

Exploring the Torah's Chronological Integrity - class #4
Before or After the Second Temple was built -
When did the story of Purim take place ?

Source sheet for TIM shiur by Menachem Leibtag/

Introduction /

Last week, we followed the 'academic' approach, following the accepted chronology of the Persian Kings as found in all classic secular history books, thus concluding that Achashverosh was the Persian King **AFTER** Darius the Great, and hence the Purim story took place **AFTER** the second Temple built. In light of that approach, we turned to the prophecies of Chagai & Zecharya [who lived the generation immediately before the story of Purim] to uncover the 'hidden' meaning of many of the events described in the Megilla.

List of Persian Kings found in standard History Books:

- 538 Cyrus = כורש
- 530 Cambyses =? [no mention in Tanach]
- 522 Darius I = דריוש [492 Battle of Marathon]
- 486 Xerxes = אחשורוש [= king of Megillat Esther?] [479 Battle of Salamis]
- 465 Artaxerxes = ארתחשסתא [Ezra (7:7) / Nechemya (1:1)]

In today's class, we return to the famous Rabbinic approach, based on the Midrashic historical approach of Seder Olam - which places Achashverosh **BEFORE** Darius, and hence **BEFORE** the second Temple was built (but after the Cyrus Decree). We will attempt to explain the internal logic of this approach, and why it became so widely accepted in our Jewish tradition

Seder Olam [Rabbinic] list of Persian Kings

Koresh - 3 years

Achashverosh - 14 years

Daryavesh = Artachshasta - 34 years

[followed by the conquest of Persian by Alexander G.]

I. The basic assumptions of Seder Olam

**Goal - to make the accepted Greek Year a significant Jewish date
i.e. Greek Year 1 = 1000 years After the Exodus**

In the Torah and Tanach we count to Exodus -

Then we simply add 1K to the secular year and have Jewish one!

How the calculation works

Calculating years from the Exodus till the end of Tanach:

From /Till	Years	Sum	Source
Yetziat Mitzraim = The Exodus	1	1	Bamidbar 1:1
Building First Temple	480	480	I Kings 6:1 - explicit
Destruction First Temple	410	890	Calculated -from 19 kings
Start 2nd Temple Darius Year 2	70	960	Zecharya 1:12 - explicit
Last event in Tanach / 34 Artexeres	33	993	Nech 13:6, if Darius=Artexerxes
Hence LAST Biblical source			
Assumption based on Avoda Zara 10a	1	994	Seder Olam (assumption)
Next year Alexander conquers Elam			
Alexander conquers all of Persia And then the Greek Year- begins	6	1000	Chazal / tradition Avoda Zara 10a

Note how it is based on TWO bold assumptions:

1. No GAP between Ezra chapter 6 & 7/ i.e. Daryevesh = Artachshashte
2. The year after Tanach ends Alexander the Great begins conquest of Elam....
And completes his conquest of Persia six years later
And that's when the Greek Year began

& hence only room for three Persian Kings:

Koresh must be the FIRST Persian King / Ezra 1:1

[corresponding to the end of Yirmiyahu's 70 years of Bavel's dominion]

