

26.05 Haman's Plot Exposed (Esther 7:1–10; 8:1–17)

✓ “*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.

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. (Most of these terms are reviewed from previous weeks.)

- *Ahasuerus* or *Ahashusheros*: The Jewish and Bible name for Xerxes. (We say *Xerxes* because it's easier to pronounce.)
- *chamberlains*: the trusted servants to the king who helped him in his “chamber”
- *gallows*: a wooden frame with a rope for hanging people to death. The gallows Haman had built were probably about five times as high as the one pictured below.
- *eating custom in Persia*: Rather than sit on chairs as we do to eat at a table, the Persians lay on low couches, sometimes called beds, at a low table. A person would rest on his/her left side and eat with his/her right hand.
- *to revoke*: put an end to a decree, decision, or promise. For example, a person with a driver's license might have that license (permission) revoked or taken away if he breaks the law. A Jew in Esther's day would have wanted to revoke Haman's decree to put all of the Jews to death. However, the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be revoked.
- *kindred*: family, race, or nation
- *to defend oneself*: when being attacked, to protect oneself or fight back
- *scribes*: men who wrote by hand. There were no typewriters, printing presses, printers, or copy machines in Esther's time. If someone needed copies of a document, the scribes had to write each of those copies.

Scripture: (ESV)

Esther 7:1 So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. 2 And on the second day, as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, “What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” 3 Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request. 4 For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king.” 5 Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?” 6 And Esther said, “A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

7 And the king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king. 8 And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, “Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?” As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face. 9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.” 10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated.

8:1 On that day King Ahasuerus gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And

Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told what he was to her. 2 And the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3 Then Esther spoke again to the king. She fell at his feet and wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil plan of Haman the Agagite and the plot that he had devised against the Jews. 4 When the king held out the golden scepter to Esther, Esther rose and stood before the king. 5 And she said, “If it please the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, and if the thing seems right before the king, and I am pleasing in his eyes, let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king. 6 For how can I bear to see the calamity that is coming to my people? Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred?” 7 Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, “Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he intended to lay hands on the Jews. 8 But you may write as you please with regard to the Jews, in the name of the king, and seal it with the king’s ring, for an edict written in the name of the king and sealed with the king’s ring cannot be revoked.”

9 The king’s scribes were summoned at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day. And an edict was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded concerning the Jews, to the satraps and the governors and the officials of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, 127 provinces, to each province in its own script and to each people in its own language, and also to the Jews in their script and their language. 10 And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed it with the king’s signet ring. Then he sent the letters by mounted couriers riding on swift horses that were used in the king’s service, bred from the royal stud, 11 saying that the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, children and women included, and to plunder their goods, 12 on one day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. 13 A copy of what was written was to be issued as a decree in every province, being publicly displayed to all peoples, and the Jews were to be ready on that day to take vengeance on their enemies. 14 So the couriers, mounted on their swift horses that were used in the king’s service, rode out hurriedly, urged by the king’s command. And the decree was issued in Susa the citadel.

15 Then Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, with a great golden crown and a robe of fine linen and purple, and the city of Susa shouted and rejoiced. 16 The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. 17 And in every province and in every city, wherever the king’s command and his edict reached, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for fear of the Jews had fallen on them.

Introduction/Review:

Haman, the wicked man who planned the annihilation of all the Jews, couldn’t wait until the twelfth month to rid himself of Mordecai, the cousin of Queen Esther. Rather than wait, Haman built a gallows 75 feet high on his own property with the intention of gaining the king’s permission to hang Mordecai the next morning.

But God had other plans. During his sleepless night, King Xerxes was reminded that Mordecai had saved his life. He also learned that Mordecai had never been rewarded for this deed.

When Haman came to ask the king to let him hang Mordecai, Xerxes instead ordered Haman to put the king’s robe on Mordecai, to have Mordecai sit on the king’s horse, and to parade Mordecai through town, shouting, “This is how the king shows honor to a man!”

Humiliated, Haman ran home after the parade. His wife and friends predicted he would suffer a loss of power at the hand of Mordecai. Would he?

Story:

As his friends were discussing Haman’s future, chamberlains of the king came to take Haman to Queen Esther’s second banquet. As the three—Xerxes, Haman, and Esther—reclined at the table, King Xerxes

asked once again (the third time), “Queen Esther, what is your request? Whatever it is, it shall be performed, even to giving you half of the kingdom.”

