

The Importance of Being Esther

Rabbis, Canonicity, Problems and Possibilities



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Abstract

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The Book of Esther was written as a parody or farce. It has both appalled and appealed to its possible readership. The rabbis may have struggled with whether to accept Esther into the canon, but once it was in, they engaged in fanciful stories about the book. Christians also struggled with accepting the Book of Esther, but for them, too, it did become part of the canon. Esther does have some very dark sides, especially in its treatment of women and its bloodthirsty closing chapters. This article suggests that if approached carefully the Book of Esther offers possibilities for open discussion concerning some sensitive topics.

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