

Exploring the Torah's Chronological Integrity - class #3
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 /

The story of Megillat Esther is one of the most well know events of the Bible. Nonetheless, a major debate is found in regard to when those events took place.

Everyone is in agreement that it takes place during the Persian time period - and **AFTER** the reign of Cyrus [Koresh]; the famous Persian king who conquered Babylonia. However, in most Rabbinic literature, Achashverosh is identified as the Persian King immediately after Cyrus- but **BEFORE** Darius, & hence it took place **BEFORE** the construction of the Temple.

On the other hand;

when considering outside [secular] sources, it seems more likely that Achashverosh should be identified as Xerxes - Persian king who reigned immediately **AFTER** the reign of Darius- and hence **AFTER** the Second Temple was built.

See table below:

Seder Olam [Rabbinic] list of Persian Kings

Three in total - who reigned for a total of approx. 40 years:

Koresh - 3 years

Achashverosh - 14 years

Daryavesh - 34 years

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

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 = ארתחשטתא [Ezra (7:7) / Nechemya (1:1)]

- I. Considering "author's intent" when studying the books of the Bible
 - A. Sefer Breishit - How God created/
That God created
Why God chooses a Nation
That God chose a Nation, etc.
 - B. "shir ha'shirim" - the purpose of its composition / "peshat" vs. "drash"
 - C. Divrei ha'Yamim - 'chronicle' or 'composition' / when & why

- II. Application of this concept to the study of Megilat Esther
 - Possible reasons for its composition (not mutually exclusive):
 - Information - to know or be aware of what happened
 - Halacha - why future generations should celebrate Purim
 - Philosophy - to see the Hand of God behind Jewish History
 - Also - who is the intended audience -
[And what does the author assume the reader knows]
 - Finally, does the author (and audience) have a sense of humor
[Is 'humor' or 'satire' a legitimate tool to deliver a divine message]

- III Logical assumptions to make
 - A. Is reader aware of the history in books of Ezra/Nechemya
 - Is he familiar with Chumash and books of early Prophets
 - Is he aware of the Later Prophets, like Yirmiyahu
 - Who forecasted redemption from Exile
 - B. Is reader aware of Persian history
 - Is the reader living in Exile, or in the Land of Israel
 - C. Is reader aware of the time period of Megilat Esther,
And where the Jewish people are 'supposed' to be
 - D. Do we expect the reader to be aware of Chagi & Zecharya
i.e. the most recent prophets for that generation

Discuss principle of 'objective analysis' / 'subjective interpretation'

IV. Historical & Prophetic Background - Megillat Esther

Ezra Chapter 1

א וּבְשָׁנַת אַחַת, לְכוֹרֶשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרַס, לְכָלוֹת דְּבַר-
ה', מִפִּי יְרֵמְיָהּ: הָעִיר ה', אֶת-רוּחַ כְּרֶשׁ
מֶלֶךְ-פָּרַס, וַיַּעֲבֹר-קוֹל בְּכָל-מַלְכוּתוֹ, וְגַם-
בְּמִכְתָּב לְאֹמֶר. ב כֹּה אָמַר, כְּרֶשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרַס--
כָּל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ, נָתַן לִי ה' אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם;
וְהוּא-פָקַד עָלַי לְבָנוֹת-לוֹ בַּיִת, בִּירוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר
בִּיהוּדָה. ג מִי-בְּכֶם מִכָּל-עַמּוֹ, יְהִי אֱלֹהֵיו עִמּוֹ,
וַיַּעַל, לְיִרוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר בִּיהוּדָה; וַיְבִנוּ, אֶת-בַּיִת
ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל--הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים, אֲשֶׁר
בִּירוּשָׁלַם. ד וְכָל-הַנְּשָׂאָר, מִכָּל-הַמְּקוֹמוֹת
אֲשֶׁר הוּא גָר-שָׁם--יִנְשְׂאוּהוּ אֲנָשֵׁי מְקוֹמוֹ,
בְּכֶסֶף וּבְזָהָב וּבְרִכּוּשׁ וּבְבַהֲמָה; עִם-הַנְּדָבָה--
לְבַיִת הָאֱלֹהִים, אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלַם.
... ז וְהַמֶּלֶךְ כּוֹרֶשׁ, הוֹצִיא אֶת-כָּלֵי בַיִת-ה',
אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיא נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר מִירוּשָׁלַם,
וַיִּתְּנֵם בְּבַיִת אֱלֹהֵיו.
ח וַיּוֹצִיאֵם, כּוֹרֶשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרַס, עַל-יַד, מְתַרְדַּת
הַגְּזָבָר; וַיִּסְפְּרֵם, לְשֶׁשֶׁבַצַּר, הַנְּשִׂיא, לְיִהוּדָה.

