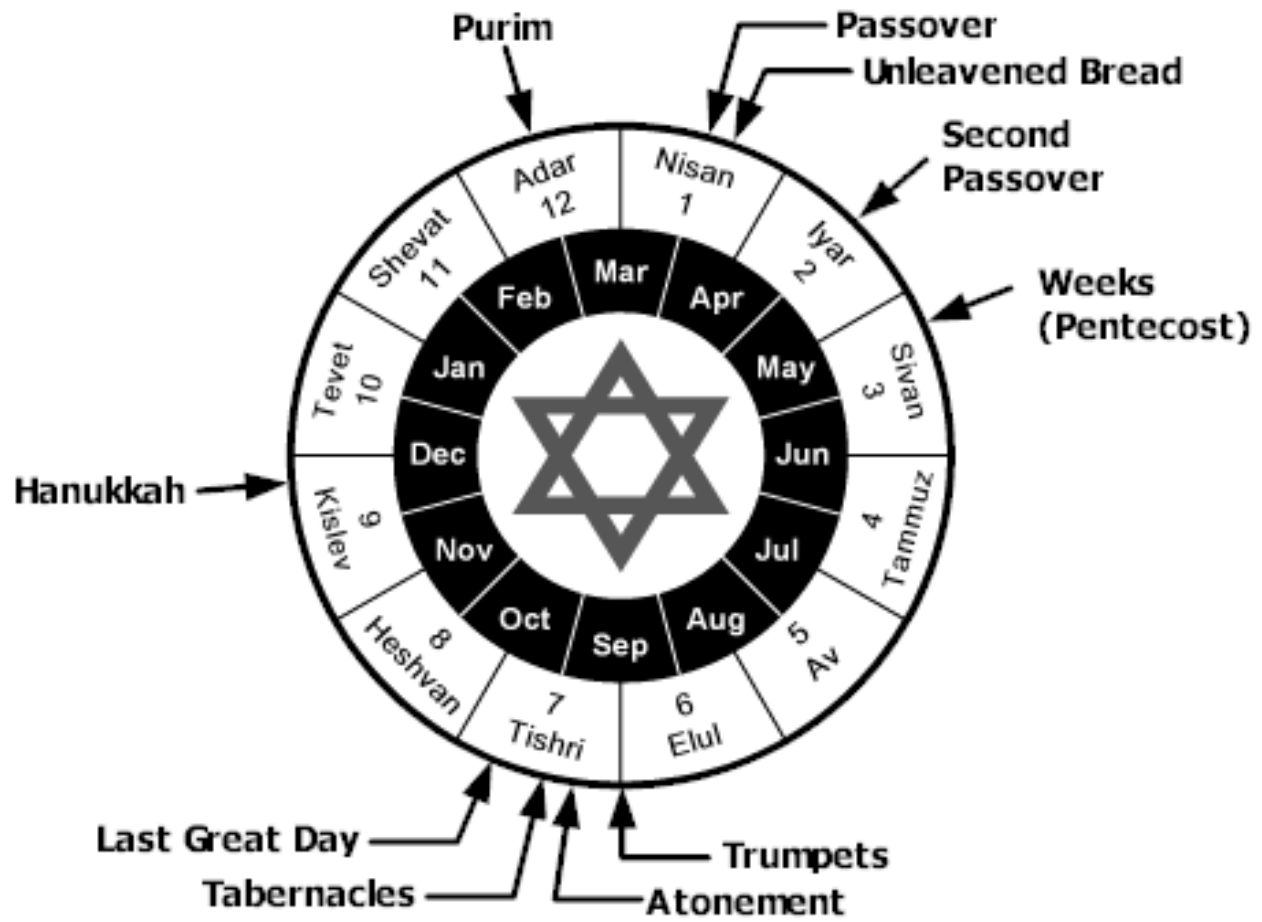
**calendars**

**king's ring or royal signet**



Ancient Egyptian Calendar

(unknown source)



Jewish calendar compared to our calendar

(unknown source)





(unknown source)