Esther’s request

Now the time was finally right for Esther to present her appeal. “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, please save my life and the lives of my people. For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated.”

As Haman listened to Queen Esther's request, he must have thought, “This sounds familiar,” for Esther was quoting the very words of Haman’s decree.

Esther continued. “If we had we been sold as slaves, I would have held my tongue, ✓but slavery is not harsh enough for our enemy. Rather, he desires our total destruction.”

“Who is this enemy, and where is he that dares to presume in his heart to do such wickedness?” asked Xerxes.

Haman’s guilt

Esther answered, “The enemy and adversary is this wicked Haman.”

At the mention of his name, Haman became terrified of the king and queen. King Xerxes, angry, got off his couch and left the room, going out into the palace garden. Haman stood up to beg Esther for mercy, for he could see the king would punish him.

King’s anger

As the king returned to the banquet room, however, Haman no longer stood but rather fell upon Esther’s couch. This looked quite “inappropriate” and made Xerxes even more angry. ✓“What will he do to the queen?” he asked. [This is not the actual text but is changed for the sake of young ears.] “Take him away!”

As the king spoke, the chamberlains covered Haman’s face and began to take him away.

“Your Majesty,” interrupted one of the chamberlains, “you should see the 75-foot-high gallows Haman made for Mordecai, the one who had spoken good for the king. The gallows are on Haman’s property.”

“Hang Haman on those gallows—his own gallows!” ordered Xerxes.

So they hanged Haman on the very gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Justice was served, and Xerxes’ anger subsided. “Esther,” he said, “you may have all of Haman’s vast property and riches.”

Mordecai’s promotion

✓“I thank you, sir,” answered Esther. “I would also like to tell you something quite important. Mordecai, the Jew who sits at the king’s gate, is my cousin. When my father and mother died, he took me in as his own daughter.”

✓“Really!?” answered the king. “Bring him here.”

When Mordecai arrived, the king said, “I have given all that Haman had to Esther. To you I will give all the authority he had in the kingdom. Here is the signet ring I gave him. His authority is now yours.”

Empire’s new decree

✓A short time later, Esther again came to the king’s throne room. “O my lord, the king!” cried Esther, falling down with tears at the feet of Xerxes. “Please, please put away the mischief Haman devised against the Jews!”

Showing his acceptance of Esther, Xerxes held out his golden scepter just as he had earlier. Again, Esther touched the end of the scepter. In four different ways she appealed to the king: [Teacher, hold up a finger for each of these four appeals.] “(1) If it pleases the king,” she began, “and (2) if I have found favor in his sight,

and (3) if the thing seems right before the king, and (4) I be pleasing in his eyes, O King, let an order be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the provinces of the king. For how can I endure to see the calamity that is coming to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"

"Listen," said Xerxes. "I have given you everything of Haman's whom I hanged on the gallows because he dared lay hands on the Jews. I have given Mordecai my royal signet ring. Go ahead, and write for the Jews what you wish. Write it in my name, and seal it with my ring. No one can revoke the writing in the king's name that is sealed with the king's ring. ✓ In the same way, no one can revoke what Haman wrote against the Jews in my name and sealed with my ring."

Three months had gone by since Haman's decree. Now, on the twenty-third day of the third month, the king's scribes were ordered to go to Mordecai. Mordecai dictated what they should write:

[Teacher, "declare" from the "scroll" at the end of this lesson that you have printed and rolled up.] "Be it known to all peoples and languages throughout the kingdom of the Persian king, Xerxes, also known as Ahashusheros, that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the Jews may gather themselves together and stand for their lives. They may destroy, slay, and cause to perish all of the people who would strike at them. Furthermore, if the Jews are victorious in their self-defense, they may take the spoil of those whom they strike down."

What a wise way to keep the king's irrevocable first decree with safety for the Jews! The Jews would be able to protect themselves and even slay someone who attacked them.

People's joy

The scribes copied the message over and over and over until there were enough copies to send throughout the kingdom's 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia. Each of these copies was sealed with the king's ring, and then messengers on fine horses carried them to every people and language in the kingdom.

Mordecai, because of his new place of honor before the king, now went out from the presence of the king in royal clothing of blue and white and wearing a large gold crown. All the people, but especially the Jews, were full of rejoicing. Wherever the new decree was heard, the Jews celebrated with joy and gladness, feasting as if they were having a holiday.

