
EXODUS 6:1 The LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh, for by a strong hand he shall let them go, and by a strong hand he shall drive them out of his land."

God encourages Moses, and promises to show wonders upon Pharaoh, and to bring out his people with a strong hand, Exo 6:1. He confirms this promise by his essential name Jehovah, Exo 6:2, Exo 6:3; by the covenant he had made with their fathers, Exo 6:4, Exo 6:5. Sends Moses with a fresh message to the Hebrews, full of the most gracious promises, and confirms the whole by appealing to the name in which his unchangeable existence is implied, Exo 6:6-8. Moses delivers the message to the Israelites, but through anguish of spirit they do not believe, Exo 6:9. He receives a new commission to go to Pharaoh, Exo 6:10, Exo 6:11. He excuses himself on account of his unreadiness of speech, Exo 6:12. The Lord gives him and Aaron a charge both to Pharaoh and to the children of Israel, Exo 6:13. The genealogy of Reuben, Exo 6:14; of Simeon, Exo 6:15; of Levi, from whom descended Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, Exo 6:16. The sons of Gershon, Exo 6:17; of Kohath, Exo 6:18; of Merari, Exo 6:19. The marriage of Amram and Jochebed, Exo 6:20. The sons of Izhar and Uzziel, the brothers of Amram, Exo 6:21, Exo 6:22. Marriage of Aaron and Elisheba, and the birth of their sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, Exo 6:23. The sons of Korah, the nephew of Aaron, Exo 6:24. The marriage of Eleazar to one of the daughters of Putiel, and the birth of Phinehas, Exo 6:25. These genealogical accounts introduced for the sake of showing the line of descent of Moses and Aaron, Exo 6:26, Exo 6:27. A recapitulation of the commission delivered to Moses and Aaron, Exo 6:29, and a repetition of the excuse formerly made by Moses, Exo 6:30.

Verse 1

With a strong hand - יָד חֲזָקָה yad chazakah, the same verb which we translate to harden; see Clarke on Exo 4:21 (note). The strong hand here means sovereign power, suddenly and forcibly applied. God purposed to manifest his sovereign power in the sight of Pharaoh and the Egyptians; in consequence of which Pharaoh would manifest his power and authority as sovereign of Egypt, in dismissing and thrusting out the people. See Exo 12:31-33.

EXODUS 6:2 God spoke to Moses, and said to him, "I am the LORD;

Verse 2

I am the Lord - It should be, I am Jehovah, and without this the reason of what is said in the 3d verse is not sufficiently obvious.

EXODUS 6:3 and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty; but by my name the LORD I was not known to them.

Verse 3

By the name of God Almighty - אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי EL-Shaddai, God All-sufficient; God the dispenser or pourer-out of gifts. See Clarke on Gen 17:1 (note).

But by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them - This passage has been a sort of crux criticorum, and has been variously explained. It is certain that the name Jehovah was in use long before the days of Abraham, see Gen 2:4, where the words יהוה אלהים Jehovah Elohim occur, as they do frequently afterwards; and see Gen 15:2, where Abraham expressly addresses him by the name Adonai Jehovah; and see Gen 15:7, where God reveals himself to Abraham by this very name: And he said unto him, I am Jehovah, that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees. How then can it be said that by his name Jehovah he was not known unto them? Several answers have been given to this question; the following are the chief: - 1. The words should be read interrogatively, for the negative particle לֹא lo, not, has this power often in Hebrew. "I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by the name of God Almighty, and by my name Jehovah was I not also made known unto them?" 2. The name Jehovah was not revealed before the time mentioned here, for though it occurs so frequently in the book of Genesis, as that book was written long after the name had come into common use, as a principal characteristic of God, Moses employs it in his history because of this circumstance; so that whenever it appears previously to this, it is by the figure called prolepsis or anticipation. 3. As the name יהוה Jehovah signifies existence, it may be understood in the text in question thus: "I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by my name God Almighty, or God All-sufficient, i.e., having all power to do all good; in this character I made a covenant with them, supported by great and glorious promises; but as those promises had respect unto their posterity, they could not be fulfilled to those fathers: but now, as Jehovah, I am about to give existence to all those promises relative to your support, deliverance from bondage, and your consequent settlement in the promised land." 4. The words may be considered as used comparatively: though God did appear to those patriarchs as Jehovah, and they acknowledged him by this name, yet it was but comparatively known unto them; they knew nothing of the power and goodness of God, in comparison of what the Israelites were now about to experience.

