



THE ORDER OF THE RELEVANT KINGS:

MALCHUS BAVEL:

(The Kingdom of Babylonia)

Nevuchadnezzar

Ehvil M'rudach

Balshatzar

MALCHUS PARAS U'MADAI:

(The Kingdoms of Persia and Media)

Daryavash I

Korech

Achashveirosh

Daryavash II



THE CALCULATIONS:

Balshatzar's calculation:

Based on the verse (29:10) in Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah), which says, "So says Hashem, when it is fulfilled in *Bavel* (Babylonia) 70 years, I will remember you," Balshatzar thought that the 70 year exile was to be counted from when Nevuchadnezzar took the kingship from Esser Chidon, the king of Assyria, thus beginning *Malchus Bavel* (the kingdom of Babylonia).

Balshatzar counted: 45 years of Nevuchadnezzar's reign + 23 years* of Ehvil M'rudach's reign + 2 years of his own reign for a total of 70 years.

Achashveirosh's calculation:

Achashveirosh believed that Balshatzar had erred by a total of 8 years because the verse in Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) doesn't say *l'malchus Bavel* (to the kingship of Babylonia), but *l'Bavel* (to Babylonia), meaning that the 70 years should be counted from the beginning of *Galus Bavel* (the Babylonian Exile), which started with the exile of Yehoyachin.

To get these 8 extra years, Achashveirosh counted: One year from the last year of Balshatzar (who ruled for a total of 3 years) + 5 years* from a combination of Daryavish I and Korech + 2 from years from his own reign for a total of 70 years.

The correct calculation:

The 70 years should be counted from the destruction of *Bayis Rishon* (the First Temple). Achashveirosh miscalculated by a total of 11* (really 13 years because of the partial years that he miscounted). To get these 13 extra years, we count: 12 years from Achashveirosh's reign + 1 year from the reign of his and Esther's son, Daryavash II. So the correct calculation looks like this:

26 years of Nevuchadnezzar's reign (45 minus 19, as *Bayis Rishon*, the First Temple, was destroyed in the 19th year of Nevuchadnezzar's reign) + 22 years of Ehvil M'rudach's reign + 3 years of Balshatzar's reign + 4 years from the combination of Daryavish I's and Korech's reign + 14 from Achashveirosh's reign + 1 from Daryavash II's reign for a total of 70 years.

*Rashi explains that Achashveirosh made two errors in counting the reigns of previous kings, due to the overlapping of years of their reigns when counting. In other words, a single calendar year can have two different kings within it, with each one subsequently having that same year count towards his reign – in essence, causing a double counting of the same calendar year when measuring time by the kings who reigned during a particular period rather than by the actual passage of time. Achashveirosh's two errors were: (1) He counted an extra year between the reigns of Nevuchadnezzar and Ehvil M'rudach, ascribing to Ehvil M'rudach a total of 23 years instead of 22 years [seemingly, Balshatzar made this same error (in addition to his beginning the counting of the 70 years from the wrong event) – with the result being that he wound up with a total of 69 years instead of 70 years]; and (2) He counted 5 years for the combined reigns of Daryavash I and Korech, when we find that there were only 4 years between them. As a result, Achashveirosh thought that it had been 78 years since *Galus Bavel* began (in the 8th year of Nevuchadnezzar's reign), when it had really only been 76, making it not 70, but 68 years since the exile began. Regardless, Achashveirosh was still calculating the 70 years from the wrong event! So, the gemara explains that Achashveirosh's calculation was 11 years off, which was really 13 years off because of the partial years that resulted in his miscounting an extra year towards Ehvil M'rudach and an extra year towards the reigns of Daryavash I and Korech. **II**

¹In 3321, *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* (Jeremiah the Prophet) wrote *Eicha*, Lamentations, which foretold of the impending destruction of *Bayis Rishon* (the First Temple), as well as the utter devastation and exile of the Jewish people. Upset by what Yirmiyahu had written, Yehoyakim burned *Eicha* (which was subsequently rewritten).

²As discussed in *Masechta Megillah*, this date is 7 years from the conquering of Yehoyakim and 8 years from the kingship of Nevuchadnezzar.

³As discussed in *Masechta Megillah*, this date is 18 years from the conquering of Yehoyakim and 19 years from the kingship of Nevuchadnezzar.

⁴See 2 Melachim (Kings) 25:27, which explains that Ehvil M'rudach became king 37 years after the exile of Yehoyachin, which was in the 8th year of Nevuchadnezzar's reign.

⁵Rashi explains that this was 69 years to the day from when Nevuchadnezzar conquered Yehoyakim.

⁶Rashi explains that Daryavash I completed the remaining time of the 70 years of *Galus Bavel*.