So much had happened to change the attitude towards Jews from dislike and disrespect to approval and favor that many non-Jews were afraid of them, even to the point of saying, "We want to be known as Jews too." God had reversed an impossible situation into one of hope and gladness.

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
Esther wept for the sake of her people, but Jesus did much more for His people: He died on the cross to save His people (believers) from the penalty of sin.
- Sometimes when life's troubles seem impossible to fix, God miraculously changes circumstances, and all is well.

Activities:

- Play dough: horse (from a cookie cutter); crown; dining table; couches
- Snack: (If a low table and cushions are available, try eating the snack in a reclined position as the Persians did.)

Kolompeh, (pronounced "ka LOMP") a Persian pastry: A variation of the kolompeh usually made with dates is one made with coconut and pistachio. A recipe is found at [Kolompeh with Coconut and Pistachio Recipe \(cookingconnect.com\)](http://www.cookingconnect.com).

- By their facial expression, voice, and body movements, have students contrast the lamentation of the people after the first decree with the new gladness after the second decree.
- Sing the Purim songs found in the last lesson and a traditional one found below. The music appears at <http://www.musicnotes.com/sheetmusic/mtd.asp?ppn=MN0033435>, but since the song sheet is for sale, we have not copied it here. The melody is not difficult. Shake the groggers made last week at the name of Haman in these songs.
- Watch an 8.75-minute video, “Esther and Mordecai Follow God’s Timing,” found at [Bible Stories for the Young : Stories \(biblestoriesonline.com\)](http://BibleStoriesfortheYoung.com). Click “Stories,” and scroll more than halfway down the page to find the video on the left side.
- Students who can read may do a “reader’s theater” presentation of “Scene 7 – Banquet Table” of this Esther story found at [Scene 1](#). Use the masks made in earlier sessions; also rattle the groggers made last week every time Haman’s name is spoken.
- Review questions: (Game: Print on paper or card stock the clipart of messengers on horseback found below. Cut out in squares. If printed on paper, back with flocked scraps of paper towel. A student who answers a question correctly may place a paper horse on a flannel board or place a card stock horse in a pocket chart.)
 1. How did King Xerxes react when he learned Haman was the man who intended to kill all the Jews? [He was angry.]
 2. What did King Xerxes say when he learned Haman had built a gallows for Mordecai? [“Hang Haman on his gallows.”]
 3. What happened to Haman’s property? [King Xerxes gave it to Esther.]
 4. Who did Esther introduce to King Xerxes? [Mordecai, her cousin and caregiver.]
 5. What did Xerxes give to Mordecai to delegate power to him? [His signet ring.]
 6. Summarize the new decree written by Mordecai. [On the day the Jews were to be killed, they could fight back, slay those who attacked them, and take the spoil.]
 7. Describe the reaction of the Jews in Susa and throughout the empire when the new decree was made known. [Very great happiness.]

Memory Verse[s]: (KJV)

- Romans 8:28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Handwork:

- For older students, print “The Joke’s on Haman” puzzle found below. Have them circle each correct letter under the true or false columns. (The solution is *DESTROYED*.) Students may color the picture.
- Younger students may color the page found at [CURR133.PDF \(calvarycurriculum.com\)](#). (Other activities are on this site for older students.)
- The following site is great for crafts to help remember this story and many others: [Esther's Life | Bible Fun For Kids](#)