I believe the simple meaning is this, that though from the beginning the name Jehovah was known as one of the names of the Supreme Being, yet what it really implied they did not know. אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי El-Shaddai, God All-sufficient, they knew well by the continual provision he made for them, and the constant protection he afforded them: but the name יהוה Jehovah is particularly to be referred to the accomplishment of promises already made; to the giving them a being, and thus bringing them into existence, which could not have been done in the order of his providence sooner than here specified: this name therefore in its power and significancy was not known unto them; nor fully known unto their descendants till the deliverance from Egypt and the settlement in the promised land. It is surely possible for a man to bear the name of a certain office or dignity before he fulfills any of its functions. King, mayor, alderman, magistrate, constable, may be borne by the several persons to whom they legally belong, before any of the acts peculiar to those offices are performed. The King, acknowledged as such on his coronation, is known to be such by his legislative acts; the civil magistrate, by his distribution of justice, and issuing warrants for the apprehending of culprits; and the constable, by executing those warrants. All these were known to have their respective names, but the exercise of their powers alone shows what is implied in being king, magistrate, and constable. The following is a case in point, which fell within my own knowledge.

A case of dispute between certain litigious neighbors being heard in court before a weekly sitting of the magistrates, a woman who came as an evidence in behalf of her bad neighbor, finding the magistrates inclining to give judgment against her mischievous companion, took her by the arm and said, "Come away! I told you you would get neither law nor justice in this place." A magistrate, who

was as much an honor to his function as he was to human nature, immediately said, "Here, constable! take that woman and lodge her in Bridewell, that she may know there is some law and justice in this place." Thus the worthy magistrate proved he had the power implied in the name by executing the duties of his office. And God who was known as Jehovah, the being who makes and gives effect to promises, was known to the descendants of the twelve tribes to be That Jehovah, by giving effect and being to the promises which he had made to their fathers.

EXODUS 6:4 I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their travels, in which they lived as aliens.

Verse 4

I have also established my covenant - I have now fully purposed to give present effect to all my engagements with your fathers, in behalf of their posterity.

EXODUS 6:5 Moreover I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant.

EXODUS 6:6 Therefore tell the children of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgements:

Verse 6

Say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out, etc. - This confirms the explanation given of Exo 6:3, which see Clarke's note on Exo 6:3.

EXODUS 6:7 and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Verse 7

I will take you to me for a people, etc. - This was precisely the covenant that he had made with Abraham. See Gen 17:7, and see Clarke's note on Gen 17:7.

And ye shall know that I am the Lord your God - By thus fulfilling my promises ye shall know what is implied in my name. See Clarke's note on Exo 6:3.

But why should God take such a most stupid, refractory, and totally worthless people for his people? 1. Because he had promised to do so to their noble ancestors Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah, etc., men worthy of all praise, because in general friends of God, devoted to his will and to the good of mankind.

2. "That (as Bishop Warburton properly observes) the extraordinary providence by which they were protected, might become the more visible and illustrious; for had they been endowed with the shining qualities of the more polished nations, the effects of that providence might have been ascribed to their own wisdom."

3. That God might show to all succeeding generations that he delights to instruct the ignorant, help the weak, and save the lost; for if he bore long with Israel, showed them especial mercy, and graciously received them whenever they implored his protection, none need despair. God seems to have chosen the worst people in the universe, to give by them unto mankind the highest and most expressive proofs, that he wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his iniquity and live.

EXODUS 6:8 I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for a heritage: I am the LORD."

Verse 8

Which I did swear - נשאתי את ידי - *nasathi eth yadi*, I have lifted up my hand. The usual mode of making an appeal to God, and hence considered to be a form of swearing. It is thus that Isa 62:8 is to be understood: The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength.

EXODUS 6:9 Moses spoke so to the children of Israel, but they didn't listen to Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

Verse 9

But they hearkened not - Their bondage was become so extremely oppressive that they had lost all hope of ever being redeemed from it. After this verse the Samaritan adds, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians: for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness. This appears to be borrowed from Exo 14:12.

Anguish of spirit - קצר רוח *kotzer ruach*, shortness of spirit or breath. The words signify that their labor was so continual, and their bondage so cruel and oppressive, that they had scarcely time to breathe.

EXODUS 6:10 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

EXODUS 6:11 "Go in, speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land."

EXODUS 6:12 Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, "Behold, the children of Israel haven't listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, who am of uncircumcised lips?"

Verse 12

Uncircumcised lips? - The word ערל aral, which we translate uncircumcised, seems to signify any thing exuberant or superfluous. Had not Moses been remarkable for his excellent beauty, I should have thought the passage might be rendered protuberant lips; but as this sense cannot be admitted for the above reason, the word must refer to some natural impediment in his speech; and probably means a want of distinct and ready utterance, either occasioned by some defect in the organs of speech, or impaired knowledge of the Egyptian language after an absence of forty years. See Clarke's note on Exo 4:10.

EXODUS 6:13 The LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and gave them a command to the children of Israel, and to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

EXODUS 6:14 These are the heads of their fathers' houses. The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel: Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these are the families of Reuben.

