

Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles.

2 All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to **Haman**, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But **Mordecai** would not kneel down or pay him honor.

3 Then the royal officials at the king's gate asked **Mordecai**, "Why do you disobey the king's command?"

4 Day after day they spoke to him but he refused to comply. Therefore they told **Haman** about it to see whether **Mordecai's** behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew.

5 When **Haman** saw that **Mordecai** would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged.

6 Yet having learned who **Mordecai's** people were, he scorned the idea of killing only **Mordecai**. Instead **Haman** looked for a way to destroy all **Mordecai's** people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of **Ahasuerus**.

7 In the twelfth year of **King Ahasuerus**, in the first month, the month of Nisan, they cast the pur (that is, the lot) in the presence of **Haman** to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

8 Then **Haman** said to **King Ahasuerus**, "There is a certain people dispersed and scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people and who do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them.

9 If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will put ten thousand talents of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out this business."

10 So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to **Haman** son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.

11 "Keep the money," the king said to **Haman**, "and do with the people as you please."

12 Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all **Haman's** orders to the king's satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of **King Ahasuerus** himself and sealed with his own ring.

13 Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews-- young and old, women and little children-- on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

14 A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they would be ready for that day.

15 Spurred on by the king's command, the couriers went out, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and **Haman** sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

4:1 When **Mordecai** learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly.

2 But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it.

3 In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 When **Esther's** maids and eunuchs came and told her about **Mordecai**, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them.

5 Then **Esther** summoned Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling **Mordecai** and why.

6 So Hathach went out to **Mordecai** in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate.

7 **Mordecai** told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money **Haman** had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews.

8 He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to **Esther** and explain it to her, and he told him to urge her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

9 Hathach went back and reported to **Esther** what **Mordecai** had said.