Achashverosh must reign at least 13 years / based on Megilla chapters 3 & 9

Can only fit between Koresh and Darius

Darius must also be Artachshasta

Next - we examine the sources in Tanach

To see how it 'perfectly' can fit

II. The GAP between Koresh & Darius
Ezra chapter 4

- א וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ, צָרִי יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵימִן :** כִּי-בְנֵי הַגּוֹלָה בּוֹנִים הֵיכָל, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. **1** Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity were building a temple unto the LORD, the God of Israel;
- ב וַיִּגְשׁוּ אֶל-זְרֻבָּבֶל וְאֶל-רָאשֵׁי הָאָבוֹת, וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהֶם נִבְנֶה עִמָּכֶם--כִּי כָכֶם, נִדְרֹשׁ לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם ; וְלֹא (וְלוֹ) אֲנַחְנוּ זִבְחִים, מִיָּמֵי אֶסֶר חֲדָן מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר, הַמַּעֲלָה אֶתְנוּ, פֹּה. **2** then they drew near to Zerubbabel, and to the heads of fathers' houses, and said unto them: 'Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up hither.'**
- ג וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם זְרֻבָּבֶל וַיֵּשׁוּעַ, וּשְׂאָר רָאשֵׁי הָאָבוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל--לֹא-לָכֶם וְלָנוּ, לְבָנוֹת בַּיִת לֵאלֹהֵינוּ : כִּי אֲנַחְנוּ יַחַד נִבְנֶה, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּנוּ, הַמֶּלֶךְ כּוֹרֶשׁ מֶלֶךְ-פָּרַס. **3** But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses of Israel, said unto them: 'Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD, the God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.'**
- ד וַיְהִי, עַם-הָאָרֶץ--מְרַפִּים, יָדַי עִם-יְהוּדָה; וּמִבְלַהִים (וּמִבְהַלִּים) אוֹתָם, לְבָנוֹת. **4** Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and harried them while they were building,**
- ה וּסְכָרִים עָלֵיהֶם יוֹעֲצִים, לְהַפֵּר עֲצָתָם-- כָּל-יָמָיו, כּוֹרֶשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרַס, וְעַד-מַלְכוּת, דָּרְיוֹשׁ מֶלֶךְ-פָּרַס. **5** and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.**
- ו וּבְמַלְכוּת, אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ, בְּתַחֲלַת, מַלְכוּתוֹ-- כָּתְבוּ שְׂטֵנָה, עַל-יִשְׁבֵּי יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם. {ס} **6** And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.**

Note how the book of Ezra doesn't tell us how many years transpire ONLY the GAP between Koresh & Darius

How to calculate?

Based on two sets of 70 years - Zecharya & Yirmiyahu

Yirmiyahu 25:1 - 1 of Bavel = 4 Yehoyakim = beginning of 70 years

They end with first year of Koresh

Zecharya 1:12 - 70 years of Destruction

From 11th year of Tzidkayhu till 2nd year of Darius

Year 4 Yehoyakim till 11 = 7 years PLUS 11 years of Tzidkiyahu = 18 years!

At least 3 years for Koresh - based on Daniel 10:1

That leaves maximum of 14 year GAP for the King inbetween!

BINGO = JUST ENOUGH to fit in the events of Megillat Esther!

III. The time period of Esther according to Seder Olam:

A. Yirmiyahu's 70 years vs. Zecharya's -- Seder Olam

Bavel	Event	King Year	Source	Persia
1	Nevuchadnezar reigns	4 Yehoyakim	Yirm 25:1	-
7	Yehoyachin exiled /Exile I	11 Yehoykm	II Kings 24:1-12	-
18	Temple destroyed/Exile II	11 Tzidkyhu	II Kings 25:1-8	-
70	Cyrus Declaration - Return	1 Koresh	Ezra 1:1-3	1
73	Achashverosh begins reign	3 Koresh	Daniel 10:1	3
76	Achashverosh's big party	3 Achashv.	Esther 1:3	6
85	Purim victory / miracle	12 Achashv	Esther 3:7	15
87	Darius succeeds Achashv.	14 Achashv	Midrash	17
88	Work begins on Bayit II	2 Darius	Chagai 2:15	18
	[note overlap of 18 years]	70 since Churbn	Zecharya 1:12	

Selective quotes from Seder Olam

Ezra and Esther

(Ezra 1:1-3) "In year one of Cyrus, king of Persia, when the word of the Eternal through Jeremiah was fulfilled...

Cyrus ruled incomplete three years.

(Ezra 4:6) "In the reign of Ahasuerus, at the start of his reign, they wrote accusations against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem."

(Ezra 4:24) "In the meantime, the work at the Temple in Jerusalem stopped and was idle until year two of Darius, king of Persia."

(Esther 1:3) in the year 3 of his (Ahasuerus's) reign he made a feast ...
" For four years, Esther was hidden in the fortress Susa.

(Esther 2:16) "Esther was taken to the king, to his palace,
in the tenth month, that is Tevet,
in the seventh year of his reign."

(Esther 3:7) "In the first month, that is Nisan, in the year 12 of king Ahasuerus, they threw the lot before Haman ..."

On the 13th of Nisan did Haman write letters (Esther 3:13) "to destroy and kill all Jews ...

