



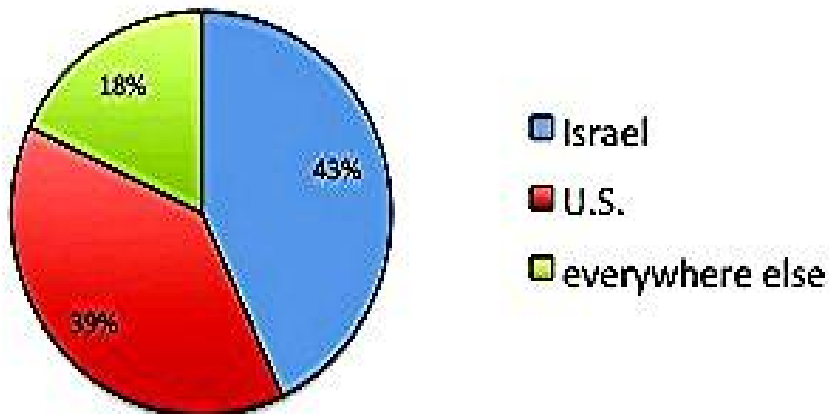
- Susa = *Shushan*, the administrative capital of Persia
- King Xerxes on the Persian throne
- Jews hadn't been captive exiles for 50 years
- 90 – 95 % of all exiles chose NOT to go back to Judah
- The Jews had assimilated over the past 100 years, and now the Persian Empire was home

JUDAH WAS A DISASTER AREA



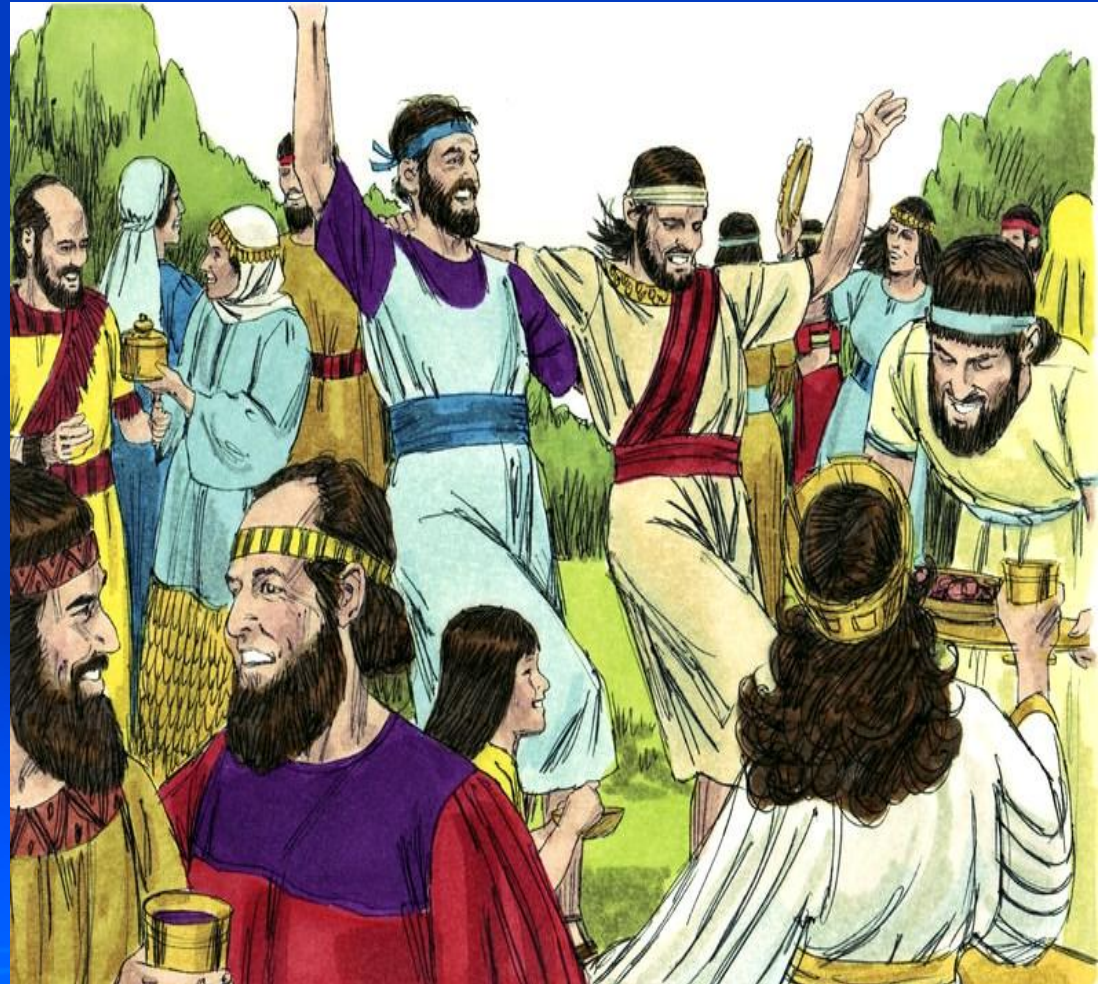
- Jews treated well in Babylon and Persia
- Diaspora = scattered, dispersed
- Jerusalem's walls and Temple a shambles
- Why don't more Jews go home? It hasn't been home for 2000 years
- Jews forced back to their homeland by the Holocaust
- Israel expensive and not an easy place to live

