

Deuteronomy 26:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments;

Analysis

And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people—God's reciprocal declaration, using the same verb *he'emircha* (הָאָמִרְתָּ). **Peculiar people** translates Hebrew *am segulah* (עַם סְגָלָה), meaning treasured possession, prized property, or special treasure (see also Exodus 19:5, Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2). **As he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments**—God's choosing Israel wasn't arbitrary favoritism but purposeful selection for covenant obedience and witness to the nations.

The concept of *segulah* appears in ancient royal contexts, referring to a king's personal treasure distinct from state property. Applied to Israel, it means God chose them as His prized possession among all nations, not because of inherent superiority but sovereign grace. Peter applies this language to the church: 'You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession' (1 Peter 2:9), showing covenant identity transferred to believers in Christ.

Historical Context

Given circa 1406 BC, echoing the Sinai covenant forty years earlier (Exodus 19:5-6). God's choice of Israel as treasured possession preceded their existence—promised to Abraham (Genesis 12:2), reiterated to Isaac and Jacob, and fulfilled through the Exodus. This wasn't ethnic supremacy but missionary election: Israel's purpose was displaying God's character to attract nations to worship Him

(Deuteronomy 4:6-8, Isaiah 49:6). Sadly, Israel often failed this calling, but the church now carries the mandate to be God's showcase people.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to be God's 'treasured possession'? How should this identity shape behavior?
2. How does Israel's election as witness-nation parallel the church's mission to display God to the world?
3. Why does God's choosing create obligation to 'keep all his commandments' rather than presumptuous entitlement?

Interlinear Text

לְעַם לֹא לֶקֶד וֹת הַיּוֹם פָּאָמִירָב יְהִי ה
And the LORD hath avouched thee this day H1961 H0 people
H3068 H559 H3117 H5971

לְהַדְבֵּר סְגָל ה פָּאָשָׁר כְּבָר
to be his peculiar H834 as he hath promised H1696 H0
H5459

מְצֹוֹתָיו כָּל וְלִשְׁמָךְ ר
thee and that thou shouldest keep H3605 all his commandments H4687
H8104

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:9 (Word): The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

Deuteronomy 7:6 (References Lord): For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 14:2 (References Lord): For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

Exodus 6:7 (References Lord): And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Titus 2:14 (Parallel theme): Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.