

Esther 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

Analysis

And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. Haman's accusation against the Jews is masterfully manipulative. He doesn't name them ("a certain people"), presents their presence as threatening ("scattered and dispersed"—suggesting infiltration), claims legal non-compliance ("their laws are diverse; neither keep they the king's laws"), and argues economic/security benefit to eliminating them ("not for the king's profit to suffer them"). Each element is partially true but massively distorted: Jews were dispersed (diaspora), did maintain distinct laws (covenant faithfulness), and sometimes disobeyed commands contradicting God's law (like Mordecai's refusal to bow). But Haman perverts these facts into justification for genocide. This demonstrates how truth can be weaponized through selective presentation and malicious interpretation.

Historical Context

Ancient empires often scapegoated minority populations, especially during crises. Haman's rhetoric mirrors antisemitic tropes throughout history: portraying Jews as alien infiltrators, loyal to their own laws rather than the state, and economically

parasitic. The claim that eliminating Jews would "profit" the king (amplified in v. 9 with the offer of 10,000 talents) added financial incentive to security concerns. Archaeological and historical evidence shows ancient Near Eastern kingdoms sometimes authorized persecution of ethnic/religious minorities viewed as threats. The Persian Empire's diversity created both tolerance for various peoples and potential for ethnic/religious conflict when demagogues exploited differences for political purposes.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Haman's manipulative use of partial truths teach vigilance against propaganda that weaponizes facts through selective presentation?
2. What does this passage reveal about how hatred rationalizes atrocity through security arguments and economic incentives?

Interlinear Text

אֵם	עַל	הַמֶּלֶךְ:	ט וּב	יִכְתֹּב	לְאַבְדֵּם
H518	H5921	it into the king's	If it please	let it be written	that they may be destroyed
		H4428	H2895	H3789	H6

תֵּן	אֶלְפֵי	כֶּסֶף	כֶּסֶף	אֶשְׁקוּל	עַל	יָדֵי
ten	thousand	talents	of silver	and I will pay	H5921	to the hands
H6235	H505	H3603	H3701	H8254		H3027

עֲשֵׂי	הַמֶּלֶכְ הַ	לְהָבִיא	אֶל	גִּזְזֵי
of those that have the charge	of the business	to bring	H413	treasuries
H6213	H4399	H935		H1595

הַמֶּלֶךְ:
it into the king's
H4428