

שבת שקלים

Second Kings, chapter 12, verses 1 to 17

Introduction

Connection of sidra and haftarah:

This is the first of four Shabbatot on which the regular sidra for the day is supplemented by an additional reading, the theme of which gives each Shabbat a special name.¹ Thus, Shabbat Sh'kalim features a reading from the opening verses of sidra Ki Tissa (Exodus 30:11-16), and the haftarah brings us the story of Temple dues in the days of King Jehoash of Judah.

The setting:

In the late 9th century B.C.E., the kingdom of Judah was going through turbulent days. Queen Athalia had occupied the throne after her son had been assassinated and she herself had killed his descendants, that is, her own grandchildren.² But one had escaped, a small child, Jehoash, who was hidden in the Temple by the wife of the chief priest, Jehoiada, who had helped Jehoash to safety. When the boy was seven years old the priestly party proclaimed him king, and Athalia lost her life in the revolution. The young king began his reign in the year 835, under the tutelage of Jehoiada, who himself became a legendary figure (he was said to have lived for 130 years).³

For more on the books of Kings, see our *General Introduction*.

Content of the haftarah:

1. Jehoash becomes king. (1-4)
2. He relieves the priests of the duty to repair the Temple. (5-9)
3. Arrangements for the repair work and its funding. (10-17)