Ahasuerus or Ahashusheros

chamberlains

gallows

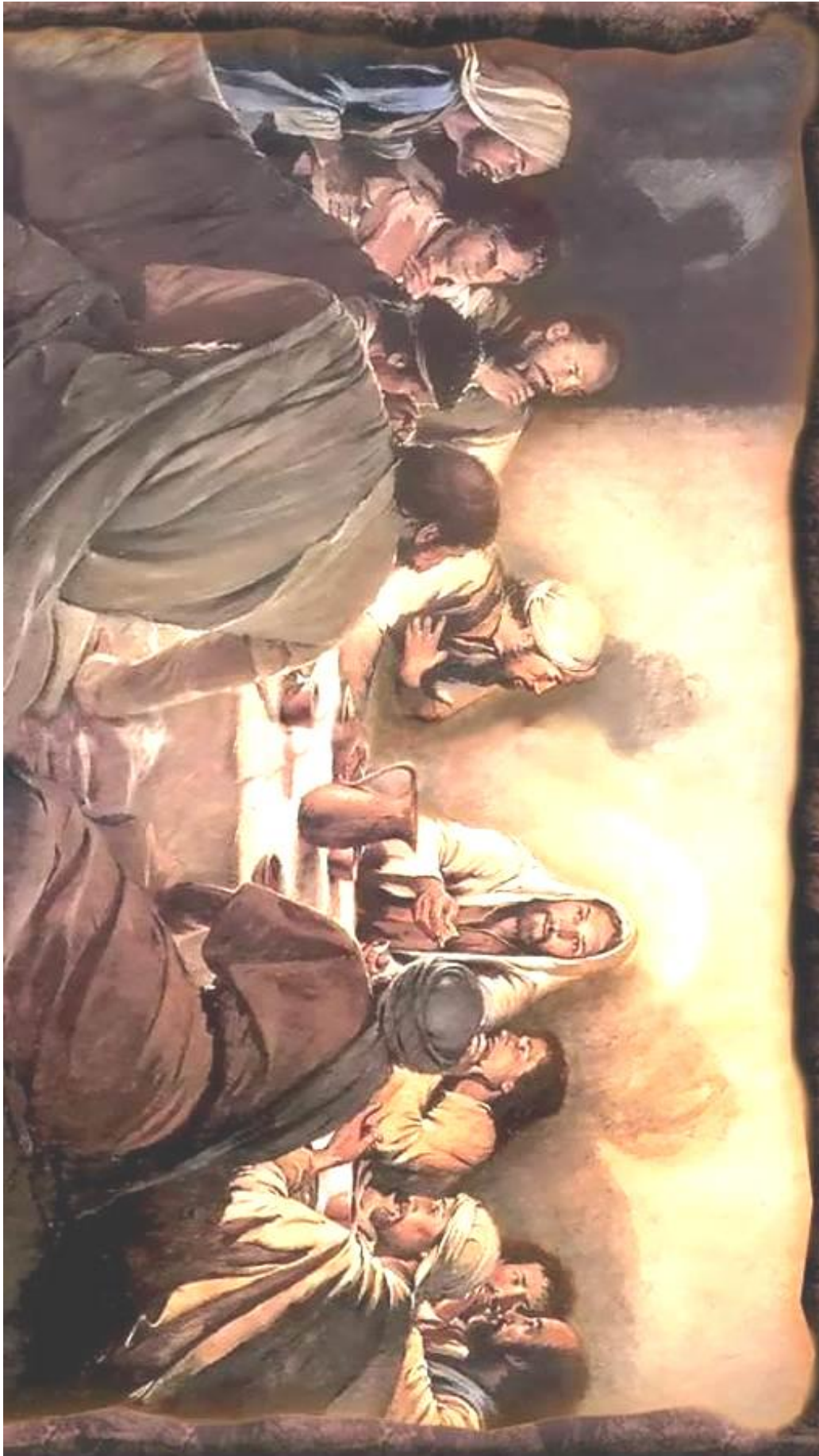
eating custom in Persia

to revoke

kindred

to defend oneself

scribes



This picture of the last supper shows the custom of reclining at the table. (Source unknown)



(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 \(Esther\)](#)