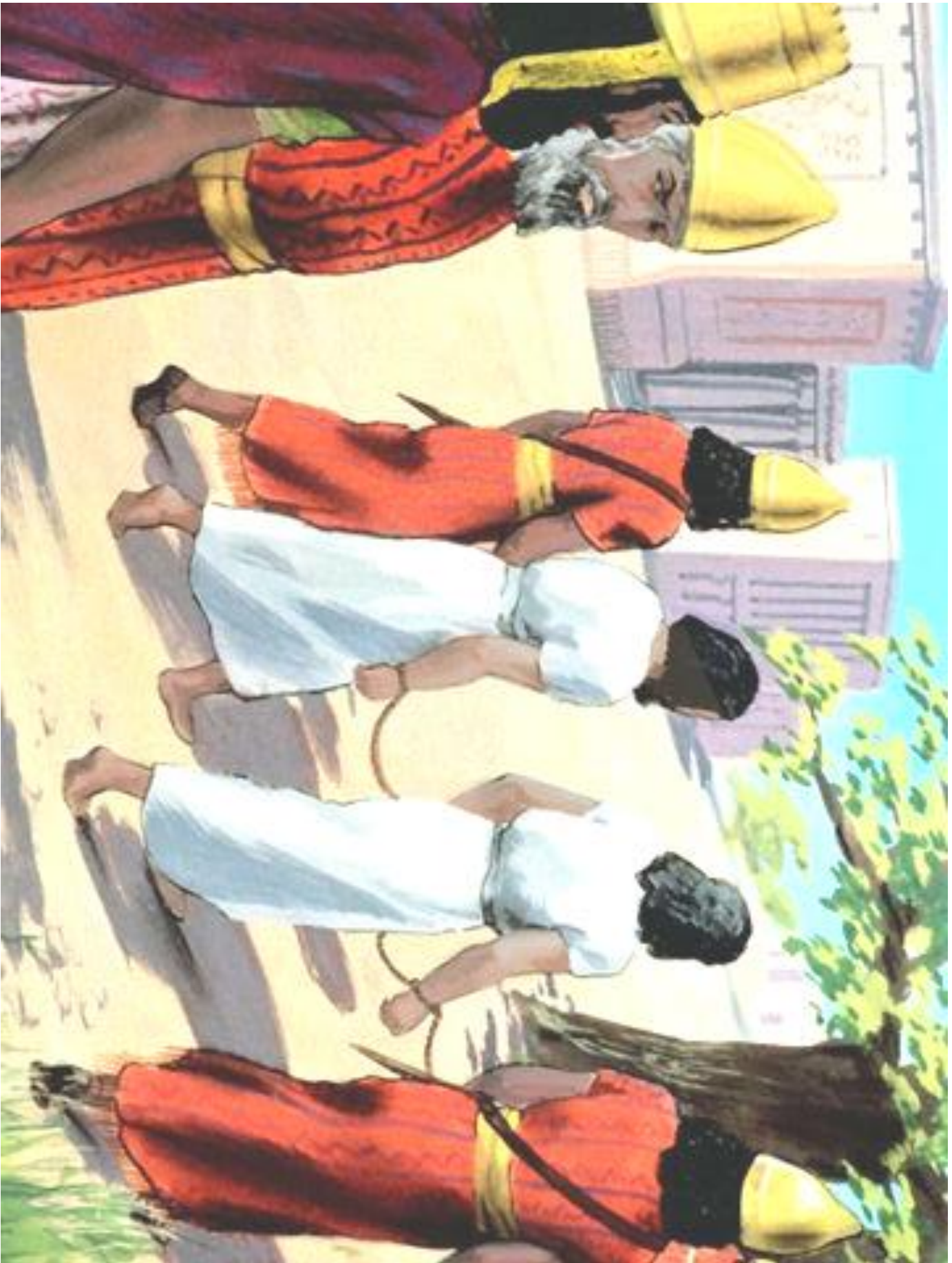




[FreeBibleimages :: Queen Esther prays for help :: Queen Esther asks God to save her people from Haman \(Esther\)](#)



