

# Esther 3:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

## Analysis

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Genocidal decree: **'And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey'**. The decree orders complete annihilation of all Jews empire-wide on a specific date, authorizing plunder of their property. The threefold description ('destroy, kill, cause to perish') emphasizes total extermination. This represents Satan's attempt to destroy the covenant people and prevent Messiah's coming. The specific date (Adar 13) gave Jews time to discover the plot and Esther opportunity to intervene, demonstrating God's providence providing space for deliverance even in crisis.

## Historical Context

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Ancient genocide (called herem or 'devotion to destruction' in Hebrew) appears in Scripture and ancient Near Eastern texts. Haman's decree authorized empire-wide pogrom, providing legal cover for Jew-hatred. The eleven-month delay between decree and execution date (Esther 3:7, 12-13) seems strange but proved providentially crucial—it allowed time for Mordecai to inform Esther, Esther to

approach the king, and events to unfold leading to the Jews' deliverance. Archaeological evidence shows ancient Near Eastern kingdoms issued imperial decrees reaching all provinces through efficient postal systems, making the threat immediate and comprehensive.

## **Related Passages**

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## **Study Questions**

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1. How does the comprehensive nature of this genocidal decree illustrate Satan's attempt to destroy God's covenant people?
2. What does the timing (specific future date) teach about God's providence creating space for deliverance even when destruction appears decreed?

## Interlinear Text

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וְנִשְׁלָחוּ	סְפָרִים	בְּיָד	הַכְּצִיִּים	אֶל	כָּל	מְדִינַת
were sent	And the letters	by	posts	H413	H3605	provinces
H7971	H5612	H3027	H7323			H4082
הַמֶּלֶךְ	לְהַשְׁמִיד	לְהָרֹג	וּלְאַבֵּד	אֶת	כָּל	
into all the king's	to destroy	to kill	and to cause to perish	H853	H3605	
H4428	H8045	H2026	H6			
הַיְּהוּדִים	מִן־עַר	וְעַד	זָקֵן	טַף	וְנָשִׁים	בְּיוֹם
all Jews	both young	H5704	and old	little children	and women	day
H3064	H5288		H2205	H2945	H802	H3117
אֶחָד	בְּשָׁלוֹשׁ	הָ	עֶשֶׂר	חֹדֶשׁ	שְׁנַיִם	עֶשֶׂר
in one	even upon the thirteenth		H6240	month	day of the twelfth	H6240
H259	H7969			H2320	H8147	
הוּא	חֹדֶשׁ	אֶדָר	וּשְׁלָלָם	לְבוֹז:		
H1931	month	Adar	and to take the spoil	of them for a prey		
	H2320	H143	H7998	H962		

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Chronicles 30:6** (Kingdom): So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.

**Esther 9:10** (Parallel theme): The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand.

**1 Samuel 15:3** (Parallel theme): Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