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing: 2 "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD, the God of heaven, given me; and He hath charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whosoever there is among you of all His people--his God be with him--let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD, the God of Israel, He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

4 And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.'

7 Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; 8 even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.

Yirmiyahu Chapter 29

י כִּי-כֹה, אָמַר ה', כִּי לִפִּי מְלֵאת לְבַבְלִי
שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה, אֶפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם; וְהִקְמַתִּי
עֲלֵיכֶם, אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הַטּוֹב, לְהַשִּׁיב אֶתְכֶם, אֶל-
הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה... וַיְקַרְאתֶם אֹתִי וְהִלַּכְתֶּם,
וְהִתְפַּלַּלְתֶּם אֵלַי; וְשִׁמַּעְתִּי, אֲלֵיכֶם. יג
וּבְקִשְׁתֶּם אֹתִי, וּמְצֵאתֶם: כִּי תִדְרָשְׁנִי,
בְּכָל-לְבַבְכֶם. יד וְנִמְצָאתִי לָכֶם נְאֻם-ה'
וְשִׁבְתִּי אֶת-שְׁבוּתְכֶם וְקִבַּצְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל-
הַגּוֹיִם וּמִכָּל-הַמְּקוֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר הִדַּחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם
שָׁם, נְאֻם-ה'; וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי אֶתְכֶם אֶל-הַמְּקוֹם
אֲשֶׁר-הִגְלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם מִשָּׁם.

10 For thus says Hashem: After 70 years are over for Babylon, I will remember you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place...And ye shall call upon Me, and go, and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you.

13 And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found of you, says Hashem and I will turn your captivity, and gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you back unto the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

Ezra Chapter 4

- א וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ, צָרִי יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵימֶן : כִּי-בָנִי
הַגּוֹלָה בּוֹנִים הַיְכָל, 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;
- ד וַיְהִי, עִם-הָאָרֶץ--מְרַפִּים, יְדֵי עַם-יְהוּדָה;
וּמְבַלְהִים (וּמְבַהֲלִים) 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 וַיִּסְכְּרוּ עֲלֵיהֶם יוֹעֲצִים, לְהַפֵּר עֲצָתָם--
כָּל-יְמֵי, כּוֹרֵשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרַס, וְעַד-מַלְכוּת,
דָּרִיוֹשׁ 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.

Haggai Chapter 1

- א בַּשָּׁנָה שְׁתַּיִם, לְדָרִיוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ, בַּחֹדֶשׁ
הַשְּׁשִׁי, בְּיוֹם אֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ--הָיָה דְבַר-יְהוָה
בְּיַד-חַגִּי הַנְּבִיא, אֶל-זֶרְבָבֶל בֶּן-שָׁאֲלֻתִיאֵל
פַּחַת יְהוּדָה, וְאֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-יְהוֹזָדָק הַכֹּהֵן
הַגָּדוֹל, לֵאמֹר.
1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth
month, in the first day of the month, came the word
of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel
the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua
the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying:
- ב כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, לֵאמֹר: הָעַם הַזֶּה
אָמְרוּ, לֹא עַת-בָּא עֵת-בֵּית יְהוָה לְהַבְנֹת.
2 'Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying: This
people say: The time is not come, the time that the
LORD'S house should be built.' {P}
- ז ... שִׁימוּ לְבַבְכֶם, עַל-דַּרְכֵיכֶם.
7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts: Consider your
ways.
- ח עָלוּ הָהָר וְהִבֵּאתֶם עֵץ, וּבְנוּ הַבַּיִת;
וְאֶרְצָה-בּוֹ וְאֶכְבַּד (וְאֶפְבְּדָה), אָמַר יְהוָה.
=====
- ט גָּדוֹל יִהְיֶה כְבוֹד הַבַּיִת
הַזֶּה הָאֲחֵרוֹן, מִן-הָרִאשׁוֹן-
אָמַר, יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת; וּבְמָקוֹם הַזֶּה
אֶתֶּן שָׁלוֹם, נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת.
8 Go up to the hill-country, and bring wood, and
build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I
will be glorified, saith the LORD.
=====
- II.9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater
than that of the former, saith the LORD of hosts;
and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD
of hosts.'

