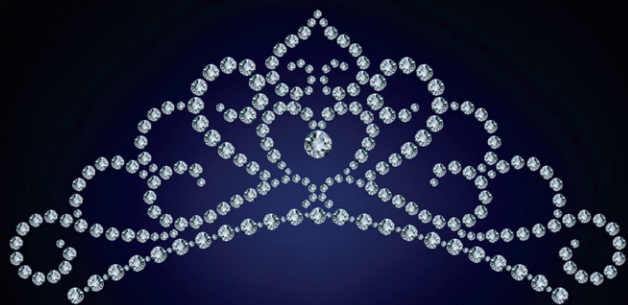


Summary

Following the destruction of the First Temple, the Jews were exiled from Israel. This exile was prophesied to last 70 years, but both the Jewish people and the Persian King Achashverosh miscalculated. Assuming that the 70 years had passed and God had forgotten the Jewish people, King Achashverosh threw a lavish party with the remaining vessels from the temple. The king also donned the garments normally reserved for the priests (Kohanim) in the Temple to celebrate what seemed to be his permanent kingship over the "forsaken" Jewish people.

The story of Esther, as recounted in the Megillah, tells the story of Achashverosh, guided by his assistant Haman, wanting to exterminate the Jewish people and the efforts of Esther and her cousin Mordechai to ensure the survival of the Jewish people.

The story, both tragedy and comedy, illustrates the hidden hand of God in Jewish history.



PLAYBILL

MEGILLAS ESTHER - מגילת אסתר



The Story of
Esther



CHARACTERS

King Achashverosh – The Persian king in the megillah who was known to have a clear anger problem. Aside from his anger, he was rather susceptible to persuasion.

Esther – Esther, an orphan, was chosen by King Achashverosh to serve as his Queen. Her cousin Mordechai urged her to accept the position even though it was clearly not an ideal environment for a Jew. While serving as the Queen, she kept her Jewish identity secret.

Mordechai – One of the last remaining prophets, Mordechai was the moral compass for the Jewish people. When most Jews had already assumed God had forgotten them, Mordechai inspired the people to reconnect with Him.

Haman – An avowed anti-Semite, Haman had one goal: Killing all the Jewish people. As the king's right hand man, he was in the perfect position to get the job done. It seemed like it would take a miracle to stop him.

God – God does not have any speaking roles during the entire story of Esther. In fact, He is not mentioned at all. If you look closely though, you may realize He was directing the story all along.

SCENE 1 PARTYING LIKE IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD

- ☞ After assuming God has abandoned the Jewish people, King Achashverosh throws a party to celebrate.
- ☞ King Achashverosh has one drink too many and makes a bad decision. He orders his wife Vashti to be executed.

SCENE 2 A PERSIAN BEAUTY PAGEANT

- ☞ Once King Achashverosh recovers from his hangover, he starts to feel lonely and begins to search for a new queen.
- ☞ His search leads him to Esther. Great girl. Pretty girl. Only one problem... she's Jewish.
- ☞ Esther is advised by her cousin Mordechai not to tell the king that she is Jewish.
- ☞ Mordechai stops a plot by two of King Achashverosh's officers to assassinate the king. Mordechai saves the king's life.



SCENE 3 THE FINAL SOLUTION

- ☞ Haman, a member of the king's court, gets a promotion. This is not good news for the Jews.
- ☞ Mordechai refuses to bow down to Haman. It bruises Haman's ego and he gets mad.
- ☞ Haman persuades King Achashverosh to order a proclamation to exterminate all of the Jews. The king agrees.



SCENE 4 IT'S UP TO YOU

- ☞ After learning about the proclamation, Mordechai begins mourning and praying for the fate of the Jewish people.
- ☞ Mordechai gives Esther the most epic pump-up speech of all time. He insists that she take action to save the Jewish people.



SCENE 5 A BOLD STEP

- ☞ Esther risks her life by entering the king's chamber uninvited. The King, in contradistinction to his previous record, acts rationally and invites her in.
- ☞ Esther invites the king to a party with Haman. It's not quite clear where she is going with this.

SCENE 6 LULLABIES JUST AREN'T ENOUGH

- ☞ King Achashverosh has a historic case of insomnia. As he is tossing and turning, he remembers that Mordechai saved his life. He invites Haman upstairs to brainstorm a fitting party for Mordechai.
- ☞ Haman, thinking that the king is planning HIS party, suggests an over-the-top party. He is not pleased when he realizes that the king had Mordechai in mind the whole time.



SCENE 7 THE TABLES ARE TURNED

- ☞ At a second party between Esther, King Achashverosh, and Haman, Esther reveals her Jewish identity and requests that her people, the Jewish people, be saved. Haman is mortified.
- ☞ King Achashverosh grants Esther her request.
- ☞ Haman, at the suggestion of Charvonah (a bystander at the time) is hung on the very gallows which he had prepared for killing the Jews.

