

שבת פרה

Ezekiel, chapter 36, verses 16 to 38

Introduction

Connection of haftarah and sidra:

The additional Torah reading of the Red Cow (*parah adummah*, Numbers 19:1-22), which gives this Shabbat its name, deals with ritual purification. The haftarah speaks of the purification of Israel and its restoration to moral health.

The setting:

Ezekiel lived in the days before and after the destruction of the First Temple and preached in the early part of the 6th century B.C.E. He was exiled to Babylon and, like the Second Isaiah after him, foresaw the day when the exiles would be restored to their homeland. The return, however, would require a reversal of their ways and practices.

For more on Ezekiel and his time, see our *General Introduction*.

The message:

1. Israel's exile has brought God's name into disrepute. (verses 16-23)
2. God therefore will give Israel a new heart and end the exile. (verses 24-26)
3. The haftarah ends with a vision of Israel's glorious future. (verses 37-38)