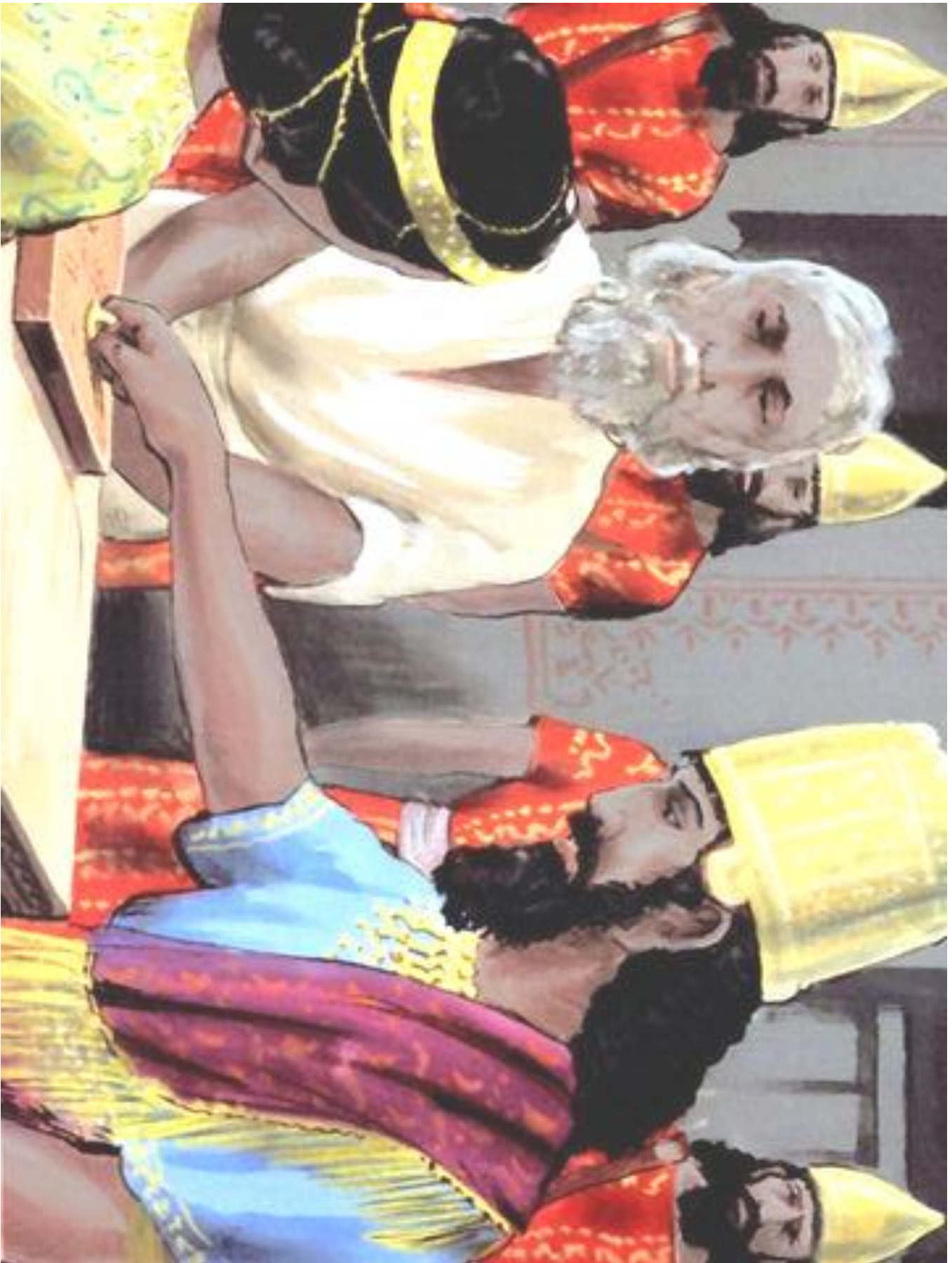
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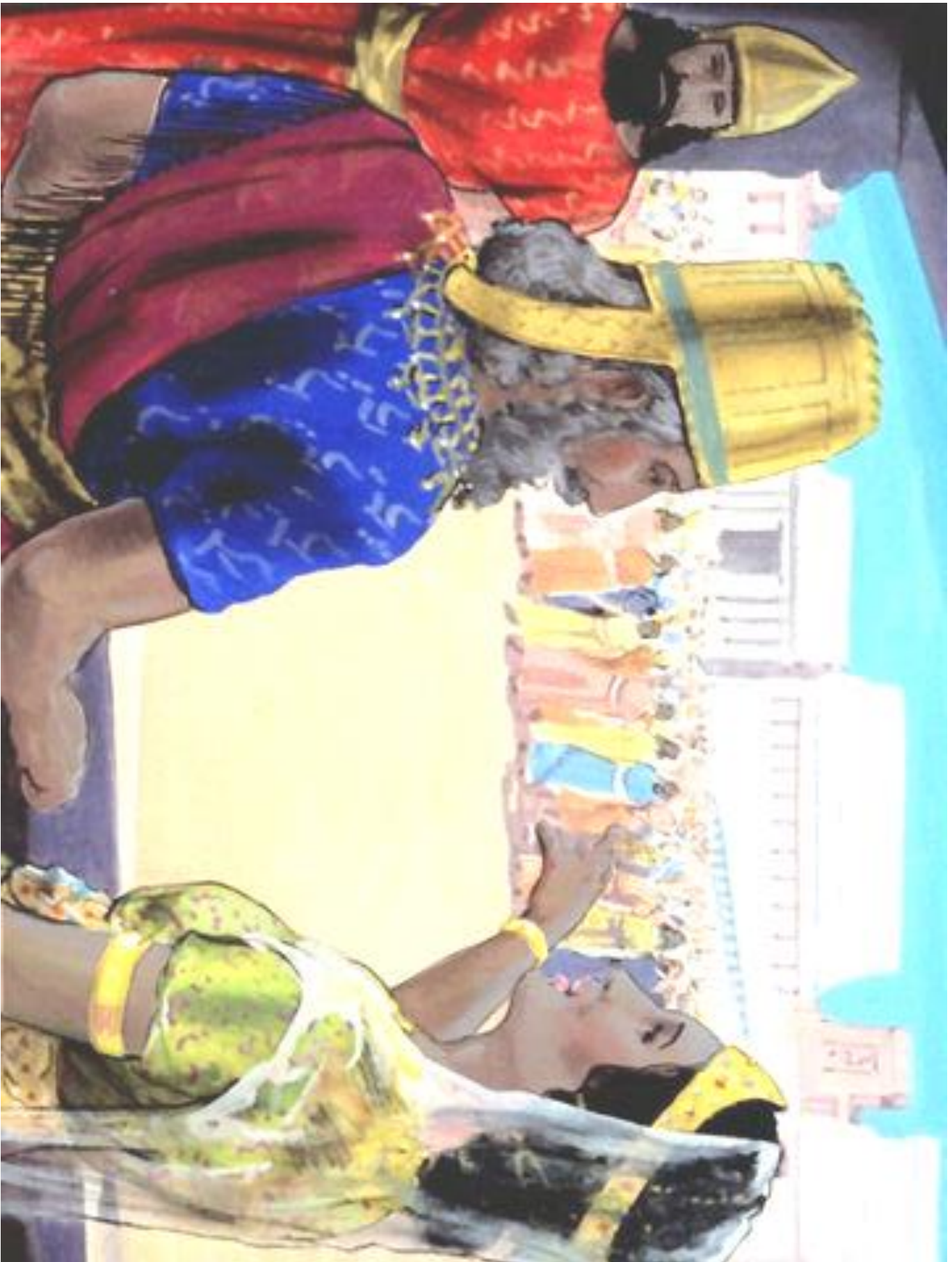