Zechariah Chapters 1 & 2 [also during second year of King Darius]

א. טז לְכֹן כֹּה-אָמַר ה', שְׁבִתִּי לִירוּשָׁלַם בְּרַחֲמִים--בֵּיתִי יִבְנֶה בָּהּ, נְאֻם ה' צְבָאוֹת וְקוֹ יִנְטֶה, עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם. I. 16 Therefore thus saith the LORD: I return to Jerusalem with compassions: My house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth over Jerusalem.

The hope for "shchina" to return to Second Temple

זכריה פרק ב' / יד רַבִּי וְשִׁמְחִי, בֵּת-צִיּוֹן--כִּי הִנְנִי-בָּא וְשִׁכְנֹתִי בְּתוֹכָךְ..

VI. Sefer Zecharya, chapter 8 - Year 4 of King Darius

In response to the question - if there is a need to continue fasting

A. A question is sent from Bavel regarding the fast days

זכריה פרק ז

- וַיְהִי בְּשָׁנַת אַרְבַּע, לְדַרְיוֹשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ; הָיָה דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-זְכַרְיָה, בְּאַרְבַּעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ הַתְּשַׁעִי--בְּכֶסֶלֶו.
- 1 And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chislev;
- ב וַיִּשְׁלַח, בֵּית-אֵל, שְׂרָאָצֶר, וְרָגַם מְלָךְ וְאַנְשָׁיו--לְחַלּוֹת, אֶת-פְּנֵי יְהוָה.
- 2 When Bethel-sarezzer, and Regemelech and his men, had sent to entreat the favour of the LORD,
- ג לֵאמֹר, אֶל-הַכֹּהֲנִים אֲשֶׁר לְבֵית-יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, וְאֶל-הַנְּבִיאִים, לֵאמֹר: הֲאֲבָכָה, בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִשִּׁי--הַנִּזְוֶר, כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי זֶה כַּמָּה שָׁנִים. {פ}
- 3 and to speak unto the priests of the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying: 'Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?' {P}
- ד וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, אֵלַי לֵאמֹר.
- 4 Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying:
- ה אָמַר אֶל-כָּל-עַם הָאָרֶץ, וְאֶל-הַכֹּהֲנִים לֵאמֹר: כִּי-צַמַּתֶם וְסָפַדְתֶּם בַּחֲמִישִׁי וּבְשִׁבְעִיעִי, וְזֶה שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה--הַצֹּם צַמַּתְנִי, אָנֹכִי.
- 5 'Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying: When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh month, even these seventy years, did ye at all fast unto Me, even to Me?
- ו וְכִי תֹאכְלוּ, וְכִי תִשְׁתּוּ--הֲלוֹא אַתֶּם הֹאכְלִים, וְאַתֶּם הַשְׂתִּים.
- 6 And when ye eat, and when ye drink, are ye not they that eat, and they that drink?
- ז הֲלוֹא אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים, אֲשֶׁר קָרָא יְהוָה בְּיַד הַנְּבִיאִים הָרְאשִׁימִים, בְּהִיּוֹת
- 7 Should ye not hearken to the words which the LORD hath proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was

יְרוּשָׁלַם יִשְׁבֶּת וְיִשְׁלֹחַ, וְעָרֶיהָ
סְבִיבֹתֶיהָ; וְהִנָּגְבַ וְהַשְּׁפֵלָה, יֵשֵׁב. {פ}

inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, and the South and the Lowland were inhabited? {P}

ט כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, לֵאמֹר:

מִשְׁפָּט אֲמַת, שְׁפָטוּ, וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים,
עֲשׂוּ אִישׁ אֶת-אָחִיו.

9 'Thus hath the LORD of hosts spoken, saying: Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother;

י וְאַל־מָנֶה וְיִתּוֹם גֵּר וְעֵנִי, אַל-תַּעֲשֹׂקוּ;
וְרַעַת אִישׁ אָחִיו, אַל-תַּחֲשִׁבוּ בְלִבְבְּכֶם.

10 and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart.

C. God's answer: Redemption - a 'two way street'

זכריה פרק ח

ג כֹּה, אָמַר יְהוָה, שְׁבִתִי אֶל-צִיּוֹן,
וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם; וְנִקְרְאָה
יְרוּשָׁלַם עִיר הָאֱמֶת, וְהָר-יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
הָר הַקֹּדֶשׁ. {ס}

3 Thus saith the LORD: I return unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain. {S}

ד כֹּה אָמַר, יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, עַד יֵשְׁבוּ
זְקֵנִים וְזִקְנוֹת, בְּרַחֲבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם; וְאִישׁ
מִשְׁעֲנָתוֹ בְּיָדוֹ, מֵרַב יָמִים.

