

# Haftarah Helper 5781: Final Two Days of Passover<sup>1</sup>

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The final days of Passover commemorate the conclusion of the Israelites' redemption with Egypt's defeat at the Red Sea. Their Haftarot relate to two later episodes of God's redeeming His people: King David from his many enemies, and Isaiah's prophecy of Assyria's defeat, the end of the Northern Kingdom's exile, and the messianic redemption.

## Day 7

### II Samuel 22:1-51

The Israelites' Song at the Sea is the Torah reading for Passover's seventh day; similarly, its Haftarah is King David's majestic song of salvation. Written in honor of God's defeat of his enemies<sup>2</sup>, David poetically reprises his brushes with death. In these moments, David looked to God for aid and was helped. God reveals Himself to David, descending from heaven to Earth to save him. David declares that God treats people measure for measure and asserts that he acted righteously before Him. Therefore, David praises God for His great justice, His aid, and for strengthening his royal rule. He concludes by expressing confidence in God's future help.

### Haftarah Breakdown

#### Verses 1-3: Introduction to David's song to his savior, God.

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-דִּבְרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בְּיוֹם הַצִּיל ה' אֶתוֹ מִכַּף כָּל-אֹיְבָיו וּמִכַּף שָׂאוּל:

#### Verses 4-7: David prays to God in his time of distress; God 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 אֶקְרָא ה' וְאֶל-אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא וַיִּשְׁמַע מִהֵיכָל־קוֹלִי וְשׁוֹעֲתִי בְּאֲזִנָּיו:

#### Verses 8-16: Earth trembles as God reveals Himself in the heavens to David; He descends to save him.

II Samuel 22:16	שמואל ב כ"ב:ט"ז
Water channels appeared [and] earth's foundations were revealed by the Lord's rebuke, by the blast of His nostrils' breath.	וַיִּרְאוּ אַפְקֵי שָׁמַיִם וַיִּגְלוּ מִסְדּוֹת תְּהוֹמֹת בְּגִעְרַת ה' מִנִּשְׁמַת רֵיחַ אַפּוֹ:

#### Verses 17-20a: God saves David from his enemies.

II Samuel 22:18	שמואל ב כ"ב:י"ח
He delivered me from my strong enemy, from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.	יִצִּילֵנִי מֵאֹיְבֵי עֹז מִשׁוֹנְאֵי כְּנִי אֲמֻצּוֹ מִמֶּנִּי:

<sup>1</sup> With emendations, all translations are from Sefaria.org. To dedicate, comment, or subscribe, email [zbeer570@gmail.com](mailto:zbeer570@gmail.com).

<sup>2</sup> With slight variations, this song is also Psalm 18. Most commentators claim that David wrote this song towards the end of his life, after defeating all his enemies. Abarbanel argues that David wrote it in the midst of his youthfully troubles, using it as a prayer to God each time he defeated his enemies; Psalm 18 is David's final version.

Verses 20b -32: God treats people measure for measure. Since David acted righteously, God interceded on his behalf, and he trusts Him.

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.	יְגַמְלֵנִי ה' כְּצַדִּיקוֹתַי כְּכֹר יְדֵי יְשִׁיב לִי:

Verses 33-43: God strengthened and supported David for victory against all his enemies.

II Samuel 22:40	שמואל ב כ"ב:מ
For You have girded me with the strength to battle: them that rose up against me you have subdued under me.	וַתַּזְרֵנִי חַיִל לְמַלְחָמָה תַּכְרִיעַ קַמִּי תַחַתְּנִי:

Verses 44-46: God's salvation of David has made him ruler of many peoples.

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.	וַתַּפְּלֹטְנִי מִרִיבֵי עַמִּי תִשְׁמְרֵנִי לְרֵאשׁ גּוֹיִם עַם לֹא־יָדַעְתִּי יַעֲבֹדְנִי:

Verses 47-51: David's final thanks and praise to God, who supports him and his descendants.

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] יְשׁוּעוֹת מֶלֶכּוֹ וְעֹשֶׂה־חֶסֶד לְמַשִּׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד וּלְזַרְעוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם: (פ)

## Connections

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

Taanit 8b	תענית ה' ב
Rabbi Yohanan said: The day of the [first] rains is as great as the day of the ingathering of the exiles, as Scripture states, "Turn our captivity, O Lord, as wadis in the Negev" (Psalms 126:4). "Wadis" refers to rain, as Scripture states, "Water channels [wadis] appeared." (II Samuel 22:16)	אמר רבי יוחנן גדול יום הגשמים כיום קבוץ גלויות שנאמר ושובה ה' את שביתנו כאפיקים בנגב ואין אפיקים אלא מטר שנאמר ויראו אפקי ים

## Day 8

### Isaiah 10:32 - 12:6

At one of Judah's bleakest hours, Isaiah gives one of his greatest prophecies of hope. From without, mighty Assyria had already exiled the Northern Kingdom and was now invading Judah as well. From within, the idolatrous King Ahaz ruled over a corrupt society. Isaiah prophesies a complete reversal of Judah's desperate situation. Not only will Assyria be defeated, but a new divinely inspired Davidic king<sup>3</sup> will arise to bring about a just society and a peaceful era. God will also return the ten northern tribes from exile in a manner reminiscent of the Exodus, reuniting them with Judah. Together, the united nation will defeat all its enemies. In response to all this, the people will praise and thank God with new songs.

The Chief Rabbinate of Israel recommends reciting this Haftarah, without blessings, on Israel's Independence Day.

### Haftarah Breakdown

**Verses 10:32-34:** Assyria's invasion of Judah from the north will halt at Nob, just northwest of Jerusalem. God will cut down its numerous army.

