



Ha'azinu: II Samuel 22:1-51¹

This Haftarah is King David's majestic song about God saving him and defeating his enemies. Like the Parashah's song, its poetry depicts God's power and providence. Most commentators assign this song to the end of David's life, after defeating all his enemies.

Abarbanel, however, argues that David wrote it in the midst of his youthly troubles, reciting it each time he defeated his enemies. In these moments, David prayed to God, who saved him.²

David poetically reprises his brushes with death. God reveals Himself to David, storming down from heaven, shaking the Earth, and summoning the forces of nature to save His anointed one. David declares that God treats people measure for measure, and asserts that he acted righteously before Him. Astonishingly, David therefore claims that his salvation was deserved. God, David sings, has girded him for battle, strengthened him, and has ignored the prayers of his enemies. He praises God for His great justice, His aid, and for securing his royal rule. He concludes by expressing confidence in God's future help.

Haftarah Breakdown

Verses 22:1-3: David sings to God for being his rock and refuge, and for saving him from Saul and other enemies.

II Samuel 22:1	שמואל ב כ"ב:א
David spoke to the Lord the words of this song at the time the Lord saved him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.	וַיְדַבֵּר דָּוִד לַיהוָה אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בְּיוֹם הַצִּיל ה' אֶתוֹ מִכַּף כָּל-אֹיְבָיו וּמִכַּף שָׂאוּל:

Verses 22:4-7: Surrounded by terrifying enemies and deathly dangers, David prays to God, who hearkens to him.

II Samuel 22:7	שמואל ב כ"ב:ז
In my distress, I called upon the Lord and cried to my God. He heard my voice [in] His [heavenly] temple; my cry is in His ears.	בְּצַר־לִי אָקְרָא ה' וְאֶל-אֱלֹהֵי אָקְרָא וַיִּשְׁמַע מִהִיכָלֹו קוֹלִי וְשׁוֹעֲתֵי בְּאָזְנוֹ:

Verses 22:8-16: God's fury at David's plight shakes heaven and earth. As God flies down from heaven upon a cherub, nature's powerful forces-the seas, wind, fire, lightning and thunder- are in an uproar.

II Samuel 22:16	שמואל ב כ"ב:ט"ז
Water channels appeared [and] land's foundations were revealed by the Lord's rebuke, by the blast of His nostrils' breath.	וַיִּרְאוּ אֲפָקֵי יָם יִגְלוּ מִסְדּוֹת תְּהוֹמוֹת בְּגַעְעַת ה' מִנִּשְׁמַת רוּחַ אָפוֹ:

Verses 22:17-20a: God saves David from enemies more powerful than he, like someone saved from drowning.

II Samuel 22:18	שמואל ב כ"ב:י"ח
He delivered me from my fierce enemy, from those who hated me, for they were stronger than I.	יִצִּילֵנִי מֵאֹיְבֵי עֵזוֹ מִשְׂנְאֵי כִי אֲמַצּוּ מִמֶּנִּי:

¹ This is also the Haftarah for the Seventh Day of Passover.

² With slight variations, this song is also Psalm 18, which Abarbanel posits is David's final version, written in his old age.

Verses 22:20b-32: God treats all people measure for measure, and brings low the powerful. God saved David because he acted righteously and without flaw. God's righteousness inspires David in battle.

II Samuel 22:21	שמואל ב כ"ב:כ"א
The Lord rewards me according to my righteousness. According to the cleanness of my hands, He recompenses me.	וְגַמְלָנִי ה' כְּצַדִּיקְתִּי כְּכֹרֵךְ נָדִי יֵשֵׁיב לִי:

Verses 22:33-43: God trained, strengthened, shielded, and supported David as a powerful warrior who utterly defeats all his enemies. God ignores his enemies' pleas.

II Samuel 22:40	שמואל ב כ"ב:מ
You girded me with strength to battle. Those who rose up against me, You have subdued under me.	וַתַּזְרֵנִי חֵזֶק לְמַלְחָמָה תַּכְרִיעַ קִמִּי תַחְתָּנִי:

Verses 22:44-46: God made David victorious over his Israelite enemies, and the leader of all nations. Nations he conquered will serve him.

II Samuel 22:44	שמואל ב כ"ב:מ"ד
You delivered me from my people's strivings. You preserved me to be head of nations. A people whom I knew not shall serve me.	וַתַּפְלֹטֵנִי מֵרִיבֵי עַמִּי תִשְׁמְרֵנִי לְרֹאשׁ גּוֹיִם עִם לֹא־יָדָעְתִּי יַעֲבֹדֵנִי:

Verses 22:47-51: David attributes his victories to God, thanking and praising God for saving him from his enemies and supporting his royal house forever.

II Samuel 22:51	שמואל ב כ"ב:נ"א
[God] is a tower of salvation for His king, who does kindness for His anointed, for David and his seed forever.	מַגְדִּיל [מַגְדֹּל] יִשׁוּעוֹת מַלְכּוֹ וְעֹשֶׂה־חַסֵּד לְמַשִּׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד וּלְזֵרְעוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם: (פ)

Connections

The Talmud compares God's redemptive power to His **power over nature**, specifically the rain.

Taanit 8b	תענית ח' ב
Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The day of the [first] rains is as great as the day of the ingathering of the exiles, as (Psalms 126:4) states, "Turn our captivity, O Lord, as wadis in the Negev [Desert]." "Wadis" refers to rain, as (II Samuel 22:16) states, "Water channels [wadis] appeared."	אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן גְּדוֹל יוֹם הַגְּשָׁמִים כְּיוֹם קְבוּץ גְּלוּיֹת שְׁנֵאמַר שׁוּבָה ה' אֶת שְׁבִיתֵנוּ כְּאֶפְיָקִים בְּנִגְבַּ וְאִין אֶפְיָקִים אֱלָא מָטָר שְׁנֵאמַר וַיֵּרָא אֶפְקֵי יָם

The Talmud invokes God's behavior to allow **righteous people to deceive to protect against deceit**.

Bava Batra 123a	ב"ב קכג א
Rachel said to Jacob: "But is it permitted for the righteous to act deceitfully?" He answered her: "Yes [in certain circumstances], as (II Samuel 22:27) states about God: 'With the pure, You show Yourself pure; and with the crooked, You show Yourself subtle.'" Jacob [therefore] gave her signs to prove that she was the one marrying him.	אָמְרָה לִיהוָה וּמִי שָׂרִי לְהוֹ לְצַדִּיקִי לְסִגוּנִי בְּרַמְאוּתָא אִין עִם נָכַר תַּתְּבַר וְעִם עֲקֹשׁ תַּתְּפֹל מָסַר לֵה סִמְנִין