

# Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program

## Introduction to the Haftarah Portion

### Guide and Outline



The D'var Torah is meant to be **inspirational**. It is supposed to be your bridge from yesterday to tomorrow, taking ancient words and applying them to our own lives.

The Haftarah speech is more **informational**. Very few people even know what a "Haftarah" is, or how it is selected. They think the word means "half Torah," or that it is linguistically connected to the word "Torah" (it is not.). This is an easier, shorter, and more focused educational speech than is the D'var Torah.

### Part One: Introduction

As with the D'var Torah, the beginning of the Haftarah speech is just sharing with us where the Haftarah portion comes from.

The Haftarah linked with Parashat \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Torah portion)/  
[or: for the Shabbat/holiday of \_\_\_\_\_] comes from the book of  
\_\_\_\_\_, Chapter \_\_\_\_\_, Verse \_\_\_\_\_ through Chapter \_\_\_\_\_  
Verse \_\_\_\_\_. I will be chanting from Chapter \_\_\_\_\_, beginning with Verse \_\_\_\_\_.

### Part Two: Background I

#### What is the Haftarah?

In this section you will explain what the Haftarah is, why we read it at all (there are several theories about this), and how the specific reading for each week was chosen.

(See Resource Sheet.) You will then explain how and why this particular portion was selected.

### Part Three: Background II:

#### More About Your Haftarah Portion

As you will see in the Resource Sheet, Haftarah portions come from either the Former Prophets (the early, quasi historical books) or the Literary Prophets (particular prophets whose life and core teachings are preserved in a dedicated book).

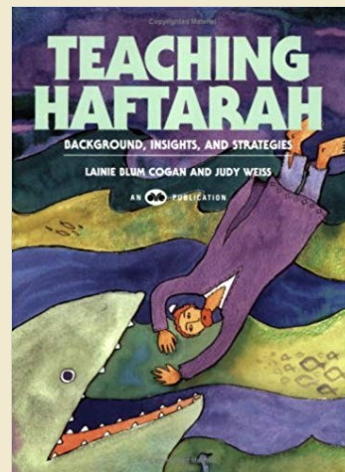
Depending on where your portion comes from, choose either:

A. History: What do we know about this book?

When was it written? What issues does it deal with? OR

B. Biography: When did this prophet live? Where?

What were the major issues this prophet addressed?



## Part Four: The Connection

Why are we reading this particular Haftarah portion, on this particular week?

Explain the connection between your Haftarah and your Torah portion.  
(That will usually be the case. Occasionally—and especially over the summer — the Haftarah is picked more because of the Jewish calendar than any specific link with the Torah portion.)

The connection could be profound — or superficial.

Both could mention the same characters,  
or deal with the same issues.

Example: Do you remember your Torah portion about vegetables? Including, perhaps, broccoli.

Your Haftarah portion might mention grass.

What's the connection? They are both green!



## Part Five: Lessons?

Although this speech is primarily informational,  
there may be lessons that just jump out and grab you.

What do these verses teach us? Are there any important issues here?

Write a paragraph or two about  
your impression of the story or lesson(s)  
in the Haftarah portion.

Write a sentence or two more  
to summarize what impact  
this portion could,  
or might, have on your life.



## Part Six: Page Number

If you would like to follow along as I read/chant, in Hebrew or in English,  
this Haftarah portion can be found on page \_\_\_ of  
the Plaut Torah Commentary, original edition,  
or page \_\_\_ of the Revised Edition.