

# 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

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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

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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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

וְקָרָאוּ	סִפְּרֵי י	הַמֶּלֶךְ:	בַּחֹדֶשׁ	הָרִאשׁוֹן	בַּשְּׁלוֹשָׁה ה
called	scribes	Then were the king's	month	of the first	on the thirteenth
H7121	H5608	H4428	H2320	H7223	H7969
וַעֲשֶׂה ר	יוֹם	בּוֹ	נִכְתָּב ב	כָּכָל	אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה
H6240	day	H0	and there was written	H3605	H834
	H3117		H3789		had commanded
					H6680
הֵמָּה ו	הַמֶּלֶךְ:	אֲחֵשְׁדֶּרְפָּנִי	אֶל	וְאֵל	
according to all that Haman		H413	lieutenants	Then were the king's	H413
H2001			H323	H4428	
וְהָפַח וְ	עַל	וּמְדִינָה	וּמְדִינָה	וְאֵל	
and to the governors	H834	H5921	of every province	of every province	H413
H6346			H4082	H4082	
וְשָׂרֵי	וְעַם	וְעַם	וּמְדִינָה	וּמְדִינָה	
and to the rulers	of every people	of every people	of every province	of every province	
H8269	H5971	H5971	H4082	H4082	
כְּכַתְּבָהּ	וְעַם	וְעַם	כְּלָשׁוֹן וְ		
according to the writing	of every people	of every people	after their language		
H3791	H5971	H5971	H3956		
בְּשֵׁם	הַמֶּלֶךְ:	אֲחֵשְׁוֶרֶשׁ	נִכְתָּב ב	וְנִחְתָּם	
in the name	Then were the king's	Ahasuerus	and there was written	and sealed	
H8034	H4428	H325	H3789	H2856	
בְּטַבַּעַת	הַמֶּלֶךְ:				
ring	Then were the king's				
H2885	H4428				

## Additional Cross-References

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**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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