4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women sit in the broad places of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age.

ה וְרַחֲבוֹת הָעִיר יִמְלְאוּ, יְלָדִים וְיִלְדוֹת,
מִשְׂחָקִים, בְּרַחֲבֹתֶיהָ. {ס}

5 And the broad places of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the broad places thereof. {S}

ו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, הִנְנִי מוֹשִׁיעַ
אֶת-עַמִּי מֵאֶרֶץ מִזְרָח, וּמֵאֶרֶץ, מְבוֹא
הַשָּׁמֶשׁ.

7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts: Behold, I will save My people from the east country, and from the west country;

ז וְהֵבֵאתִי אֹתָם, וְשָׁכְנוּ בְּתוֹךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם;
וְהָיוּ-לִי לְעָם, וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים-
בְּאֱמֶת, וּבְצִדְקָה.

8 And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness. {S}

ח כִּי כֹה אָמַר, יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, כִּאֲשֶׁר
זָמַמְתִּי לְהַרְעֵ לָכֶם בְּהַקְצִיף אֲבֹתֵיכֶם
אֹתִי, אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת; וְלֹא, נִחַמְתִּי.

14 For thus saith the LORD of host: As I purposed to do evil unto you, when your fathers provoked Me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not;

טו כִּן שִׁבְתִּי זְמַמְתִּי בַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה, לְהִיטִיב אֶת-יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת-בַּיִת יְהוּדָה: אֶל-תִּירְאוּ.

15 so again do I purpose in these days to do good unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear ye not.

טז אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים, אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּ: דַּבְּרוּ אֱמֶת, אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ--אֱמֶת וּמִשְׁפָּט שְׁלוֹם, שִׁפְטוּ בְּשַׁעְרֵיכֶם.

16 These are the things that ye shall do: Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates;

יז וְאִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵת רֵעֵהוּ, אֶל-תַּחֲשְׁבוּ בְּלִבְבְּכֶם, וּשְׁבַעַת שֶׁקֶר, אֶל-תֶּאֱהָבוּ: כִּי אֶת-כָּל-אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר שָׂנֵאתִי, נֶאֱמַר-יְהוָה. {ס}

17 and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.'

יח וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, אֵלַי לֵאמֹר.

18 And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying:

יט כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, צוֹם הָרְבִיעִי וְצוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי וְצוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְצוֹם הָעֲשִׂירִי יִהְיֶה לְבַיִת-יְהוּדָה לְשִׂשׁוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחָה, וּלְמַעֲדִים, טוֹבִים; וְהָאֱמֶת וְהַשְּׁלוֹם, אֶהְבֹּ. {פ}

19 'Thus saith the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful seasons; therefore love ye truth and peace. {P}

D. Review of key phrases that will appear in Esther:

טז אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים, אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּ:

דַּבְּרוּ אֱמֶת, אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ--אֱמֶת וּמִשְׁפָּט שְׁלוֹם, שִׁפְטוּ

בְּשַׁעְרֵיכֶם.

יז וְאִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵת רֵעֵהוּ, אֶל-תַּחֲשְׁבוּ בְּלִבְבְּכֶם, וּשְׁבַעַת שֶׁקֶר, אֶל-תֶּאֱהָבוּ: כִּי אֶת-כָּל-אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר שָׂנֵאתִי, נֶאֱמַר-יְהוָה.

The 'Four Fast Days' will become 'holidays'

יט כֹּה-אָמַר ה' צְבָאוֹת, צוֹם הָרְבִיעִי וְצוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי וְצוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְצוֹם הָעֲשִׂירִי יִהְיֶה לְבַיִת-יְהוּדָה לְשִׂשׁוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחָה, וּלְמַעֲדִים, טוֹבִים; וְהָאֱמֶת וְהַשְּׁלוֹם, אֶהְבֹּ.

How often to we find this phrase דַּבְּרֵי שְׁלוֹם וְאֱמֶת?

Together with fast days, only Megilla and Zecharya!