Global Jewish population distribution



THE PERSIAN WAY OF LIFE

- They liked to party and drink !!
- Much separation between men and women
- Persian royalty spent much money on decadent indulgences
- Political spin and protecting the leader was the job of the king's advisors



THE OFFICIAL SPIN: QUEEN VASHTI'S REFUSAL WAS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

- Drunk King asks Vashti to do something she couldn't do
- Queen Vashti's refusal to obey was to be portrayed as a nationwide problem of rebellious wives
- New law enacted and sent to all 127 districts
- Only 1 language and 1 culture to be allowed in a household: the husband's



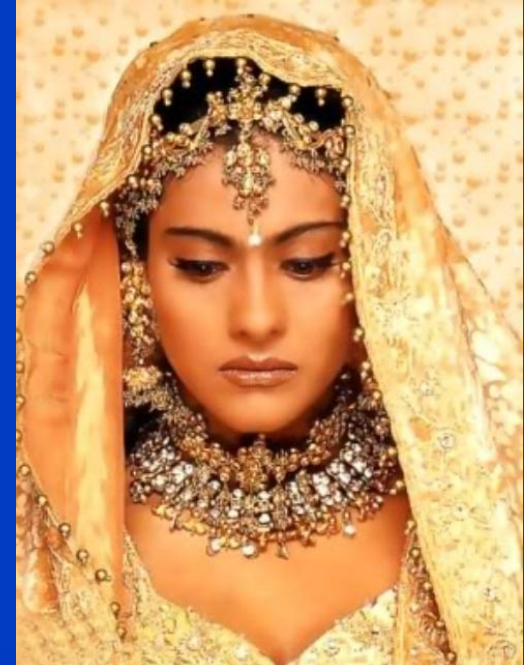
ESTHER CHAPTER 2: MORDECHAI AND ESTHER

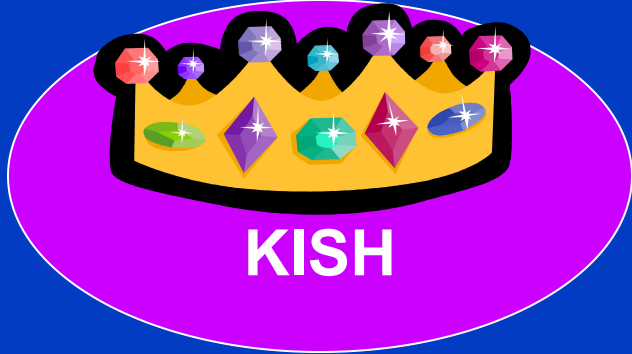


- *Ahar ha-debbarim* = after these things
- King “remembered” Vashti was an expression of regret
- Advisors worried because it was **THEY** who had recommended sending Vashti away
- The solution? Get a new and even more beautiful wife from among the entire Empire!
- A risky proposal since the king was to marry within the 7 royal Persian families

MORE TO VASHTI THAN BEAUTY

- Vashti was not only beautiful she was charming
- Advisors felt that beauty was the all-important feature for Xerxes' future Queen
- Door flung open to the entire Empire for Queen candidates
- Hegai, the royal Harem supervisor





**KING SAUL'S
FATHER**



SEVERAL GENERATIONS



**MAN WHO CURSED
KING DAVID**



SEVERAL GENERATIONS



**MORDECHAI'S
ACTUAL FATHER ?**



ONE GENERATION ?



**OF ROYAL
BENJAMITE LINE**



THE REALITY OF BIBLICAL GENEALOGY

- Biblical genealogy is not exhaustive
- Not meant as a step-by-step generational guide
- Generations are skipped if not seen as relevant
- They each have various purposes
- **Mordechai's** was to show us that he was of the royal Benjamite line
- Esther was **Mordechai's** first cousin
- Esther is called beautiful and shapely....stunning!



WHEN DID *MORDECHAI* COME TO BABYLON?

- If *Mordecai* came to Babylon in 586 B.C when Jehoiachin was Judah's king, then he'd be at least 107 years old !
- The wording probably indicates this is when his family came to Babylon
- Esther = Babylonian name = Ishtar
- *Hadassah* her Hebrew name
- *Mordechai* is probably the Jewish vocalization of Marduka
- Marduka = Babylonian Marduk





- Vs. 8 Esther is brought to the Harem
- NO hint of violence, resistance, protest or kidnapping
- We need to view this through the lens of the Middle East of 2500 years ago, not modern times
- One of these many virgin girls was going to become the Queen of Persia, and some of the others would live in luxury
- 7 girls assigned to attend to Esther
- Number 7 again indicates God's hand is directly involved

DID ESTHER “HIDE” HER JEWISHNESS ?



- *Mordechai* told Esther not to reveal her Jewishness
- No reason given
- Persia a melting pot, so race & ethnicity was no issue
- *Mordechai* HOPED Esther would be chosen as Queen
- She would be able to advance her family and derive great benefits
- He had no idea she would save the Jewish people