

Haftarah Helper 5781: HaChodesh

Zachary Beer (Nachshon Project Fellow, The City College of New York) and
Barry Kornblau (Rabbi, Young Israel of Hollis Hills-Windsor Park, Queens, NY)

On four Shabbatot beginning in Adar, additional Torah readings (the “Four Parashiyot”) are read after the weekly Parashah, reflecting seasonal themes relating to Purim and Passover. Their associated Haftarot also relate to these themes. The final of the Four Parashiyot, “HaChodesh” (Ex. 12:1-20), describes key historical events in the month of the Exodus, their eternal commemoration through mitzvot of that month (Nisan), and Nisan’s exalted status at the head of the Jewish calendar year. The following year, the Tabernacle was erected and inaugurated beginning on Rosh Chodesh Nisan. The Haftarah discusses these and similar themes as they relate to a rebuilt Temple.

Ezekiel 45:16-46:18¹

Speaking to his fellow exiles in Babylon, Ezekiel offers hope, rebuke, and an exalted vision of redemption. His final, extended vision (chapters 40-48) describes a restored society and Temple in Jerusalem. The Haftarah’s portion of that vision describes the responsibilities of the leader, or Prince², of the people. His first duty described here is to collect money and animals from the people to bring communal sacrifices at the Temple on their behalf. Ezekiel then describes a purification of the Temple; a subsequent celebration of Passover, Sukkot, and other holy days; and regulations relating to the Prince and his family, the Temple, the people, and their landholdings.

These and related passages differ notably from laws detailed in Chumash, prompting ancient debates about whether the Bible should include Ezekiel, and how to interpret these passages; Maimonides’ view is below.

Haftarah Breakdown

[Verses 45:16-17: The Prince’s shall present Temple offerings on the people’s behalf.](#)

Ezekiel 45:17	יחזקאל מ"ה:י"ז
The burnt offerings, meal offering, libations on feast days, [new] moons, and Sabbaths, at all appointed times of the house of Israel shall be the Prince’s duty. He shall prepare the sin offering, meal-offering, burnt offering, and peace offerings to atone for the house of Israel.	וְעַל־הַנְּשִׂיאִי יְהִי־הָעוֹלֹת וְהַמִּנְחָה וְהַנִּסְיָא בַּחֲגִים וּבְחַדְשֵׁימוֹעֲדֵי בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא־יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־הַחֲטָאֹת וְאֶת־הַמִּנְחָה וְאֶת־הָעוֹלָה וְאֶת־הַשְּׁלָמִים לְכַפֵּר בְּעֵד בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ס)

[Verses 45:18-20: Purifying and rededicating the Temple in advance of Passover...](#)

Ezekiel 45:18	יחזקאל מ"ה:י"ח
Thus says the Lord God: “In the first month, on the first day of the month, you shall take a young unblemished bull and purify the Temple.”	כֹּה־אָמַר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי ה' בְּרֵאשִׁיטוֹן בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ תִּקַּח פֶּרֶךְ־בָּנָהוֹר תְּמִים וְחִטְאָתָאֶת־הַמִּקְדָּשׁ:

[Verses 45:21-25: ...and the celebration of that holiday and of Sukkot.](#)

Ezekiel 45:21	יחזקאל מ"ה:כ"א
In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten.	בְּרֵאשִׁיטוֹן בְּאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ יְהִי־לָכֶם הַפֶּסַח חֲגֵג שִׁבְעוֹת יָמִים מִצּוֹת יֶאֱכַל:

¹ Sepharadim read until verse 46:15.

² Rashi (45:17) identifies the “Prince” as either a High Priest or a king. It might also be a new role similar to a tribal prince in Chumash.

Verses 46:1-3: Activities of the Prince and the people at the Temple's Eastern gate.

Ezekiel 46:1	יחזקאל מ"ו:א
Thus says the Lord God: "The gate of the inner court facing east shall be shut for the six working days. On the Sabbath day, it shall be opened, and on the day of the [new] moon, it shall be opened.	כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי ה' שְׁעַר הַחֲצָר הַפְּנִימִית הַפְּנֵה קָדִים יִהְיֶה סָגוּר שֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשָׂה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִת יִפְתָּח וּבַיּוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ יִפְתָּח:

Verses 46:4-7: The Prince's offerings on Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh.