VII. The two letters in Esther chapter 9

A. The first letter: 9:20-23

כ ויכתב מרדכי, את-הדברים האלה; וישלח ספרים אל-כל-היהודים, אשר בכל-מדינות המלך אחשוורוש-- הקרובים, והרחוקים. **20** And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far,

כא לקיים, עליהם--להיות עשים את יום ארבעה עשר לחדש אדר, ואת יום-חמשה עשר בו: בכל-שנה, ושנה. **21** to enjoin them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly,

כב כימים, אשר-נחו בהם היהודים מאיביהם, והחדש אשר נהפך להם מיגון לשמחה, ומאבל ליום טוב; לעשות אותם, ימי משתה ושמחה, ומשלח מנות איש לרעהו, ומתנות לאבנים. **22** the days wherein the Jews had rest from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

Note the eternal nature of this celebration:

כז קימו וקבלו היהודים עליהם ועל-זרעם ועל כל-הנלוים עליהם, ולא יעבור--להיות עשים את שני הימים האלה, ככתבם וכזמנם: בכל-שנה, ושנה. **27** the Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to the writing thereof, and according to the appointed time thereof, every year;

Why an eternal celebration?

Why sending presents?

B. The second letter: 9:29-32

Why was it necessary? [If already accepted/ see 9:27]

What did the letter say?

כט וַתִּכְתֹּב אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה בַת-
אַבְיָחַיִל, וּמֹרְדֵכַי הַיְהוּדִי--אֶת-כָּל-
תִּקְוָהּ: לְקַיֵּם, אֶת אֲגֵרַת הַפָּרִים הַזֹּאת-
הַשְּׁנִיית.

29 Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote down all the acts of power, to confirm this second letter of Purim.

ל וַיִּשְׁלַח סְפָרִים אֶל-כָּל-הַיְהוּדִים, אֶל-שֶׁבַע
וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה--מִלְכוּת, אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ:
דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם, וְאַמֶּת.

30 And he sent letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,

לא לְקַיֵּם אֶת-יְמֵי הַפָּרִים הָאֵלֶּה
בְּזִמְנֵיהֶם, כַּאֲשֶׁר קִיַּם עֲלֵיהֶם מֹרְדֵכַי
הַיְהוּדִי וְאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה, וְכַאֲשֶׁר קִיַּמוּ
עַל-נַפְשָׁם, וְעַל-זֶרְעָם: דְּבָרֵי הַצּוּמוֹת,
וְזַעֲקָתָם.

31 to confirm these days of Purim in their appointed times, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had ordained for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry.

What are the דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם וְאַמֶּת?

The introduction, or the content?

Also, what is the connection to the ‘fast days?’

Could Esther's second letter be alluding to this entire prophecy of Zecharya,

It was the most recent prophecy to the Exile.
Could this explain “mshloach manot”?

Zecharya chapter 8	Esther chapter 9
<p>טז אלה הדברים, אשר תעשו: דברו אמת, איש את-רעהו--אמת ומשפט שלום, שפטו בשעריכם. יז ואיש את-רעת רעהו, אל- תחשבו בלבבכם, ושבעת שקר, אל-תאהבו: כי את-כל-אלה אשר שנאתי, נאם-ה'.</p> <p>יח ויהי דבר-ה' צבאות, אלי לאמר. יט כה-אמר ה' צבאות, צום הרביעי וצום החמישי וצום השביעי וצום העשירי יהיה לבית- יהודה לששון ולשמחה, ולמעדים, טובים; והאמת והשלום, אהבו.</p>	<p>..והחדש אשר נהפך להם מיגון לשמחה ומאבל ליום טוב לעשות אותם ימי משתה ושמחה ומשלח מנות איש לרעהו ומתנות לאבינים....</p> <p>(כט) ותכתב אסתר המלכה בת אביחיל ומרדכי היהודי את כל תקף לקים את אגרת הפרים הזאת השנית. (ל) וישלח ספרים אל כל היהודים אל שבע ועשרים ומאה מדינה מלכות אחשוורוש דברי שלום ואמת. (לא) לקים את ימי הפרים האלה בזמניהם כאשר קים עליהם מרדכי היהודי ואסתר המלכה וכאשר קימו על נפשם ועל זרעם דברי הצומות וזעקתם.</p>

If our assumption is correct,

There may be additional connections between this prophecy and Megillat Esther! Let's read the final words of this prophecy,

The great hopes for Bayit Sheni !

