Esther 3:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.

Analysis

Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. The genocidal decree was formalized through Persian bureaucratic machinery: scribes drafted it, lieutenants and governors received copies, each province and people group got versions in their own languages. The decree went forth "in the name of king Ahasuerus" and was "sealed with the king's ring," giving it full legal authority. The same administrative efficiency that enabled Cyrus's decree allowing Jewish return (Ezra 1) now enabled their attempted destruction. The thirteenth day of the first month (Nisan) means this occurred during Passover season—bitter irony that the month celebrating Israel's deliverance from Egypt became the month

decreeing their destruction in Persia. Yet God's providence would transform this into ultimate deliverance, celebrated annually as Purim.

Historical Context

Persian administrative efficiency enabled rapid empire-wide communication. The mention of multiple languages reflects the empire's diversity—Aramaic served as lingua franca, but provincial languages were also used. Archaeological discoveries including the Behistun Inscription demonstrate Persian practice of multilingual official documents. The seal with the king's ring made the decree irreversible (Persian law's immutability, 1:19). The timing during Nisan (Passover month) creates theological irony—the month celebrating redemption from Egypt becomes the month decreeing destruction in Persia, yet will ultimately bring new redemption. The bureaucratic detail demonstrates how institutional machinery can efficiently serve evil purposes when directed by wicked leaders.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

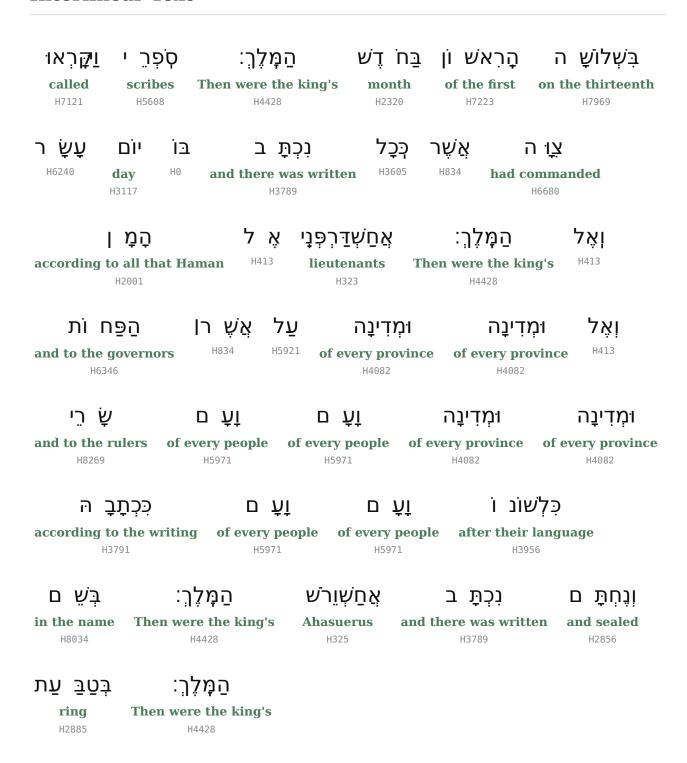
Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

- 1. How does the use of administrative efficiency for genocide illustrate that institutional capability is morally neutral—serving good or evil depending on leadership?
- 2. What does the Passover timing teach about God's redemptive patterns and His ability to transform threats into deliverance?

Interlinear Text



Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 21:8 (Parallel theme): So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

Esther 1:22 (Kingdom): For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

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