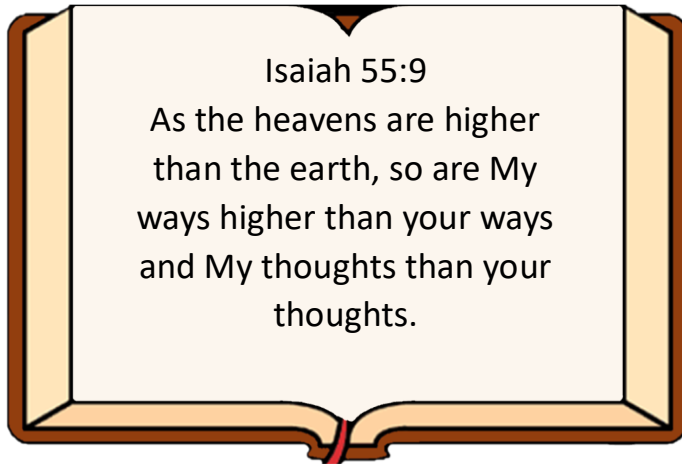


Weekly Memory Verse



In this verse, "My" is referring to God.
 According to the verse, what are the heavens higher than?

Who's thoughts are higher than my thoughts? _____

Esther Becomes Queen



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The Medes and Persians ruled from India to Egypt. Fifty years earlier, during Daniel's time, the Persian Empire conquered the Babylonians. Ahasuerus [Ä-ha'-shoo-är'us] became king after Darius died.

After reigning as king for three years, Ahasuerus decided to give a banquet for all the leaders of the Persian Empire.

The king gave another banquet. All the men were invited also. They celebrated for an entire week.

Meanwhile, Queen Vashti prepared a great feast for the women of the palace. During the banquet the king sent a message to Vashti: "You must come immediately to the king so he can show everyone how beautiful you are." When Vashti refused to come, the king was furious. No one, not even the queen, could disobey an order from the King of Persia!

Immediately Ahasuerus called his wise men. Ahasuerus asked them, "What does the law say must be done to Queen Vashti? She has not obeyed my order."

One adviser answered, "If it pleases the king, make a royal order that Vashti be sent away from the palace forever. Then let the king find a new queen." So, a law was made which said that Vashti could never again enter the king's presence.

In another part of the city lived a Jewish man named Mordecai [Mor'-de-kai] and his cousin Hadassah [Ha-das'-sa]. Hadassah was also called Esther. Mordecai raised her as his daughter after her parents died. Mordecai worked for the Persian government.

Now that Vashti was gone, the king needed a new queen. He sent an order throughout the empire that every young and beautiful girl who had never been married be brought to the palace. The girl that pleased the king the most would be chosen as the next queen of Persia.

The king's soldiers went throughout the empire bringing the girls to the palace. For many of the girls it was a dream come true, but for Esther it was more like a nightmare. The Jewish law said she was to marry only a Jewish man. Mordecai told her not to let anyone know she was a Jew.

Even though there is no mention of God in the book of Esther, He was always with Esther. The Jews were God's chosen people, and He had a plan for them. Even though Esther and Mordecai could not understand what was happening, God was in control and was working out His plan for His people.

Each girl spent a year preparing for her night with the king. Every day Mordecai came to the gate outside the place where Esther was living to see how she was doing.

When it was Esther's turn to spend the night with King Ahasuerus, God worked on her behalf and gave her favor with the king. Esther pleased the king more than all the other girls. So Ahasuerus made Esther queen over the entire Persian Kingdom.

Circle the correct answer.

Esther was a Jew, but she (*did, didn't*) tell the king.

One day while Mordecai was working at the palace gate, he overheard two of the king's soldiers making plans to kill the king. Mordecai sent word to Esther. She told King Ahasuerus that Mordecai had discovered the plot. When the report was found to be true, the men were killed. But Mordecai was never rewarded according to the Persian custom.

Sometime after Esther became queen, the king decided to honor one of his nobles named Haman [Hä'man]. Haman was not a good man and cared only about himself. The king promoted him and gave the order for everyone to bow down to Haman whenever he rode through the city.

How proud Haman was of himself! As he passed by the people, they would all bow down before him. All but one! Mordecai refused to bow down. This made Haman furious, and he began to hate Mordecai.

God had commanded the Jews not to bow down or worship anyone but Him. When Haman learned Mordecai was a Jew, he decided to destroy *all* the Jews in the kingdom.

Haman went to the king and said, "There is a group of people in the kingdom who do not obey your laws. It would be best for you and the kingdom to get rid of them. Make an order to destroy these people."

The king gave his signet ring to Haman and said, "Do as you please." So the law was written and could not be changed. It stated that all the Jews in the kingdom were to be put to death on a certain day. There must have been great sorrow and fear among the Jews when they heard it.

When Mordecai heard the news, he cried at the city gate. When Esther heard about her cousin, she sent a servant to find out why Mordecai was so upset. Mordecai gave the servant the entire report and a copy of the king's law to give to Esther. Mordecai also told him to tell Esther to go to the king and beg for mercy, and plead with him for the lives of her people.

Queen Esther sent a message back to Mordecai, "There is a law that anyone who goes to the king in the inner courtyard without being called must be put to death. There is only one exception. If the king holds out his royal scepter, that person will live."

Mordecai sent another message to Esther. He said, "Do you think that you will be saved from death because you are in the palace? Remember, you are a Jew and will die with the rest of us. If you keep quiet, then someone else will save the Jews. But who knows, you may have been chosen queen for such a time as this?"

Then Esther sent her answer to her cousin, "Gather all the Jews in Shushan and fast three days and nights for me. My servants and I will do the same. Then I will go to the king. If I die, I die." Mordecai did just as Esther had instructed him.

True or False

The king told Haman to do as he wished with the Jews. _____