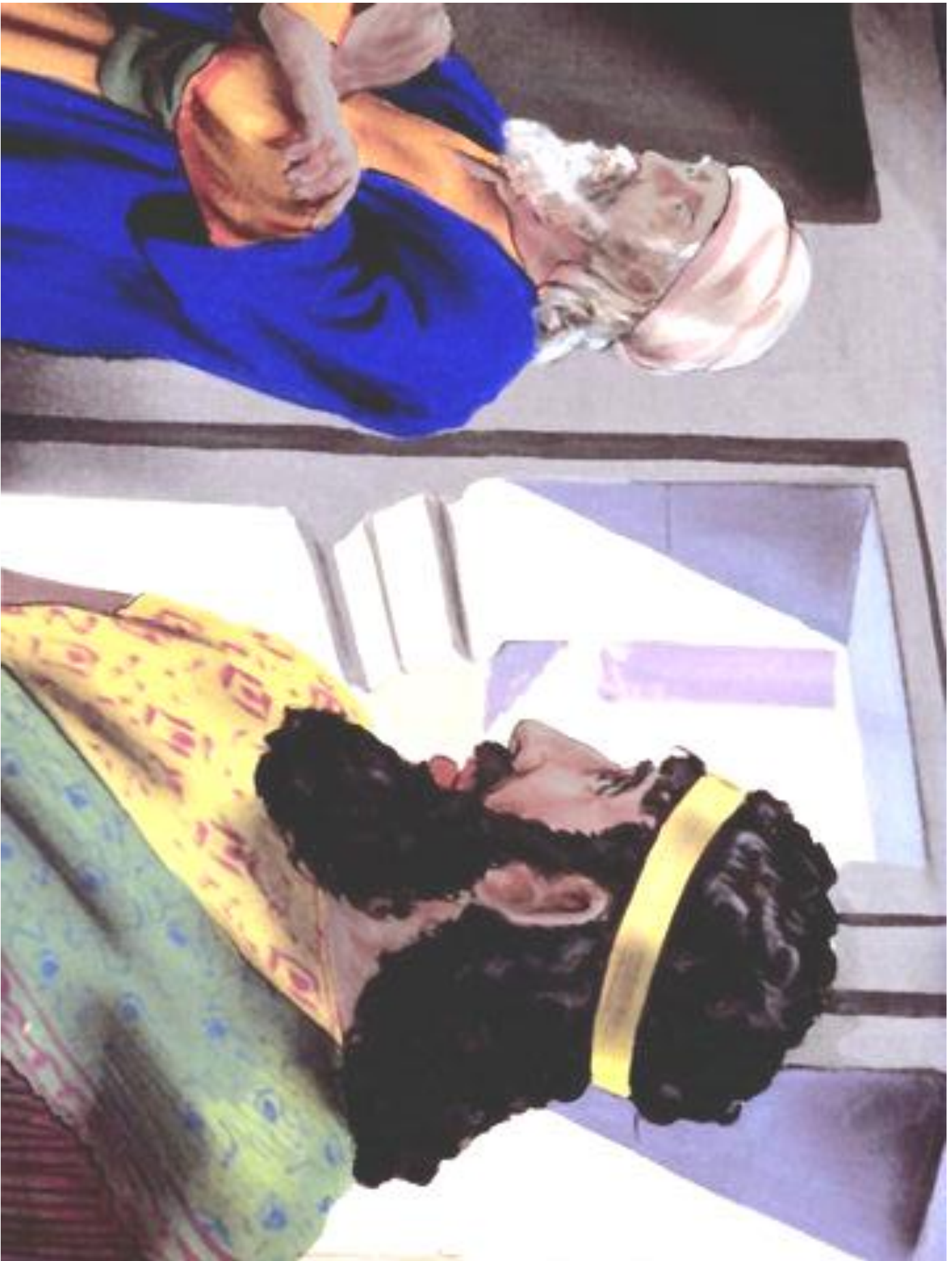
[FreeBibleimages](#) :: [Queen Esther prays for help](#) :: [Queen Esther asks God to save her people from Haman \(Esther\)](#)



