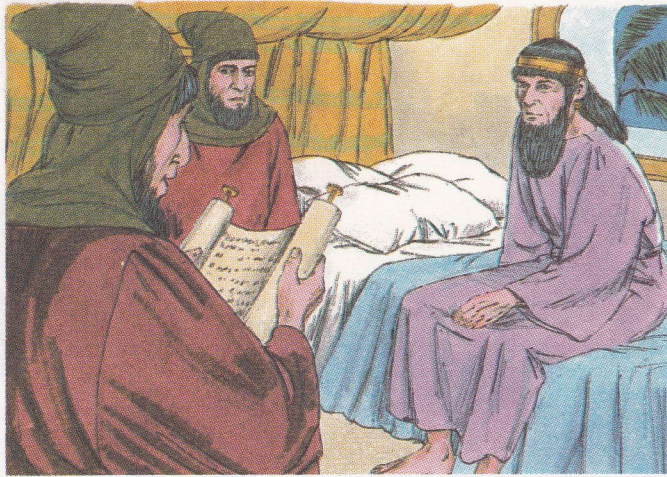
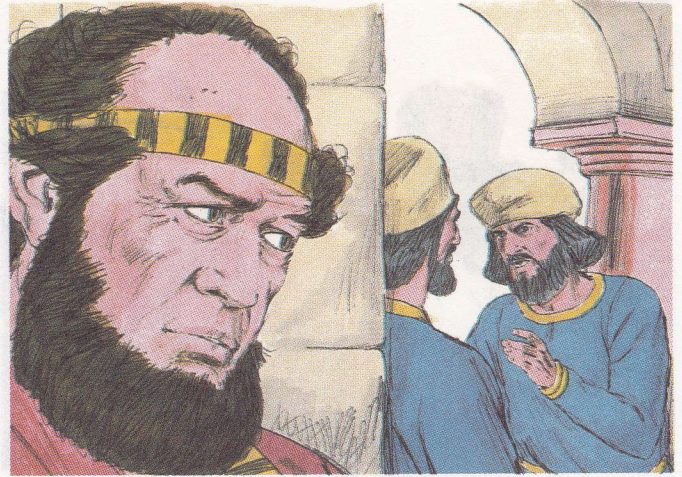


Haman's Plans Go Wrong



1 On the very night that Haman was making plans to hang Mordecai, King Xerxes was unable to go to sleep. So he had his servants bring the official records of the empire and read them to him.



2 When they read how Mordecai had saved the king's life by warning of a murder plot, the king stopped them. He asked, "What was done to thank Mordecai?" They replied, "Nothing at all."



3 Just then Haman came in to ask the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had built. When the servants told the king that Haman was waiting to see him, the king said, "Send him in."



4 The king said to Haman, "There is someone I wish to honor. What should I do for this man?" Haman thought to himself, "The king must be going to honor *me!*"



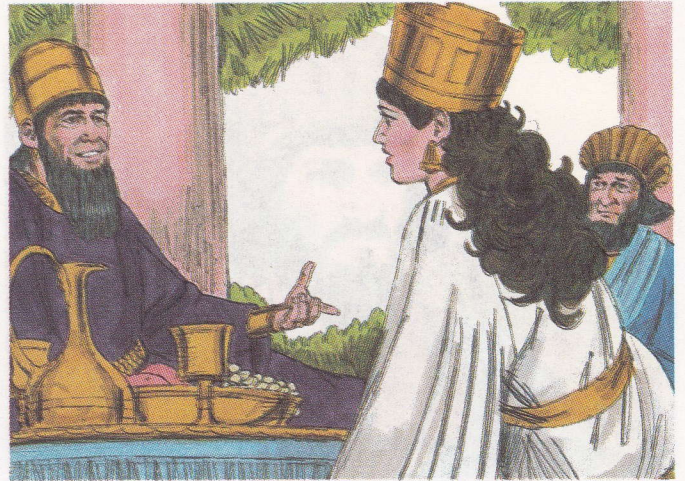
5 So Haman said, "Dress the man in your royal robes and have your highest nobleman lead him through the city square on your horse saying, 'Thus does the king honor this man.'"



6 Then the king said, "That's good, Haman. Now hurry and get my robe and horse and give all these to Mordecai the Jew. Do everything for him that you have suggested."



7 So Haman had to give Mordecai the honors he expected for himself! Afterward, Haman went home hiding his face in anger and shame. Soon the king's servants arrived to take him to the banquet.



8 As Haman and King Xerxes ate with Esther, the king again asked her, "What is it you want? Tell me and you shall have it — even up to half of my kingdom."



9 Esther answered, "My people and I are about to be destroyed! Please save us!" Xerxes was shocked and said, "Who would dare to do such a thing?" "Our enemy is Haman," Esther replied.



10 Haman was terrified. The king was so angry that he left the room and went out to the palace gardens. Fearing the king would punish him, Haman stayed behind to beg Queen Esther to save him.



11 Just as Haman threw himself on Esther's couch to beg for mercy, the king came back in. Seeing Haman, he was even more angry. "Will he attack the queen in my own palace?" he shouted.



12 Xerxes had the evil Haman hanged on the gallows built for Mordecai. Then he issued a new decree allowing the Jews to defend themselves. A time of sadness became a time of joy for God's people.