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"Be it known to all peoples and languages throughout the kingdom of the Persian king, Xerxes, that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the Jews may gather themselves together and stand for their lives. They may destroy, slay, and cause to perish all of the people who would strike at them. Furthermore, if said Jews are victorious in their self-defense, they may take the spoil of those whom they strike down."

OH, ONCE THERE WAS A WICKED, WICKED MAN...

Traditional Purim Song, Composer Unknown

Oh, once there was a wicked, wicked man,
And Haman was his name, Sir.
He would have murdered all the Jews,
Though they were not to blame, Sir.

CHORUS:

Oh today we'll merry merry be
Oh today we'll merry merry be
Oh today we'll merry merry be
And nosh some hamentashen.

And Esther was the lovely queen of King Ahashuerosh
When Haman said he'd kill us all,
Oh my how he did scare us.

CHORUS

But Mordechai her cousin bold
Said, "What a dreadful chutzpah
If we don't act at once, my dear,
Our life's not worth a shilling."

CHORUS

When Esther speaking to the King
Of Haman's plot made mention,
"Ha, ha," said he, "Oh, no he won't!
I'll spoil his bad intention."*

CHORUS

The guest of honor he shall be,
This clever Mr. Smarty.
And high above us he shall swing
At a little hanging party.

CHORUS

Of all his cruel and unkind ways
This little joke did cure him
And don't forget we owe him thanks
For this jolly feast of Purim.

The Joke's on Haman!

Read the story of Esther in the book named after her in the Bible: Esther 2:15—7:10. Mark each of these statements true or false. Then write the letters in the numbered blanks to answer the question.

	True	False
1. Esther was a Jew.	D	S
2. Mordecai was Esther's father.	H	E
3. Haman was eager to help the Jews.	E	S
4. Haman was a friend of Mordecai's.	F	T
5. Esther was very courageous.	R	J
6. Esther was not concerned for the Jews.	K	O
7. Mordecai had saved the king's life in the past.	Y	L
8. Esther was used to save the lives of many Jews.	E	M
9. Haman built the gallows upon which he was to die.	D	P

What did Haman's hatefulness and selfishness do to him?

_____ him.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9



