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Haftara Behar-Bechukotai
by Julie Zhuk on 2023-05-13

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This week's haftara goes back to the parsha where G-d reminds the Jews to follow His Commandments. In the parsha, He warned them of consequences that would happen if they disregarded His Commandments. Unfortunately many of the Jews back then didn't keep their word on following G-d's Commandments. This is why the haftara focuses on punishments G-d had planned for the Jews. This was not meant for all of the Jewish population, but many of them who didn't follow His Commandments. For those who did follow His Commandments, G-d planned on sending blessings in their direction. After all, they were following the Creator's wishes. There is a theme from the Torah reading that gives us details about these blessings G-d sent and the punishments for those who needed it.

The haftara mentions the prophet Jeremiah a lot. G-d never spoke directly to the Jews, He was on such a high level throughout history, He was always using a prophet. This time He used Jeremiah. Jeremiah went to the Jewish people, reprimanding them for their idolatrous ways. He accused the Jews of not having enough faith in their Creator, G-d. Instead, they turned to these idols that the people from the non-Jewish nations around them encouraged them to do so. Jeremiah conveyed G-d's words of wrath to those who were worshiping idols instead of Him. Since they did this, G-d sent out word of punishment to them and that was they would be sent into exile. On the other hand, those Jews who always stuck with G-d and turned to Him no matter what and DID NOT PRACTICE IDOL WORSHIP received blessings from G-d.

It was through Jeremiah, many Jews got word from G-d: "Cursed is the man who trusts man and mortal flesh for strength and whose heart turns away from G-d." G-d's curse was these types of Jews would become like a lone tree in the desert. They would not see when good times were coming their way. They would dwell on parched land in the desert, this meant they would be on salt-sodden soil. This was not good for that tree, because that kind of soil was not habitable. At this part of the haftara, G-d blesses the Jews who trusted Him. Through Jeremiah, G-d said, "Blessed is the man, who trusts in the G-d, whom G-d will be his trust. Unlike the other trees mentioned here, G-d gives His blessing for this tree to be planted by water.