

# An Uncensored Reading of the Purim Story

with Chana Weisberg

## Historical Background: Who's Who? – The World Scene:

### **BABYLONIAN EMPIRE:**

*Nevuchadnetzer*—first king of Babylonia

*Balshatzar*—son of *Nevuchadnetzer*, was killed on the night he made a party using the vessels of the Temple.

*Vashti*—daughter of *Balshatzar*, entire household killed by the Medeans and Persian, she was the lone survivor. Married *Achashverosh*, who became the successor of the Babylonian, Persian and Medean empires.

### **PERSIAN EMPIRE:**

*Astyages*—king of Persia

*Mandane*—daughter of *Astyages*, destined to be his heir. Seduced by king's courier who was later killed by the king and she was thrown into prison.

*Cyrus*—son born to *Mandane* who *Astyages* ordered to be left exposed on a mountaintop to die but was saved by a dog who allowed him to suckle her and therefore he was called *Cyrus*, dog. Became powerful warrior and eventually killed his grandfather *Astyages* and became king of Persia.

### **MEDEAN EMPIRE:**

*Darius*—king of Medes. Sent message to Cyrus to make an alliance by Cyrus marrying his daughter.

*Daughter of Darius* (name unknown)—married *Cyrus*. *Cyrus* and *Darius* attacked and killed *Balshatzar* and overcame Babylonia. They spared *Balshazar's* pretty, young daughter, *Vashti*.

*Achashverosh*—son of *Cyrus* and *Darius's* daughter. Inherited from his father and grandfather the kingdoms of Persia, Medea and Babylonia. During his period, the miracle of Purim took place. Married *Vashti* had her killed and married *Esther*, Jewish heroine of Purim.

*Darius II*—son of *Esther* and *Achashverosh* who allowed the Jews to return to Israel and rebuild the Temple.