

Haftarah for Ki Seitzei
Exile is only a brief Moment of Our History
by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

The Haftarah for Ki Seitzei is taken from Yeshaya 54:1-10. It opens up with the words, 'Sing o' barren one who did not give birth break into song, o' one who had no labor pains for more are the children of the desolate than of the inhabited says Hashem. Broaden the place of our tents and stretch the curtain of your dwellings.' Rashi, following the Targum Yonasan, explains the barren one to be Yerushalayim. While Yerushalayim was once a city so full of life it has become so desolate that the parable of a woman who has never given birth is used. Perhaps the point is that since Yerushalayim has been without its inhabitants for so long, the imagery of a woman who never gave birth is more touching than a woman bereft of her children. Therefore Hashem tells Yerushalayim, through Yehasya Hanavi, that she will be reunited with children she never even knew she had. Not only will she be reunited but she will expand to accommodate the huge numbers and her dark days will be long forgotten.

In verse seven it states that for a brief moment I left you but with abundant mercies I will gather you in. The Radak, a well-known commentator on Tanach explains that in the bigger picture, the time of tears and exile will seem small and insignificant. Those times will be overshadowed by the glorious days of the redemption. Indeed, this is how we are to look at the time of our exile in which we are currently living. Though it seems that our exile is never-ending, it is really only a small part of our history. When our exile ends, it will seem small and of little consequence overshadowed by much better times. May we merit seeing the fulfillment of all of these beautiful prophecies in the very near future. Amen.