

Haftarah Helper 5781: Shemini Atzeret

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1 Kings 8:54-66

The Haftarah of the second day of Sukkot recounted Solomon's dramatic placement of the Ark of the Covenant into the Holy of Holies.¹ Today's Haftarah continues that story, telling how he and the people consecrated the Temple. He blesses them, and they all celebrate a 14-day consecration feast that concludes on Shemini Atzeret; see verse 66, below. Solomon then bids the people farewell and they head home. This event and day are the apex of Biblical history and joy.

Haftarah Breakdown

Verses 54-61: King Solomon's blessing of the people.

I Kings 8:55-56	מלכים א ח:נ"ה-נ"ו
And he stood and blessed the entire congregation of Israel (with) a loud voice, saying, "Blessed (be) the Lord, Who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He spoke; there has not failed one word of all his good word that He spoke through Moses His servant."	וַיַּעֲמֵד וַיְבָרֵךְ אֶת כָּל־קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל קוֹל גָּדוֹל לֵאמֹר: בְּרוּךְ ה' אֱשֶׁר נָתַן מְנוּחָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לֹא־נִפְּל דְבַר אֶחָד מִכָּל דְּבָרָיו הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ:

Verses 62-65: The consecration feast.

I Kings 8:63	מלכים א ח:ג"ו-ס"ד
Solomon slaughtered the peace-offerings that he slaughtered to the Lord - twenty-two thousand oxen, and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. [With this,] the King and all the children of Israel inaugurated the Temple of the Lord.	וַיִּזְבַּח שְׁלָמֵי ה' אֶת זְבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים אֲשֶׁר זָבַח לֵה' בָּקָר עֶשְׂרִים וּשְׁנַיִם אֶלְפֵי וְצֹאן מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלְפֵי וַיַּחֲנוּ אֶת־בַּיִת ה' הַמִּלְכָּךְ וְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Verse 66: The people return home.

I Kings 8:66	מלכים א ח:ס"ו
On the eighth day, he dismissed the people, and they blessed the King and went to their homes, rejoicing and delighted of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had wrought for David His servant and for Israel His people.	בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי שָׁלַח אֶת־הָעָם וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּלְכוּ לְאֹהֲלֵיהֶם שְׂמֵחִים וְטוֹבֵי לֵב עַל כָּל־הַטּוֹבֵי ה' אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' לְדָוִד עַבְדּוֹ וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ:

¹ For more, read its Haftarah Helper at <https://www.ou.org/holidays/haftarah-helper-sukkot>.

Connections

Verses from Solomon's blessing appear across Jewish liturgy, such as in **the conclusion of Hoshanot on each day of Sukkot...**

Siddur Ashkenaz, Festivals, Sukkot, Hoshanot	סידור אשכנז, חגים, סוכות, הושענות
Deliver and bless Your people; tend them and sustain them forever (Psalms 28:9). And may these words of mine, which I have offered in supplication before the Lord, be close to the Lord our God day and night, that He may provide for His servant and for His people Israel, according to each day's needs. In order that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord alone is God, there is no other (I Kings 8:59-60).	הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת עַמְךָ וּבָרֵךְ אֶת נַחְלֶתְךָ וּרְעֵם וּנְשָׂאֵם עַד הָעוֹלָם: וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הִתְחַנַּנְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ קְרוּבִים אֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה לַעֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט עִבְדֶּךָ וּמִשְׁפָּט עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל דְּבַר יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ: לְמַעַן דַּעַת כָּל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי יְיָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אֵין עוֹד:

... and in the prayer of **“Atah Haretah”**, which is read on Simchat Torah.

Siddur Sefard, Simchat Torah, Hakafot	סידור ספרד, שמחת תורה, הקפות
It has been demonstrated to you that the Lord is God; there is none beside Him (Deuteronomy 4:35).... May the Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; may He never abandon us or forsake us (I Kings 8:57) ... For instruction shall come forth from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3).	אַתָּה הִרְאֵתָ לְדַעַת כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹקִים אֵין עוֹד מִלְבַּדּוֹ ... יְהִי ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ עִמָּנוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר הָיָה עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֵל יַעֲזְבֵנוּ וְאֵל יִשְׁטָנוּ: ... כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם:

The **Talmud** assumes that Solomon and the people **ate on Yom Kippur**, and claims that God forgave that sin:

Shabbat 30a	שבת ל' א
[I Kings 8:66 states:] “On the eighth day, he dismissed the people, and they blessed the King and went to their homes, rejoicing and delighted of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had wrought for David, His servant and for Israel, His people.” ... “And for Israel, His people” means that He forgave them for the sin of [eating that year on] Yom Kippur.	”בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי שָׁלַח אֶת הָעָם וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּלְכוּ לְאַהֲלֵיהֶם שְׂמֵחִים וְטוֹבֵי לֵב עַל כָּל הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' לְדָוִד עִבְדֶּךָ וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ... ”וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ” — דְּאֲחִיל לְהוֹ עוֹן דְּיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים.

Don Issac Abarbanel, however, claims otherwise:

Abarbanel on I Kings 8:65	אברבנאל על מלכים א ח:ס"ה
It is possible that on that day [Yom Kippur], they offered celebratory offerings like the other days but didn't eat from those offerings until the evening. And if they did eat that day as per the opinion of the Sages, then it was a temporary suspension of Halachah, permitted by a prophet.	אפשר שאותו היום עשו שלמי חגיגה כשאר הימים אבל באותו יום לא אכלו משלמיהם עד הלילה, ואם היה שאכלו אותו היום כדעת חז"ל ליהיה הדבר להוראת שעה וע"פ נביא

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

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