

Haftarah Helper 5780: Eikev

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Isaiah 49:14-51:3

In this second of the seven haftarot of consolation (Aramaic: שבע דנחמתא), Isaiah calls out to and comforts God's exiled people more intensely than in the first. He states that God has not rejected them and will redeem them even from powerful nations seeking to prevent their return. Conversing with a forlorn Zion (Jerusalem), God reassures "her" that her "children" (the Jewish people) will return to her in large numbers and that her ruins shall be rebuilt. He reassures the minority of exiles who heed his word and return that they will multiply. The prophet also describes the courage God gives him to speak despite powerful opposition.

Haftarah Breakdown

Verses 49:14-16: God has not forgotten Zion and not abandoned her.

Isaiah 49:16	ישעיהו מ"ט:ט"ז
Behold on [My] hands have I engraved you; your walls are before Me always.	הן על-כפיים חקתיך חומתיך נגדי תמיד:

Verses 49:17-23: God will return the Jewish people to Zion, mustering the forces of the world to do so...

Isaiah 49:21-22	ישעיהו מ"ט:כ"א-כ"ב
And you [Zion] shall say to yourself, "Who begot these for me, [seeing that] I am bereaved and solitary, exiled and rejected? Who raised these? Behold I was left alone; these-[from] where are they?" So said the Lord God, "Behold I will raise My hand to the nations, and to the peoples will I raise My standard, and they shall bring your sons in the bosoms of their garments, and your daughters shall be borne on their shoulder[s]."	ואמרת בלבבך מי ילדלי את-אלה ואני שכולה וגלמודה גלה וסור'ה ואלה מי גדל הן אני נשארת לבדי אלה איפה הם:כה-אמר אד-ני ה' הנה אשא אל-גוים ידי ואל-עמים ארים נסי והביאו בניך בחצן ובנתיך על-כתף תנשאנה:

Verses 49:24-26: ...and God will take His people out of mighty nations.

Isaiah 49:25	ישעיהו מ"ט:כ"ה
For so said the Lord, "Even the captives of a mighty warrior can be taken and the prey of a tyrant shall escape, and with your contender will I contend, and your sons I will save."	כי-כה אמר ה' גם-שבי גבור יקח ומלקוח עריץ ימלט ואת-יריבך אנכי אריב ואת-בניך אנכי אושיע:

Verses 50:1-3: God has not rejected His exiled people, and will save them.

Isaiah 50:1	ישעיהו נ:א
So said the Lord, "Where is your mother's bill of divorce that I sent her away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold! For your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions, your mother was sent away."	פה אמר ה' אי זה ספר כריתות אמכם אשר שלחתיה או מי מנושי אשר-מכרתי אתכם לו הן בעונתיכם נמכרתם ובפשעיכם שלחה אמכם:

Haftarah Breakdown (cont.)

Verses 50:4-9: God has given the Prophet the strength to announce God's message, despite opposition...

Isaiah 50:4	ישעיהו נד
The Lord God gave me a tongue for teaching, to know to establish times for the faint [for His] word; He awakens me every morning, He awakens My ear, to hear according to the teachings.	אֲדַבְּרֵהוּ לִי לְשׁוֹן לְמוֹדִים לְדַעַת לְעוֹת אֶת־יַעֲרֵף דְּבַר יַעֲרֵר אֶבְיָר בְּבִקְרֵי יַעֲרֵר לִי אֲזֵן לְשִׁמְעַת כָּל־מוֹדִים:

Verses 50:10-11: ... and God will reject those who do not heed his words.

Isaiah 50:10	ישעיהו נה
Who among you is God-fearing, who hearkens to the voice of His servant, who went in darkness and who has no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord and lean on his God.	מִי בְכֶם יִרְאֵהוּ שִׁמְעַת בְּקוֹל עַבְדּוֹ אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה חֹשֶׁךְ יָמָיו וְאֵין נֹגֵה לוֹ יִבְטַח בְּשֵׁם ה' וַיִּשְׁעֵן בְּאֵלָיו:

Verses 51:1-3: As He did for Abraham, God will multiply the small number of returnees.

Isaiah 51:2	ישעיהו נ"א:ב
Look at Abraham your father and at Sarah who bore you, for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him and made him many.	הַבְּיָטוּ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אֲבִיכֶם וְאֶל־שָׂרָה תְּחוּלְלֶכֶם כִּי־אָמַד קָרָאתִיו וְאַבְרָכָהוּ וְאַרְבָּהוּ:

Important Themes

Zion: A major character in the Haftarah is Zion, who represents Jerusalem and the land of Israel. She is depicted as a mother who has lost her children. However, God promises that he will remember Zion, and return her "children". See verses 49:14-21, 51:3.

Other Connections

The Talmud elaborates on one of the main themes of the Haftarah, the feeling of abandonment by God.

Sanhedrin 105a	סנהדרין ק"ה עמוד א
Shmuel said: Ten people came and sat before the prophet Ezekiel. He said to them: "Repent." They said to Ezekiel: "[In the case of] a slave sold by his owner, or a woman divorced by her husband, does this person have any claim upon that person?" [When God sold or divorced the Jewish people by exiling them, He terminated their mutual covenant.] The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to the prophet: "Go say to them: 'Where is your mother's scroll of severance, with which I sent her away? Or to which of My creditors have I sold you? For your iniquities were you sold, and for your transgressions was your mother sent away' (Isaiah 50:1)."	שמואל אמר באו עשרה בני אדם וישבו לפניו אמר להן חזרו בתשובה אמרו לו עבד שמכרו רבו ואשה שגרשה בעלה כלום יש לזה על זה כלום אמר לו הקב"ה לנביא לך אמור להן (ישעיהו נ, א) איזה ספר כריתות אמכם אשר שלחתיה או מי מנושי אשר מכרתי אתכם לו הן בעונותיכם נמכרתם ובפשעכם שלחה אמכם

With emendations, biblical translations are by Rabbi A. J. Rosenberg, and other translations are from Sefaria.org.

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