Isaiah 10:32	ישעיהו י"ל"ב
This very day [Assyria's general] will stand at Nob. He will wave his hand [towards] the mountain of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.	עוד הַיּוֹם בָּנָב לְעִמּוֹד יִנַּפֵּף יְדוֹ הַר בֵּית-[בַּת-] צִיּוֹן גְּבַעַת יְרוּשָׁלַם: (ס)

**Verses 11:1-5:** A new era will dawn, when a new Davidic king rules with righteous wisdom and awe of God.

Isaiah 11:4	ישעיהו י"א:ד
With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. He shall smite land[s] with his mouth's rod, and with his lips' breath shall he slay the wicked.	וְשָׁפֵט בְּצִדְקָה דְלֵים וְהוֹכִיחַ בְּמִישׁוֹר לְעַנְוֵי-אֶרֶץ וְהִכָּה-אֶרֶץ בְּשֵׁבֶט פִּי וּבְרוּחַ שְׁפָתָיו יָמִית רָשָׁע:

**Verses 11:6-9:** In that future era, peace will reign between animals, and between animals and people.

Isaiah 11:6	ישעיהו י"א:ו
The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid-a calf, a young lion and a fatling together; a small child shall lead them.	וְגַר זֵאֵב עִם-כֶּבֶשׂ וְנִמְר עִם-גְּדִי יִרְבְּצוּ וְעִגְל וּכְפִיר וּמְרִיא יִחְדָּו וְנָעַר קִטָּן נִהְגָּ בָּם:

**Verse 11:10:** Moreover, all nations will seek out the Davidic king and honor him.

Isaiah 11:10	ישעיהו י"א:י
On that day, Jesse's root [shall] stand as a banner for [all] peoples. Nations shall seek him, [making] his resting place glorious.	וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא שְׁרֵשׁ יִשְׂי אֲשֶׁר עִמָּד לְגֵס עַמִּים אֲלֵיו גּוֹיִם יִדְרָשׁוּ וְהִיְתָה מְנַחְתּוֹ כְּבוֹד: (פ)

<sup>3</sup> Since only some of these prophecies were fulfilled under Judah's next king, righteous Hezekiah, tradition assigns them to the messianic era.

Verses 11:11-12: God will return His people from all lands of their exile.

Isaiah 11:12	ישעיהו י"א:י"ב
[God] shall raise a banner for the nations and assemble Israel's outcasts. He shall gather together Judah's dispersed from earth's four corners.	וְנָשָׂא נֵס לְגוֹיִם וְאַסְפֵּי נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִפְצָוֹת יְהוּדָה יִקְבְּצֵן מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפוֹת הָאָרֶץ:

Verses 11:13-14: Reunited, the northern and southern kingdoms will defeat their enemies.

Isaiah 11:14	ישעיהו י"א:י"ד
The [reunited kingdoms] shall together fly upon the Philistines to the west. Together they shall plunder the eastern peoples of the east: Edom and Moab shall be subject to them, and the children of Ammon shall obey them.	וְעָפוּ בְכַתְף פְּלִשְׁתִּים לְמַה יַחֲדוּ יָבוֹאוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי-קֶדֶם אֲדוֹם וּמוֹאָב מִשְׁלוּחַ יָדָם וּבְנֵי עַמּוֹן מִשְׁמַעְתָּם:

Verses 11:15-16: God will return His people and punish His enemies with Exodus-like miracles.

Isaiah 11:16	ישעיהו י"א:ט"ז
There shall be a highway for the remainder of His people who remain from Assyria, such as there was for Israel when it went up from the land of Egypt.	וְהָיְתָה מְסֻלָּה לְשָׂאֵר עַמּוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂאֵר מֵאַשּׁוּר כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיוֹם עֲלֹתוֹ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

Verses 12:1-6: The new songs that Israel will sing after its redemption.

Isaiah 12:2	ישעיהו י"ב:ב
Behold, God is my salvation! I will trust and not fear for the Lord God is my strength and my song; He shall be my salvation.	הִנֵּה קֵל יְשׁוּעָתִי אֲבִטַח וְלֹא אֶפְחָד כִּי-עָזַי וְזַמְרָת קוֹה ה' וְיִהְיֶה לִי לְיִשׁוּעָה:

**Connections**

Isaiah 11:12 (above) is an **origin of the idiom** “four corners of the earth” and the **Amidah's tenth blessing**.

Siddur Ashkenaz, Weekday, Amidah, Gathering the Exiles	סידור אשכנז, ימי חול, עמידה, קבוצ גליות
Sound the great shofar for our liberty, raise a banner to gather our exiles, and gather us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are You, God, Gatherer of the dispersed of His people Israel.	תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו ושוא נס לקבץ גליותינו וקבצנו יחד מארבע כנפות הארץ: ברוך אתה ה' מקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל

**Maimonides concludes** his masterwork, **the Mishneh Torah**, with words from the Haftarah.

Mishneh Torah, Kings and Wars 12:5	משנה תורה, הלכות מלכים ומלחמות י"ב:ה
In that [Messianic] era, there will be neither famine, war, envy, nor competition, for good will be very pervasive. All delicacies will be as available as dust. The entire world's activity will only be to know God alone. Therefore, Israel will be great sages who know the sealed matters. They will achieve knowledge of their Creator according to man's ability as [Scripture] states, “For the Earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:9)	ובאותו הזמן לא יהיה שם לא רעב ולא מלחמה. ולא קנאה ותחרות. שהטובה תהיה משפעת הרבה. וכל המעצונים מצויין כעפר. ולא יהיה עסק כל העולם אלא לדעת את ה' בלבד. ולפיכך יהיו ישראל חכמים גדולים ויודעים דברים הסתומים וישיגו דעת בוראם כפי כח האדם. שנאמר (ישעיה יא, ט) "כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים":