



# Putting things in **PERSPECTIVE**

**Megillas Esther** tells of how King Achashveirosh made a party in the third year of his reign and the **gemara**, in **Masechta Megillah**, explains that this party was to celebrate Achashveirosh's erroneous belief that the 70 years of exile that Hashem had decreed on His people had lapsed without our being redeemed and that Hashem had, *chas v'shalom*, abandoned us. Achashveirosh wasn't the first to come to this conclusion and to make a celebration; Balshatzar, a previous ruler, had done the same thing. Let's take a closer look at the miscalculations by Balshatzar and Achashveirosh, as well as the correct calculation of the 70 year period of exile. **BY ROBERT SUSSMAN**

**0 (3318)** Nevuchadnetzar becomes king by conquering Ninveh, which was where the head of the Kingdom of Assyria, Esser Chidon, was located. *Malchus Bavel* (the Kingdom of Babylonia) begins.

**1** In the second year of his reign, Nevuchadnetzar conquers Yerushalayim, plunders the *Beis HaMikdash* (the Temple), but doesn't destroy it, and exiles Yehoyakim, the king of Yehudah (Judea), to Bavel, along with Daniel, Chananya, Mishael, and Azaria. This took place during the third year of the reign of Yehoyakim. Nevuchadnetzar subsequently returns Yehoyakim to Yerushalayim to rule over Yehuda, under his dominion.<sup>1</sup>

**4** After three years, Yehoyakim rebels against Nevuchadnetzar.

**7** Three years after it began, Nevuchadnetzar crushes Yehoyakim's rebellion, killing him and appointing his son, Yehoyachin, in his place.

**8 (3327)** Yehoyachin rules for only 3 months before rebelling against Nevuchadnetzar. Nevuchadnetzar exiles Yehoyachin to Bavel, thus beginning *Galus Bavel*, the Babylonian Exile, and appoints Tzidkiyahu in place of Yehoyachin.<sup>2</sup>

**19 (3338)** Nevuchadnetzar destroys *Bayis Rishon* (the First Temple), which stood for 410 years, and takes all of the vessels from there. Nevuchadnetzar blinds and exiles Tzidkiyahu. Only a small number of Jews remain in Eretz Yehuda (Judea), with those who weren't killed or died of hunger and disease being taken into exile to Bavel.<sup>3</sup>

**45** After reigning for 45 years, Nevuchadnetzar dies and is succeeded by his son, Ehlvi M'rudach.<sup>4</sup>

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46

Balshatzar's calculation: 70 years from *Malchus Bavel* (the Kingdom of Babylonia)

Achashveirosh's calculation: 70 years from *Galus Bavel* (the Babylonian Exile)

The correct calculation: 70 years from Churban Bayis Rishon (the destruction of the First Temple)

The numbering 0 to 89 refers to the counting of the years from the beginning of *Malchus Bavel*, the Kingdom of Babylonia, which began with the reign of Nevuchadnetzar (numbers in brackets refer to years in the Hebrew Calendar).