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The Calling of Isra'el

19: 3-9

The calling of Isra'el DIG: What is the segulah and how does it relate to the wedding of Isra'el to ADONAI? What does God expect from the leadership of Isra'el? What does He promise will result? What right does the LORD have to dictate the terms of this Covenant?

REFLECT: What barriers has Yeshua set aside so that we can draw near to God with confidence (see Hebrews 10:19-23)? What does Peter urge us to do to become a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, belonging to God (First Peter 2:9)?

This territory was not new to **Moses**. **He** had lived nearby with **his** father-in-law for forty years and it was here that **he** had met **ADONAI** at the burning bush. Notice how **Moses** seemed eager to seek another interview with **God** on the same holy ground. **He** went **up to the mountain**, but did not yet climb it. **Then Moshe went up to** meet with **God at Mount Sinai, and ADONAI called to him from the mountain**. It is interesting that **God** instantly responded to **Moshe** and **He** is also eager to respond to us. When we **come near to God, He will come near to us (James 4:8)**.³⁴⁶

God Himself was responsible for **Isra'el's** redemption. **And** He wanted them to remember what **He** had done in destroying **Egypt** and bringing them to **Himself**. **This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Isra'el, "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself" (19:3-4)**. The expression, **eagles' wings**, is a Hebrew idiom that means *a successful escape after being pursued*. You can find it in **Deuteronomy 32:11** and **Revelation 12:14**, with the same meaning. So on the way from **Egypt to Mount Sinai**, **ADONAI** had **carried them on eagles' wings** by grace. **He** sweetened the bitter waters of Marah, **He** gave **them** manna and quail when **they** were hungry and water from the rock when **they** were thirsty, and **He** delivered **them** from the Amalekites.



Not only were **the Israelites** to remember what **the LORD** had done for **them**, but also that memory was to motivate them to **obey**.³⁴⁷ **He** promised: **If you obey Me fully and keep My Covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Even though all the earth is God's, yet Isra'el was His private cherished treasure above all other peoples if they would obey. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (19:5-6).** The whole concept of **a chosen people** arises from these statements. **God** did not merely give **the Torah** to save **Isra'el**. **He** gave **the Torah** so that **they** might *know how to live for Him* and be **His treasured possession**.³⁴⁸

There's going to be a wedding! The engagement (Exodus 6:7a) and the separation of the bride (Exodus 5:1), have already taken place. Now we have **the segulah**. **Exodus** presents a very moving scene where **the Groom (YHVH)** took **His would-be bride** to a beautifully secluded spot and spoke kind and tender words to **her**, telling **her** how much **He** loved **her**. One of the words **He** calls **her** in English is **treasured possession (19:5)**, but the Hebrew word is *segulah*. It is a very picturesque word. In ancient times it was used in Canaanite literature to describe what a king would think concerning the possessions he may have gained when he conquered another people. He would have many new valuable objects, but only a few choice ones would he classify as *segulot* (plural of *segulah*). These, he considered the most prized possessions which he treated with special care and kept under special protection. Thus, **Exodus 19:5** states **the King of kings** possesses all of the earth, but only **Isra'el** does **He** consider to be **His** special, loved and **treasured possession - His segulah**.³⁴⁹

Not only would **Isra'el** be **God's treasured possession**, but **she** would also **be**

for Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, Ha'Shem's representative, as it were, for and to the Gentile nations (**19:6**). Summarizing what **the Eternal One** was telling **Isra'el, His bride**, we see that not only would **Isra'el** enjoy the unique status of being **God's treasured possession**, but **she** would also have both the privilege and responsibility to "show-and-tell" the Gentile nations of the world who **ADONAI** really was. In short, **Isra'el** was/is to be a nation among the other nations serving as a perpetual witness and testimony of the one true **God**. How much this would actually happen is the object of much debate. But the fact of **her** calling is certain.

Imagine how it would have been if, on the night of your wedding engagement, your potential spouse told you in lovingly enduring terms exactly what **God's** plans for your marriage would be - glorious, meaningful, and praiseworthy plan! This is exactly what **the LORD** was telling **Isra'el. He** described, in most definite terms, what their marriage would be like. Since **the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** was **the One** who formulated this marriage, in one way or another, these plans would ultimately be carried out with **Isar'el**.

So Moses descended from **the mountain**. He **went back** to the camp of **Isra'el and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words ADONAI had commanded him to speak (19:7)**. They were free to either accept or reject **God's** offer, and although the specific terms of the covenant had not yet been spelled out to **them, the people** at Sinai agreed to obey **them. The people all responded together**, saying: **We will do everything ADONAI has said. So Moses brought their answer back to God (19:8)**. How little **Isra'el** understood **their** own frailty and proneness to sin when **they** so readily and almost flippantly consented to the condition of obedience. Within a few weeks **they** had broken every one of commandments in the Torah, proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that **the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (Jeremiah 17:9)**.³⁵⁰

*They said, "Bring it on. We'll keep the **Torah**," even before **they** even knew what it was. Then **they** demonstrated for fifteen hundred years that **they** could not keep it. This is the attitude of a great many people today. They think the natural man, with his old nature can please **God**. But the natural man cannot keep the commandments of **YHVH** and he fails miserably in the attempt. You and I have that same old nature and it is at war with **God**. It can never be obedient to **God** and can never please **Him**. Have you discovered that in your own life? Have you found that you are a failure at meeting **God's** standards? Well, there is good news. **Therefore the Torah became our guardian to lead us to Messiah, so that we might be***

made right based on trusting (*Galatians 3:24 TLV*).

ADONAI said to **Moshe** His prophet: **I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear Me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you.** The physical manifestation of **God's** presence was for the benefit of **the weak Israelites. The people**, since leaving **Egypt**, had been walking by sight and not by faith. They needed physical, visual assurances. As a result, then, of the Sh'khinah glory, **the people** will believe in, **trust** in, and have faith in **Moshe**. In other words, when **the people** heard **ADONAI** speaking to **Moshe**, there would be no doubt that **Moses** needed to be believed when **He** spoke. **Then Moses told God what the people had said (19:9).**