

ויקרא

First Kings, chapter 7, verses 40 to 50

Introduction

Connection of sidra and haftarah:

Both sidra and haftarah deal with the construction of a sanctuary to honor God: one in the desert and the other in Jerusalem. Moses has the support of his chief architect, Bezalel; Solomon has Hiram, his own gifted artisan.

The setting:

Solomon accedes to the throne (about 970 B.C.E.) and soon thereafter begins to build the Temple. In this enterprise he has the valuable aid of Hiram, who supplies him not only with wood from the forests of Lebanon but also with skilled labor, which was not as yet available in Israel.

The haftarah is fully understandable only in the context of previous chapters, for it is but a small excerpt of the story of construction, which relates the making of the outside of the Temple and of the holy vessels and other small items within the sanctuary. For another segment of the account, see the haftarot for T'rumah and Pikudei. The records are part of ancient royal archives, and their meticulous detail is characteristic of this literary genre.

For more on the book of Kings, see our *General Introduction*; on Solomon, see the haftarah for Va-y'chi.

Content of the haftarah:

Taken from the First Book of Kings,¹ the haftarah consists of only 11 verses.

1. Enumeration of various aspects of the building project. (40-45)
2. Construction methods; the metals used. (46-50)

The records are repeated in II Chronicles 4:11-18 almost verbatim; and the various items are enumerated also in II Kings 25:13-17, as well as in a Babylonian account that lists their loot from the sack of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E.