" On the 15th of Nisan did Esther appear before the king.

On the 16th of Nisan was Haman hanged.

On the 23rd of Nisan did Mordecai write to countermand the missives of Haman. [Esther chapter 8]

[COUNT THE DAYS FROM FIRST DECREE TO SECOND

13 Nisan till 23 Sivan = 17 + 30 + 23 = 70 DAYS of peril !!]

On the 13th of Adar (Esther 9:5) "did the Jews slay all their enemies," (Esther 9:12) "and in Shushan ba'Bira the Jews slew 500 men" and they hanged the ten Sons of Haman who had written incitements against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. (Esther 9:11) "On that day, the king was informed of the number of the slain."

About the same time the next year it is said (Esther 9:29) "Queen Esther and the Jew Mordecai wrote..."

Lo, it says (Jer. 29:10): "When Babylon will have filled 70 years I shall remember you and fulfill My good word to return you to this place";

(Dan. 9:2) "I checked the books for the number of years, about which the word of the Eternal was to the prophet Jeremiah, that 70 years were fulfilled since the destruction of Jerusalem."

Israel was **52** years in the kingdom of the Chaldeans,
then they were remembered and returned,
3 years in the reign of Cyrus,
14 of Ahasuerus, and in the **second** year of Darius the Temple was built.

And so says Zachariah (Zach. 1:12): "The angel of the Eternal declaimed and said: O Eternal of Hosts, until when will you not have mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, about which You are angry now these 70 years."

The Temple was built for **four** years as it is said (Ezra 6:15): "This temple was finished at the third of Adar in the year **six** of the reign of Darius."

At the same time the next year did Ezra come up from Babylon and other deportees with him as it is said (Ezra 7:6-10):

[Hence no GAP between Ezra chapters 6 & 7 !!!]

Nehemiah to the end of the 2nd Temple

(Neh. 1:1) 'The words of Nehemiah son of Hakhaliah ...' Twelve years he was in the land of Israel, repairing the wall and returning every man to his town and his inherited land. And so it says (Neh. 13:6): "When all this happened, I was not in Jerusalem because in the year 32 of Artaxerxes I came to the king and after one year I took leave from the king."

From year 20 to year 32 are **12** years.

The kings of Media and Persia ruled for a total of 52 years

[18 before Temple was built + 34 after Temple built till Alex G.]

R. Yose says: The Persian empire existed during the time of the Temple for 34 years.

The kingdom of the Greeks 180 years.

The kingdom of the Hasmoneans 103 years.

The kingdom of Herod 103 years. [total 420]

After that start counting after the destruction of the Temple.

And in Babylonia one writes in the Seleucid era 1,000.

The following are the eight kings of the Greeks: Alexander the Macedonian, Antipatros, Ptolemy

**IV. The Jewish year that we use today from Creation
Simple calculation how it came about**

Greek Year began in 312 BCE

Therefore - today's Greek Year = 2023+312 = 2335

If Greek Year = 1000 from the Exodus

Today it' is 2335 + 1000 = 3335 from the Exodus

**Once Western world stopped using Greek Year and moved to CE
Jewish custom needed to change their date as well**

How to transform to Year of Creation

To calculate how many years From creation till the Exodus:

From /Till	Years	Sum	Source
Creation	1	1	Breishit 1:1
Birth of Avraham	1948	1948	Br. Chaps. 5 & 11
Birth of Yitzchak	100	2048	Breishit 21:5
Exodus	400	2448	Breishit 15:13

Therefore, minimum of 2448 years from Creation to Yetziat Mitzraim

Today - 3335 from EXODUS plus 2448

3335

2448

=====

5783 or today's accepted traditional Hebrew Year

But note

This calculation is based on the following assumptions:

1. Yetziat Mitzraim took place 400 years after the birth of Yitzchak

[based on Breishit 15:13, but not according to Shmot 12:40 in pshat]

2. No GAP between Ezra chapter 6 & 7/ i.e. Daryevesh = Artachshashte

[not pshat in the book of Ezra]

3. The year after Tanach ends Alexander the Great begins conquest of Elam...

[no source in outside history

Other than Alexander the Great killed Darius III]