Ezekiel 46:6	יחזקאל מ"ו:ו
On the day of the [new] moon, a young unblemished bull [shall be offered with] six lambs and a ram- they shall be unblemished.	וּבַיּוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ פָּר בֶּן־בָּקָר תְּמִימִם וְשֵׁשֶׁת כִּבְשִׂים וְאַיִל תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ:

Verses 46:8-10: Paths through the Temple for the Prince and the people.

Ezekiel 46:8	יחזקאל מ"ו:ח
When the prince enters, he shall enter through the [eastern] gate's porch, and he shall depart through it.	וּבָבֹא הַנְּשִׂיא דָרַךְ אוֹלָם הַשְּׁעָר יָבֹא וּבִדְרוֹכוֹ יֵצֵא:

Verse 46:11-15: Voluntary and other offerings of the Prince.

Ezekiel 46:12	יחזקאל מ"ו:י"ב
When the prince shall make a voluntary burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily to the Lord, [someone shall] open the eastward-facing gate for him. He shall make his burnt offering and his peace offerings as he does on the Sabbath day, and leave. [Someone shall] shut the gate after he leaves.	וְכִי־יַעֲשֶׂה הַנְּשִׂיא נִדְבָה עוֹלָה אוֹ־שְׁלָמִים נִדְבָה לֵה' וּפְתַח לוֹ אֶת הַשְּׁעָר הַפְּנֵה קָדִים וְעָשָׂה אֶת־עֹלֹתָו וְאֶת־שְׁלָמָיו כַּאֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִת וַיֵּצֵא וְסָגַר אֶת־הַשְּׁעָר אַחֲרָי צֵאתוֹ:

Verses 46:16-18: Regulations of the Prince's land rights to protect the people's landholdings.

Ezekiel 46:18	יחזקאל מ"ו:י"ח
The prince shall not take from the people's inheritance to deprive them of their possession. He shall bequeath to his sons from [only] his possession so that each man of My people shall be not scattered from his possession.	וְלֹא־יִלְכַח הַנְּשִׂיא מִנַּחֲלַת הָעָם לְהוֹנֵחֵם מֵאֲחֻזָּתָם מֵאֲחֻזָּתוֹ יִנְחַל אֶת־בְּגָדוֹ לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִפְצְצוּ עַמִּי אִישׁ מֵאֲחֻזָּתוֹ:

Connections

Maimonides rules that the **Haftarah's sacrifices and laws are not standard Temple procedures:**

Mishneh Torah, Sacrificial Procedure 2:14	משנה תורה, הלכות מעשה הקרבנות ב:י"ד
All the measures of libations stated in Ezekiel and the lists of sacrifices and orders of service written there are all inauguration sacrifices. They are not to be practiced [in all] generations. Rather, the prophet commanded and explained how to bring the inauguration [sacrifices] as part of the Altar's inauguration in the Third Temple in the days of the Messianic king.	כָּל שְׁעוֹרֵי הַנְּסֻכִים הָאֵמוּרִין בְּסֵפֶר יְחִזְקֵאל וּמִנְּנוֹ אוֹתוֹ הַקְּרָבָנוֹת וְסִדְרֵי הָעֲבוּדָה הַכְּתוּבִים שָׁם כָּלֵם מְלוֹאִים הֵן וְאִין נוֹהֲגִין לְדוֹרוֹת אֱלֵא הַנְּבִיא צָוָה וּפָרַשׁ בִּיצַד יִהְיוּ מְקַרְבִּין הַמְלוֹאִין עִם חֲנֻפֵת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בַּיָּמִי הַמְּלֻכָה הַמְּשִׁיחִית כְּשִׁיבְנָה בֵּית שְׁלִישִׁי:

With emendations, all translations are from Sefaria.org. To dedicate, comment, or subscribe, email zbeer570@gmail.com.