

Haftarah

'I have set a place there for the Ark'



See how the promise has now been kept! I have risen to succeed my father David, and I now sit on Israel's throne, as God promised, and I have built that House for the Presence of the Eternal, the God of Israel.

1 Kings 8:20
(trans. Plaut)

Links

- In the Jewish calendar, this Haftarah reading (1 Kings 7:51—8:21) accompanies the Torah portion *Pekudei*: Exodus 38:21—40:38.
- Both readings refer to the completion of a sacred structure: the Tabernacle (Torah) and the Temple (Haftarah).

Background

- As this week's Haftarah takes up the story, King Solomon (David's successor) has completed his major building program. After seven years of construction, the Temple which had been David's dream is accomplished under Solomon's leadership, as the Lord had promised. The Temple increases the prominence of Jerusalem as the nation's capital.

Ponder

- The assembly and procession mark an important transition moment in Israel's history. With the transfer of the Ark to the Temple, the period of desert wandering is formally brought to a close. The portable Tabernacle is now placed in its permanent home in the Temple.
- *'Poles'* (8:7-8): were used to carry the Ark in the wilderness; *'cloud'* (8:10): referring to the presence of God; *'In a thick cloud'* (8:12): God cannot be seen.
- *'The cloud had filled the House of the Lord...for the Presence of the Lord filled the House of the Lord'* (1 Kings 8:10-11). Note the allusion here to the conclusion of the construction of the Ark in Moses' day: *'the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Presence of the Lord filled the Tabernacle'* (Exodus 40:34). Reference to the *'two tablets of stone'* also links the two eras, that of Solomon and that of Moses.
- The final section (8:13-21) speaks of the fulfillment of God's promise to David, through his son Solomon.
- *'...out of Egypt'* (8:9,16,21): note the repeated reference to God's saving work in the exodus.

Reflect

As a physical structure, the splendor of the Temple dwarfs the portable, tent-like shrine carried in the wilderness. Yet the meaning in both cases is consistent: both point to the Lord's presence among the Israelites, and the covenantal relationship between God and Israel.

- With reference to this Haftarah text, ponder the way cherished beliefs, traditions and values are passed on and expressed anew from generation to generation.

Bibliography: Plaut, *The Haftarah Commentary* (NY, 1996); Sarna, ed., *The JPS Bible Commentary: Haftarah* (Philadelphia, 2002). Scripture quotations: JPS unless indicated otherwise.

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Text: Teresa Pirola. Illustration: Sarann Ryan. © The Story Source, 2012. *Haftarah* (from the Hebrew root word; 'to conclude') is the name given to the reading which, in accordance with the Jewish lectionary, is read after the Torah portion of the day, at Shabbat and festival services.