

# HONESTY

Choosing to be < **TRUTHFUL** > in whatever you say & do

## Haman's Plot Against the Jews

Esther 3; 4:8b; 5:6-10; 7:1-6, 9b-10

**MEMORY VERSE | Proverbs 10:9**

**K**ing Xerxes was the most powerful man in all of Persia.  
His commands were the law of the land.

Soon after Xerxes became king, he threw a party for all his most important officials, with merriment and food for all. It was one wild festival—until the king gave an order for his queen, Vashti, to appear before him. And Vashti refused!

Xerxes was so angry that he banished Vashti and chose a new queen—a young girl named Esther. Though he didn't know it, Esther and her cousin Mordecai were Jews. Like many of God's people, they had been captured and forced to leave their homes and live in a new land.

"Don't tell anyone about your family or where you come from," Mordecai warned Esther, hoping to keep her safe.

Just as Xerxes had chosen a new queen on a whim, he liked to move his officials around as if they were chess pieces. One day, he promoted a man named Haman to second-in-command of the entire kingdom.

"Yeah, I'm a pretty big deal," Haman agreed, smirking.

"Everyone must get down on their knees before Haman!" ordered King Xerxes.

"You hear that?" gloated Haman. "Get down before me, you dogs!"

Everyone obeyed and bowed to Haman. Everyone, that is, except Mordecai, who often sat at the palace gate.

“Make him bow!” whined Haman.

The royal officials tried to make Mordecai obey the king’s command, but still, Mordecai refused to bow down.

“No fair!” complained Haman.

“He is a Jew, you know,” said one of the other officials. “They’re not like us.”

“A Jew, huh?” asked Haman, considering. He quickly snapped out of his tantrum and sat down to hatch a terrible plot. Then he went before the king.

“Your majesty,” he began, “there are certain people living here in your kingdom. Foreigners. They’re different from us. They do strange things.”

***“They don’t obey your laws! So you shouldn’t put up with them.”***

“Strange?” demanded the king. “Like what?”

Haman didn’t really have a good answer. But that didn’t stop him from twisting one anyway. “Weeeell,” he said at last. “*They don’t obey your laws!* That’s it. So you shouldn’t put up with them.”

“I shouldn’t put up with them!” agreed the king.

“Send out an order that these Jews should all be destroyed on a certain day,” suggested Haman.

"I'll do it!" decided the king. He sent the command throughout the land, with no idea that his own queen, Esther, was also a Jew.

When Esther received the news of Haman's new law from Mordecai, she faced a difficult choice. No one was allowed to see the king uninvited. But risking her life, she stepped into the throne room anyway!

The king held out his scepter to show that she wouldn't be punished. "What do you want, Queen Esther?" he asked. "I'll give you anything."

Esther knew she would have a better chance convincing the king in private, so she said, "I'm preparing a special feast today. Please come. And bring Haman."

When the king and Haman attended Esther's special feast, though, she didn't ask for the king's help yet. Instead, she invited both men to return the next day for another feast.

Haman left the festive meal in good spirits. "Well, well. Dinner with the queen two days in a row!" he said. "Guess I'm *really* a big deal."

But as Haman passed through the palace gate, he saw Mordecai sitting there. And as usual, Mordecai refused to stand. "Ooo. That just burns me up!" grumbled Haman.

He couldn't get it out of his mind, even as he bragged about all his honors to his family and friends. "I'm rich. I'm the queen's favorite. I'm a *super* big deal," he pointed out. "But I just can't enjoy how awesome I am while that Jew, Mordecai, is around!"

"Then get rid of him," suggested a friend.

"Aha! I'll get rid of him!" agreed Haman.

But while Haman made plans to kill Mordecai, Xerxes had just discovered something amazing. Years earlier, Mordecai had stopped a plot to kill the king! When Haman arrived at the palace the next morning, the king immediately asked for his help.

*"What should be done for the man I want to honor?"* demanded King Xerxes.

Haman was certain that Xerxes wanted to honor him! So he said, "Put a royal robe on this man and have him ride through the streets on your horse. And have someone announce: *'This is what is done for the man the king wants to honor!'*"

The king beamed. "Excellent!" he said. "Go do it all for Mordecai."

Haman couldn't believe his ears. "For *Mordecai?!'*" he shrieked. Humiliated, Haman was forced to lead the man he'd plan to kill through the streets on the king's horse, shouting out, *"This is what is done for the man the king wants to honor!"*

Haman stalked home afterward to complain to his family and friends. But he still had one triumph to gloat over: that evening he would dine again with the queen. A royal official soon arrived at his door and announced, "Come with us, sir. The feast is ready!"

At dinner, the king asked Esther once again: "What do you want? I'll give you anything."

***"Who has dared to do this?!"* thundered King Xerxes.**

"Your Majesty, please let me and my people live," begged Esther. "Someone is trying to destroy us!"

"Who has dared to do this?!" thundered King Xerxes.

Esther turned her gaze directly on Haman. "This man. Haman!" she cried out.

The king leapt to his feet, face blazing with anger, as Haman shrank back.

“Unbelievable!” he roared.

One of the king’s officials stepped forward. “Your Majesty, it just so happens that Haman was trying to kill Mordecai,” the man pointed out. “He has everything ready.”

“Well, kill Haman instead!” ordered the king.

That day, Haman was put to death. He had used lies to take revenge, but his dishonest words and actions cost him his life. And through the brave actions of Esther and Mordecai, God’s people, the Jews, were saved.



Let's  
Talk!

***Say the neighbor is going to pay you to watch her dogs while she's out of town, and asks whether you've ever taken care of big dogs, like hers.***

**You haven't done it before. What happens if you lie, just to make sure you get the job? List everything you can think of that might happen.**

**Well, you probably get the job. Great, right? But since you haven't walked a really big dog before, the dog pulls you over when it sees a squirrel and you sprain an ankle. Or the dog gets away and digs in another neighbor's flowerbeds. Or maybe you do fine, but the neighbor finds out you lied and decides not to hire you again. Or no one finds out, but you know you broke your neighbor's trust and you walk around with a knot of guilt inside that you can't seem to get rid of.**

**Whatever happens, truth is that a lie you tell to help yourself, will end up hurting you. It's just not worth it. Pray for each other, that God will help you be truthful with Him and with others in all circumstances.**