

דְּוִיָּו

Second Samuel, chapter 22, verses 1 to 51

Introduction

Connection of sidra and haftarah:

The sidra brings us Moses' farewell song, and the haftarah a song by David. The haftarah is repeated on the seventh day of Pesach.

It must be noted that this poem is found also in the book of Psalms (Psalm 18); the two versions are largely identical, and some differences are helpful in understanding difficult passages.

The setting:

Verse 1 informs the reader that David spoke this prayer after he had been delivered from his enemies, and especially from Saul, who had sought his life. This superscription is problematic, for the last portion of the prayer depicts David as one whose rule is firmly established and whose battles are behind him. Traditional interpreters suggest this solution: David composed the prayer at the end of his life, but the sense of being saved was so real that it was as if it happened yesterday, and especially so with the remembrance of his escape from Saul.¹

But perhaps the poem itself comes from a much later era, and the title was added by a pious editor. At one time, this opinion was widespread among scholars, while nowadays the case for the antiquity and the Davidic authorship of the text has been reasserted, although the presence of many archaic expressions is not in itself proof of early authorship.²

Just when David would have composed this prayer/poem cannot be ascertained; it may have been after he had brought the Ark of God to Jerusalem.³

For more on the book of Samuel, see our *General Introduction*.

Content of the haftarah:

Title (verse 1)

1. The cry of David. (2-7; continued in verse 17)
2. Interlude: in praise of God's power. (8-16)
3. How God protected David. (17-35)
4. A vision of victory. (36-46)
5. Finale: in praise of God. (47-51)