

**God Reveals the True
Meaning of His name
“Yahweh”**

Exodus 6:1-12

Introduction

- In our last passage, Exodus 4:19-5:23, we learned about Moses' first encounter with Pharaoh and Pharaoh's negative response (5:1-5)
- Pharaoh increased the Israelite workload as a punishment for Moses' request (5:6-19)

- The Israelites were greatly distressed and angrily blamed Moses and Aaron for their increased suffering (5:20-21)
- Let's review for a moment Moses' response as he blames God for the distressing situation (5:22-23)

Moses blames God for the distressing situation (Exo. 5:22-23)

²² Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, "O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? ²³ For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all."

- At this juncture, Moses is not yet the stalwart leader he later becomes. He still has much to learn about the God who is unwavering in keeping his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- Moses is distressed and discouraged because his focus is on the problems and circumstances, and not on the

- character of the who has called him.
- The most vital lesson of the Mount Horeb experience, “**I will be with you**” *despite* Pharaoh’s hard heart, has not yet sunk in.
- Moses has not yet learned that there is more at stake here than how *he* is doing. God’s character is at stake;

- Moses seems to have forgotten that God has already told him twice that Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go unless God made Pharaoh let them go.
- The phrase in 5:23, “For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name,” implies that a considerable time had elapsed between their request to

- Pharaoh and this point in time.
- It took time for the publication of the new, harder requirements, time for the desperate attempts to meet it, and their failures to do so, time for the process of beatings that followed the failures, and time for the foremen's complaint to reach Moses and Aaron.

- Moses evidently expected God's promised deliverance would occur relatively quickly, and would not involve setbacks or disappointments.

God's Response to Moses' Complaint (Exo. 6:1-9)

Exodus 6:1 But the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."
² God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD."

³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. ⁴ I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. ⁵ Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as

slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. ⁶ Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.

⁷ I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.

Analysis of God's Response

- The repetition of “with a strong hand” (twice), which is a repeat of Exodus 3:19, and the phrases, “an outstretched arm” and “with great acts of judgment” is telling Moses that it will take something greater than human power to move Pharaoh to let the Israelites go!

- The series of judgments (plagues) that eventually forces Pharaoh to do what he otherwise never would have done, serve as a judgment against Egypt, Pharaoh, and the “gods” of Egypt.
- Pharaoh was a hard-hearted man by disposition. He had illegally, unfairly put the Israelites into slavery!

- We know that Israelites were never a real threat against Egypt. They would never have joined with Asiatic enemies to try to take over Egypt (as accused - Exo. 1:10).
- Satan put it in Pharaoh's heart to persecute the Jewish people!
- When God rescues the Israelites from Egypt, God not only punishes

- Pharaoh, but He also destroys the Egyptian's faith in their "gods" and "goddesses," and allows the Israelites to collect "restitution" for their years of wrong treatment.
- In Exodus 6:2, when God says, "I am the LORD," He is going to introduce a theological meaning to an already known name "LORD" or Yahweh.

Exodus 6:3 says, “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty [El Shaddai], but by my name the LORD [Yahweh] I did not make myself known to them.

- God has said the words, “I am Yahweh” only twice before, in Gen. 15:7 to Abraham, and in Gen. 28:13 to Jacob. Each time was in

- was connection to His promise of giving them the land of Canaan.
- Here for the third time, again in connection with His promise of giving them the land of Canaan, God uses His name “Yahweh.” (see Exod 6:4).
- God is saying, I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but only partially—in the capacity of El

- Shaddai. But who I am fully, which is what my name Yahweh captures, I did not make myself known to them. This is made known first only now, to you, the Exodus generation, who will witness my mighty saving power.
- “Yahweh” is God’s “salvation name.” It speaks of His desire to not only deliver from bondage, but also to

- enter into personal relationship with people!
- What Exod. 3:14–15 and 6:3 demonstrate is not the newness of the divine *name*, but the centrality of the Exodus as **the event** by which God's salvation, and hence his salvation name, "Yahweh," is fully known.

- In Exod. 6:6-8, God instructs Moses to tell the Israelites that as Yahweh He 1) will “bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians,” 2) “will deliver you from slavery to them,” 3) “will redeem you,” 4) will take you to be my people,” 5) “will be your God,” and 6) you shall know that I am the LORD [Yahweh] your God, who has

- brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.
- All of this is saying that the Israelites will come to know God in a personal and intimate way that the patriarchs did not.
- God starts His promise with “I am the LORD [Yahweh] in Exo. 6:2 and ends it in Exo. 6:8 with “I am the LORD.”

- The focus of God's message to the Israelites is on WHO HE IS – He is Yahweh, and their assessment of the situation must be based squarely on that unchangeable fact!
- Yahweh is not only all-powerful, but is the only God that exists. Further, He desires to enter into personal relationship with humans who will acknowledge His authority and role.

God Commands Moses Again (Exod 6:10-11)

- ¹⁰ So the LORD said to Moses, ¹¹ "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the people of Israel go out of his land."

Moses Response (Exod 6:12)

¹² But Moses said to the LORD,
"Behold, the people of Israel have not
listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh
listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised
lips?"

- After God's patience with Moses,
promising that He will be with Moses,

- and after explaining in detail Who He is in Exod. 6:6-8, “I am Yahweh,” – what does Moses do?
- Moses looks at himself, and then at the seemingly impossible circumstances, and loses heart. He doesn’t believe it will make any difference to do what God says.

- Moses is desperately discouraged and pessimistic. He wanted out of his leadership role!
- Note: Moses does not complain to other people about God. He does his complaining directly to God alone.
- In the NT we learn that God invites us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and to cast all of our

- care upon Him, for He cares for you – 1 Peter 5:6-7.
- Moses had not yet learned how mighty and powerful Yahweh really is!
- We have. We have the Exodus record. We have the New Testament.
- We should be strong in our faith and persistent in our trust in God no matter how things look.

- When God promises us that He will work in the midst of whatever happens to us for our good (Rom. 8:28), we should be strong in our faith to believe what He says!
- What is the good He promises us? Romans 8:29 tells us it is helping us to become more like Jesus in our thoughts, words, and behavior!

- We should be strong in our trust that God is good! and that He is working for our good!
- Don't look at God through your circumstances!
- Take a fresh biblical look at God and then look at your circumstances!
- Trust Him – Always!
- He is worthy of our trust.

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