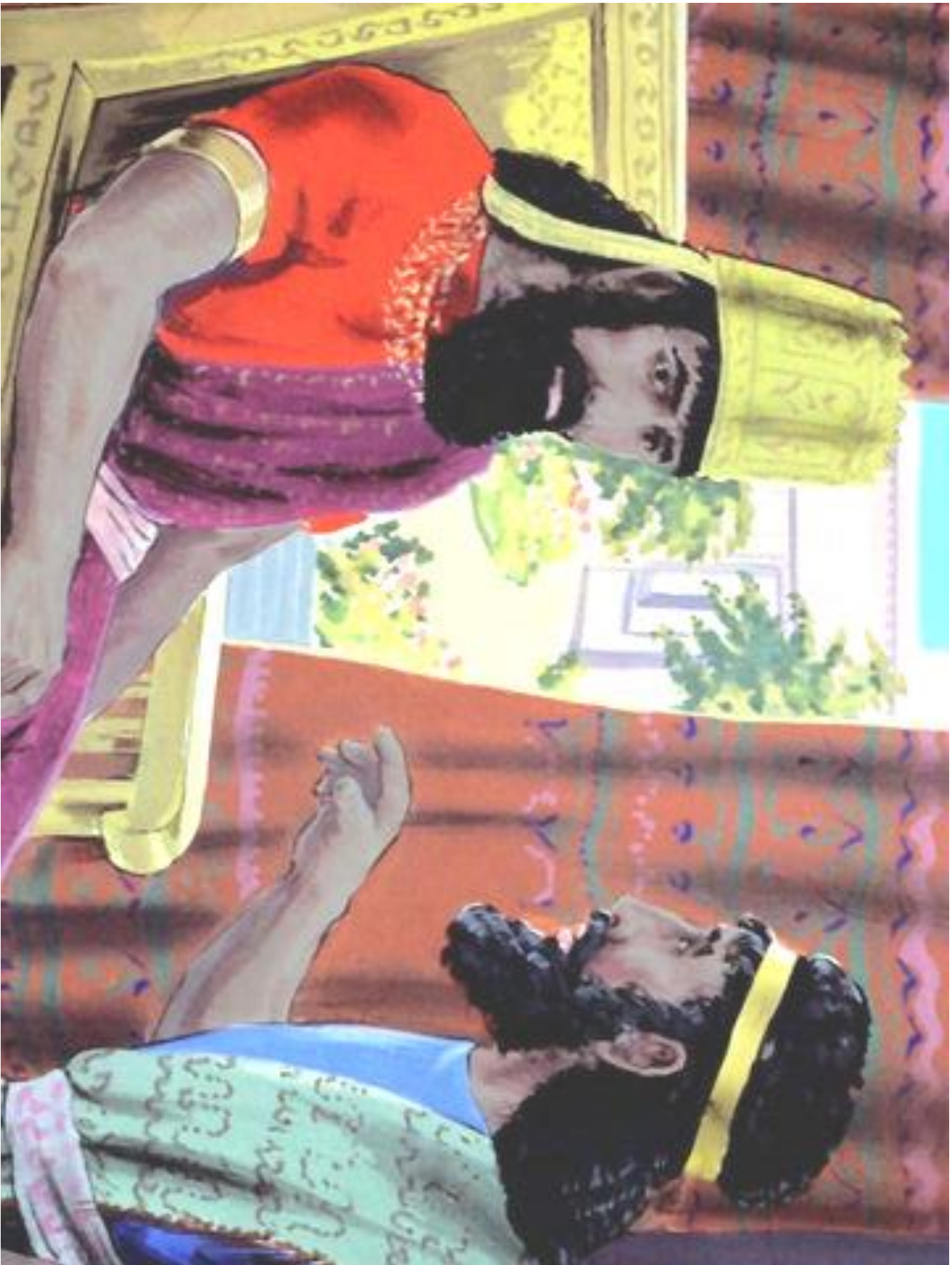
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[FreeBibleimages](#) :: Esther - The Chosen Bride :: Queen Esther, Mordecai and the threat from Haman (Esther)

**1 silver talent weighs  
75 pounds.**

**At today's prices  
(<\$400 per pound),  
one talent of silver  
would be—  
\$30,000.**

**10,000 talents of silver  
would be—  
\$300,000,000.**

"Xerxes commands the people of his kingdom to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and to take their possessions. This document is to be law in every province, being published for all people so that they may prepare for that day."

Teacher, roll this page as a scroll and read at the appropriate place in the story.

