

Tell a story

Purim

by Julie Zhuk on 2024-03-23

The story of Purim as follows it started in the fourth century BCE in Persia. There was a holy Temple that stood in Jerusalem and had been destroyed fifty years before that. The Jews living there had been in exile from Persia had been subjects from 127 different lands. It had been three years since King Achashveirosh had risen to the throne, now he was feeling secure in his new position and he was celebrating a grand party for 180 days straight. All of his subjects were at this party, following the party this king had a smaller party for those living in the capital city of Shushan. In the palace of the women's quarter's the King's wife Vashti was hosting her own party for the women. On the seventh day of this party, Achashveirosh's heart was "merry with wine". It meant that he commanded for his wife to come down and join him at his own party with all the men. He wanted to show off his wife's beauty, her outside beauty. She absolutely refused to go in front of all the men and her husband as well. His advisor, who was Haman and had the nickname as Memuchan. He told Achashveirosh to have her execute Vashti. Achashveirosh was drunk at this point and it wasn't his concern that his wife was now dead. With the advice of Memuchan, he got a beauty contest going for a round of women to get a new wife in his life. His officers did a lot of the organization for the beauty contest, soon there would be a girl who would find favor in the king's eyes. The leader of the Jewish people was a resident whose name was Mordechai. He had a cousin named Esther. She had been orphaned as a young girl. Mordechai raised her and treated her as if she was his own daughter.

She had no desire to enter this beauty contest and she didn't want to go in front of this king, even against her wishes she was forced to go in front of this king. The other girls used lotions and perfumes to make themselves beautiful in front of King Achashveirosh, but Esther used nothing when in front of the king. The king liked Esther more than any of these other girls. The king took favor in her eyes because G-d had His own plans and before anyone knew it Esther had appeared before the king. Right away, Esther became the new queen of Persia. Mordechai was very observant what was going on and told her instantly to not tell the king that she was a Jew. Mordechai heard two soldiers plan to kill the king. Mordechai had them reported right away and they were hanged instantly. While this was happening, Haman had been promoted to becoming a prime minister to the king. This was not a good thing especially not for the Jews, for Haman was a true Jew hater. He was a descendant of the notoriously antisemitic nation of Amalek. It happened right after his promotion. The king passed a decree for everyone to bow down to anyone who passed by if they walked by Haman. It's important to keep in mind that Haman walked around with a giant idol with a chain around his neck. Mordechai was a proud Jew who was the one person that didn't want to bow down to Haman.

We can only imagine how angry this made Haman and he plotted a revenge against all of the Jewish people. He drew up a lot of determination for one "lucky day" to destroy the Jewish nation when he would implement his plan of getting rid of the Jewish people. This Jewish day was going to fall on the day of 13th of the Hebrew month of Adar. Haman approached the King and offered him a huge sum of money. It was about ten thousand silver coins in exchange to kill all the Jewish people. The king was no friend to the Jewish people. The King told Haman that the money was his to keep and the Jewish nation is yours to do with as you please. Right away Haman sent proclamations to all of the king's lands. These declarations were sealed with the

royal signet. It ordered the people to rise up against the Jewish people. The plan was to kill all of the Jewish people. This included the men, the women, and the children. Soon Mordechai became aware of the decree and he rented his garments and donned his sackcloth. He sent a message right away to Esther asking her to approach the king and beg him to spare the Jewish people. She responded that anyone who went into the king's chambers without being summoned could be killed. She had not been asked by the king himself to go in and be seen by him with his golden scepter so she was afraid of going into the king's chambers to be seen by him without being asked.

She needed a reason or for him to call her himself. Mordechai sent Esther another message, "Do not think that you will escape the fate of all the Jews by being in the king's palace. For if you will remain silent at this time relief and salvation will come to the Jews from another source, and you and the house of your father will be lost. He concluded his speech by saying, and who knows if it's not for just such a time that you reached this royal position. At this point, Esther agreed to listen to Mordechai. She asked Mordechai to gather up all of the Jews in the city of Shushan and for them to fast for three days and for three nights. Esther was putting her life in her hands for three days and three nights. She went to approach the king. Mordechai did what Esther asked and the Jews did what Esther wanted. There were twenty-two thousand Jewish children who did what Esther wanted and they fasted, repented, and turned to G-d at this time.

After three days of fasting, Esther put on nice clothing and went into the king's chambers. Right away the king asked her what was her request, she said I would like to invite the king and Haman to a small feast. The king and Haman came for a small feast and there was wine. At this feast, the king asked Esther if she wanted anything else and she said she wanted to have another feast. The king said he would grant her another one of course. Esther explained that the next day she would tell the king what she wanted her next request to be the next day from the king. Esther was taking her time with her requests. The king was on board with this. He was patient enough to wait for whatever she wanted next. He didn't seem to be in any hurry. At this second feast, Haman left the party feeling proud and happy. He didn't think anything bad happened, he didn't understand what was going on of course.

When Haman was leaving, Mordechai stood at the king's gate. Mordechai did not bow down to Haman and this frustrated the life out of Haman. When Haman got home, he found his advisors to be home and they told him to erect some gallows. They also told him to go to the king and ask him permission to hang Mordechai since he does not bow down to you. Haman was excited to erect these gallows, this was his plan for Mordechai. It was the start of the beginning of the end. In his mind all of this was for the Jewish people and for Mordechai, but it was not going to work out like this for the Jews. That night, the king was not able to sleep and he asked his servants to read from the Royal Chronicles for him. They did what was asked and they read to him how Mordechai saved the king's life when two of his chamberlain's tried to kill him. All of a sudden the king asked if Mordechai had been rewarded for his actions saving him that is? His servants said no he had not been rewarded, not yet at least. It seemed that Haman also could not sleep and he too decided to go see the king. He entered the king's chambers wanting to speak to him. He asked the king's permission to hang Mordechai, before he could do so the king said "My Haman in your estimation what should be done to a person for someone if the king wants to wish them honor?"

Haman was certain that the king was speaking about him. He had no idea that the king was speaking about Mordechai. Haman responded, "You should bring a royal garment and a royal horse. It's important to let one of the king's nobles dress the man and lead him on the horse through the city streets. Then proclaim him, "So is done for the man whom the king wishes to honor!" The king thought this was a grand idea and told Haman, "Now go get the garments and the horse. Do all of these things for Mordechai the Jew! It was at this point that Haman had no choice but to comply. It was on the next day that he went and honored Mordechai just as the king had ordered him to do so. Right after that he rushed over to join the king and Esther for the second feast. The king had been very curious to find out what Esther wanted, so here he could finally find out. She came before him and said if it pleases the king, I would like my life because this man standing before you... Haman wants to take away the life of all the Jews my people and he wants to take away my life as well. Now she has finally come forward and confronted about herself, Mordechai, and all the Jewish people.

Esther told the king that she is Jewish. The king is so happy for his life was saved by Mordechai and the king has come to love Esther that he does not mind the Jewish people. The tables were turned, instead of Haman being prime minister to the king it was Mordechai's turn to getting part of Haman's estate. Whatever it was that Haman had once had he no longer had it anymore. He was in a lot of trouble now with the king. The king was angered by what Haman had wanted to do to the whole Jewish nation and kill Esther and Mordechai. The king was angered by Haman building the gallows and wanting to have Mordechai hang on them. Instead, the king decided Haman will hang on the gallows. In the end, the Jewish nation stood together.