E. Even 'other nations' will come to Jerusalem in search of God

כ כה אמר, יהוה צבאות: עד אשר יבאו עמים, וישבי ערים רבות. **20** Thus saith the LORD of hosts: It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come peoples, and the inhabitants of many cities;

כא והלכו יושבי אחת אל-אחת **21** and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying: Let us go

לֵאמֹר, נִלְכֶה הַלֹּדֶד לְחַלּוֹת אֶת-פְּנֵי
יְהוָה, וּלְבַקֵּשׁ, אֶת-יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת;
אֲלֵכֶה, גַּם-אֲנִי.

speedily to entreat the favour of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will go also.

כַּב וּבָאוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים וְגוֹיִם עֲצוּמִים,
לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת-יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בִּירוּשָׁלַם,
וּלְחַלּוֹת, אֶת-פְּנֵי יְהוָה.

22 Yea, many peoples and mighty nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favour of the LORD. {S}

כָּג כֹּה-אָמַר, יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, בַּיָּמִים
הַהֵמָּה, אֲשֶׁר יַחֲזִיקוּ עֲשָׂרָה אַנְשִׁים
מִכָּל לְשׁוֹנוֹת הַגּוֹיִם; וְהִחֲזִיקוּ בְכַנְף
אִישׁ יְהוּדִי לֵאמֹר, נִלְכֶה עִמָּכֶם--כִּי
שָׁמַעְנוּ, אֱלֹהִים עִמָּכֶם. {ס}

23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying: We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

IV. - Re-examining Megilat Esther - in light of Chagi/ Zecharya

A. A strange 'Jewish (?) name', and genealogy back 4 generations

אסתר פרק ב ה אִישׁ יְהוּדִי, הָיָה בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה; וּשְׁמוֹ מְרְדֳכָי,
בֶּן יָאִיר בֶּן-שְׁמַעִי בֶּן-קִישׁ--אִישׁ יְמִינִי.
ו אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה, מִירוּשָׁלַם, עַם-הַגְּלָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָתָהּ, עַם
יְכָנְיָה מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה--אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה, נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר

B. .. Who is 'the King' ['The King' (?)]

אסתר פרק ג ח וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ, לְמֶלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוּשׁ--יֵשְׁנוּ עִם-אֶחָד מִפְּזָר
וּמִפְּרָד בֵּין הָעַמִּים, בְּכָל מְדִינֹת מְלְכוּתְךָ; וְדַתִּיהֶם שְׁנוֹת מְכַל-
עַם, וְאֶת-דַּתִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵינָם עֹשִׂים, וְלְמֶלֶךְ אֵין-שׁוּה, לְהַנִּיחֶם.

C. The strange details in chapter 1 -

International ramifications of a Queen not obeying

אסתר פרק א

ב בַּיָּמִים, הָהֵם--כְּשֶׁבֶת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ, עַל כִּסֵּא מַלְכוּתוֹ, אֲשֶׁר, בְּשׁוֹשָׁן
הַבִּירָה. **ג** בְּשָׁנַת שְׁלוֹשׁ, לְמַלְכוֹ, עָשָׂה מְשֻׁתָּה, לְכָל-שָׂרָיו וְעַבְדָּיו ...? וְהִשְׁקוֹת
בְּכָלֵי זָהָב, וְכָלִים מִפְּלִים שׁוֹנִים

טז וַיֹּאמֶר מוֹמְכוֹ לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשָּׂרִים, לֹא עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ לְבַדּוֹ, עֲוֹתָהּ וְשִׁתִּי הַמַּלְכָּה :
כִּי עַל-כָּל-הַשָּׂרִים, וְעַל-כָּל-הָעַמִּים, אֲשֶׁר, בְּכָל-מְדִינוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֵׁרוֹשׁ. יז כִּי-
 יֵצֵא דְבַר-הַמַּלְכָּה עַל-כָּל-הַנָּשִׁים, **לְהַבְזוֹת בְּעֵלֵיהֶן בְּעֵינֵיהֶן** ... וַיַּעַשׂ הַמֶּלֶךְ, כְּדִבְרֵי
 מְמוֹכָן. **כב** וַיִּשְׁלַח סִפְרִים, אֶל-כָּל-מְדִינוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ--אֶל-מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה כְּכַתְּבָהּ,
וְאֶל-עַם וְעַם כְּלָשׁוֹנוֹ : לְהִיּוֹת כָּל-אִישׁ שֹׁרֵר בְּבֵיתוֹ,
וּמְדַבֵּר כְּלָשׁוֹן עִמוֹ .

IX. 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	