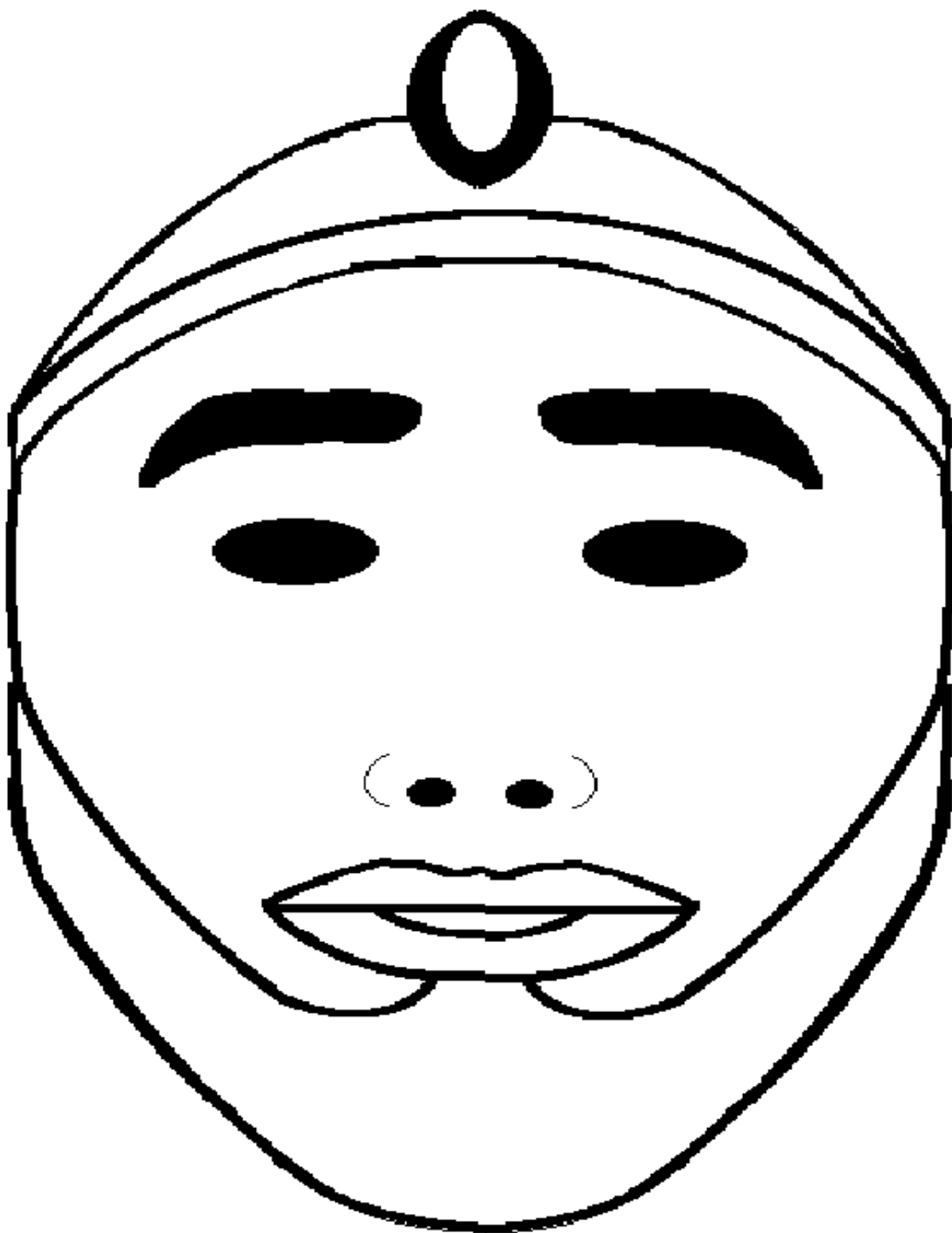
<b>First Month</b>	<b>Second Month</b>	<b>Third Month</b>	<b>Fourth Month</b>	<b>Fifth Month</b>	<b>Sixth Month</b>
<b>Seventh Month</b>	<b>Eighth Month</b>	<b>Ninth Month</b>	<b>Tenth Month</b>	<b>Eleventh Month</b>	<b>Twelfth Month</b>
<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Day 6</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Day 8</b>	<b>Day 9</b>	<b>Day 10</b>	<b>Day 11</b>	<b>Day 12</b>
<b>Day 13</b>	<b>Day 14</b>	<b>Day 15</b>	<b>Day 16</b>	<b>Day 17</b>	<b>Day 18</b>
<b>Day 19</b>	<b>Day 20</b>	<b>Day 21</b>	<b>Day 22</b>	<b>Day 23</b>	<b>Day 24</b>
<b>Day 25</b>	<b>Day 26</b>	<b>Day 27</b>	<b>Day 28</b>	<b>Day 29</b>	<b>Day 30</b>

Cut apart on lines. Keep the “month” lots separate from the “day” lots.

“Cast the lots” for the month into the “hat.” Have someone draw out a month. (Haman’s was the twelfth.)

Take the months out of the “hat.”

“Cast the lots” for the days into the “hat.” Have someone select a day. (Haman’s day was 13.)



Haman from <http://www.holidays.net/purim/costumes.html>



“Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai’s matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew. And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.”

**ESTHER 3:4–5**



Haman is seen in this picture with the traditional three-cornered hat. ( <http://kaufman-center.org/images/press/2009-mar-mch/PAGE5.QueenEsther.jpg>).

## PLAY DOUGH

This recipe is for play dough that is not oily, smells good, is pliable, and can be rejuvenated with water when it starts to dry out. (*Growing in God's Love*, published by Standard Publishing, 1997).

2 1/2 cups flour

1/2 cup salt

1 Tblsp. cream of tartar

2 pkgs. unsweetened drink mix, like Kool Aid®

seal-top bags or other air-tight containers

Dissolve drink mix in 1 1/2 cups boiling water. Add to dry ingredients in a bowl and mix well, being careful not to get burned. Knead until smooth. Put small amounts in the seal-top bags. This recipe makes enough for 6-8 children.