

## HAFTARAH EXHORTATIONS:

# Haftarah Shemot

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Jeremiah 1:1-2:3 (Sephardic)

### “Calling All Saints”

The obvious leap in time, from the end of Genesis to the opening of Exodus, makes this a logical point of separation as the Torah is sub-divided into five separate books. The previous focus on the families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their offspring shifts as their descendants have multiplied significantly while residing in Goshen. The exact number of years from when Joseph dies to when Moses is born is debatable, but it is certainly a number of generations as the new Pharaoh is not knowledgeable about the earlier redeeming works of Joseph:

“But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them. Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph” (Exodus 1:7-8).

The opening chapters of the Book of Exodus record the unique calling of the self-acclaimed, ineloquent Moses, to lead the people of Israel to freedom. Some of the Sages found parallels between Moses’ call, and in the special call that was upon the youthful Jeremiah, who was chosen by God to be a prophet to the Southern Kingdom. Notice in these passages the genuine humility of both Moses and Jeremiah, as they each recognized that being a mouthpiece for Him was beyond their human ability:

“Then Moses said to the LORD, ‘Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.’ The LORD said to him, ‘Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes *him* mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.’ But he said, ‘Please, Lord, now send *the message* by whomever You will” (Exodus 4:10-13).

“Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.’ Then I said, ‘Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth” (Jeremiah 1:4-6).

Obviously, two servants of the Lord like Moses and Jeremiah had profound impacts during their respective generations. Neither sought their calling, but simply were chosen by the Almighty for works that He prepared for them from eternity past (cf. Ephesians 2:10). Both were faithful to their calls, despite the challenges that came during their lifetimes.

When one views the life of Moses as captured in the opening of Exodus, and compares it to what one learns of Jeremiah in his prophetic ministry, the statement made by the Lord regarding Him accomplishing His stated words, should bring much comfort to the heart. Just read the following statement after God supernaturally touches the mouth of Jeremiah, and then gives this youth an incredible assignment to make declarations to nations and kingdoms, with attendant consequences, that are followed by the promise to perform His word:

But the LORD said to me, ‘Do not say, “I am a youth,” because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you,’ declares the LORD. Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.’ The word of the LORD came to me saying, ‘What do you see, Jeremiah?’ And I said, ‘I see a rod of an almond tree.’ Then the LORD said to me, ‘You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it” (Jeremiah 1:7-13).

When God calls people into His purpose and speaks His word into their lives, He is fully able to carry it out. As the old sentiment goes, God is not necessarily looking for your ability, but

rather your availability. When you have been touched by God and called into His service, are you willing and able to allow Him to use you for whatever purposes He has created you?

These are important things for us to ponder. When we read about the life of Moses, we discover that he spent a lifetime seemingly discussing various issues with God—problems and challenges that crop up in his sojourn through life. While there is initially some reluctance due to self-perceived inadequacies, over time, God performed the word He confirmed to Moses that He was in charge, simply using him as an instrument for the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Later in Moses' life, when the time came for the people of Israel to enter into the Promised Land, we find Moses attempting to change God's word so that he will be able to overcome an indiscretion that occurred when he struck the rock rather than speaking to it as directed by God (Numbers 20:11-12). However, God does not change His word to Moses, but instead reminds Moses that he will receive the punishment for his disobedience (Deuteronomy 3:25-26).

Jeremiah's call was different than Moses', but substantial nonetheless. Jeremiah is directed to make prophetic statements to not only six different kings of Ancient Judah, but also declarations about many of the nations in the region. We find that Jeremiah remains faithful to his call throughout his life, despite the numerous physical challenges that ensued. In both cases, the supernatural calls and visitations from the Lord, gave both Moses and Jeremiah the intestinal fortitude to persevere through the trials and tribulations of their respective eras.

It is important that *you* consider the call that God has upon *your* life. If you are truly born from above, then God has supernaturally transformed your heart of stone to a heart of flesh, and taken up residence inside of you via the presence of the Holy Spirit. He has created you for a unique purpose in His created order, and none of us gets a pass on not being useful in the Kingdom's work in some way. By faith in the accomplished work of the Messiah at Golgotha, you have a personal responsibility to be a useful vessel in His hands. In the words of the Apostle Paul,

**"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them"** (Ephesians 2:8-10).

By performing the good works He has prepared for us, every Believer has the privilege of accomplishing the call that is upon his or her life.

Moving ahead in the Scriptures, we see many others who were called by God for unique purposes. Paul was one who clearly understood that every saint has a unique call for service unto the Lord, exhorting the audiences of his various epistles to take up their call with all diligence and perseverance:

**"For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Messiah Yeshua, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, 'LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD'"** (1 Corinthians 1:25-31).

**"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Messiah's gift"** (Ephesians 4:1-7).

**"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and**

called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Messiah Yeshua from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Messiah Yeshua, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day” (2 Timothy 1:8-12).

Time after time, Paul constantly encourages those he was able to touch in ministry, to walk in a manner worthy of their calling, unashamed, without regard to the fact that God often chooses weak and seemingly foolish vessels to confound the purported wise and strong of the world. This does not mean that Believers are weak willed or ignorant people, but rather that they joyfully choose to be weak in their own strength so that God can be strong through them (2 Corinthians 12:9-11).

Thankfully, the Lord has given us the extended testimonies of individuals like Moses and Jeremiah. The testimony of men like Paul confirm that there has been a line of those called by God for His service. As saints who have received the same calling of salvation, it is inherent upon each of us that we continually grow and mature in the knowledge not only of our Messiah Yeshua, but our respective responsibilities and the mission we are to perform. With this in mind, I offer you this given our collective need to be enlightened in every capacity, so that we might all fulfill the call that is upon each of our lives:

***“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Messiah, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the [assembly], which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”*** (Ephesians 1:18-23).

No one called of the Father has an excuse to avoid the works that He has prepared for us to walk in! He will perform His word whether we believe it or not. Moses, Jeremiah, and Paul all knew it to be true. If you are called, so should you. He will receive all the glory!

Until the restoration of all things...

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