Verse 14

These be the heads - ראשי rashey, the chiefs or captains. The following genealogy was simply intended to show that Moses and Aaron came in a direct line from Abraham, and to ascertain the time of Israel's deliverance. The whole account from Exo 6:14-26 inclusive, is a sort of parenthesis, and does not belong to the narration; and what follows from Exo 6:28 is a recapitulation of what was spoken in the preceding chapters.

EXODUS 6:15 The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the families of Simeon.

EXODUS 6:16 These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari; and the years of the life of Levi were one hundred thirty-seven years.

Verse 16

The years of the life of Levi - "Bishop Patrick observes that Levi is thought to have lived the longest of all Jacob's sons, none of whose ages are recorded in Scripture but his and Joseph's, whom Levi survived twenty-seven years, though he was much the elder brother. By the common computation this would be twenty-three years: by Kennicott's computation at the end of Genesis 31. (See Clarke's note at Gen 31:55) Levi's birth is placed twenty-four years before that of Joseph; his death, therefore, would be only three years later. But this is not the only difficulty in ancient chronologies. Kohath, the second son of Levi, according to Archbishop Usher was thirty years old when Jacob came into Egypt, and lived there one hundred and three years. He attained to nearly the same age with Levi, to one hundred and thirty-three years; and his son Amram, the father of Moses, lived to the same age with Levi. We may observe here how the Divine promise, Gen 15:16, of delivering the Israelites out of Egypt in the fourth generation was verified; for Moses was the son of Amram, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Jacob." - Dodd.

EXODUS 6:17 The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, according to their families.

EXODUS 6:18 The sons of Kohath: Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel; and the years of the life of Kohath were one hundred thirty-three years.

EXODUS 6:19 The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their generations.

EXODUS 6:20 Amram took Jochebed his father's sister to himself as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were a hundred and thirty-seven years.

Verse 20

His father's sister - דדתו dodatho. The true meaning of this word is uncertain. Parkhurst observes that דוד dod signifies an uncle in 1Sam 10:14; Lev 10:4, and frequently elsewhere. It signifies also an uncle's son, a cousin-german: compare Jer 32:8 with Exo 6:12, where the Vulgate renders ידי דודi by patruelis mei, my paternal cousin; and in Amo 6:10, for דודו dodo, the Targum has קריביה karibiah, his near relation. So the Vulgate, propinquus ejus, his relative, and the Septuagint, οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ, those of their household. The best critics suppose that Jochebed was the cousin-german of Amram, and not his aunt. See Clarke's note on Exo 2:1.

Bare him Aaron and Moses - The Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac, and one Hebrew MS. add, And Miriam their sister. Some of the best critics suppose these words to have been originally in the Hebrew text.

EXODUS 6:21 The sons of Izhar: Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri.

Verse 21

Korah - Though he became a rebel against God and Moses, (see Num 16:1, etc.), yet Moses, in his great impartiality, inserts his name among those of his other progenitors.

EXODUS 6:22 The sons of Uzziel: Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Sithri.

Verse 22

Uzziel - He is called Aaron's uncle, Lev 10:4.

EXODUS 6:23 Aaron took Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nahshon, as his wife; and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

Verse 23

Elisheba - The oath of the Lord. It is the same name as Elizabeth, so very common among Christians. She was of the royal tribe of Judah, and was sister to Nahshon, one of the princes; see Num 2:3.

Eleazar - He succeeded to the high priesthood on the death of his father Aaron, Num 20:25, etc.

EXODUS 6:24 The sons of Korah: Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph; these are the families of the Korahites.

EXODUS 6:25 Eleazar Aaron's son took one of the daughters of Putiel as his wife; and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families.

Verse 25

Phinehas - Of the celebrated act of this person, and the most honorable grant made to him and his posterity, see Num 25:7-13.

EXODUS 6:26 These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies."

Verse 26

According to their armies - צבאותם tsibotham, their battalions - regularly arranged troops. As God had these particularly under his care and direction, he had the name of יהוה צבאות Yehovah tsebaoth, Lord of hosts or armies. "The plain and disinterested manner," says Dr. Dodd, "in which Moses speaks here of his relations, and the impartiality wherewith he inserts in the list of them such as were afterwards severely punished by the Lord, are striking proofs of his modesty and sincerity. He inserts the genealogy of Reuben and Simeon, because they were of the same mother with Levi; and though he says nothing of himself, yet he relates particularly what concerns Aaron, Exo 6:23, who married into an honorable family, the sister of a prince of the tribe of Judah."

EXODUS 6:27 These are those who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These are that Moses and Aaron.

EXODUS 6:28 On the day when the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt,

Verse 28

And it came to pass - Here the seventh chapter should commence, as there is a complete ending of the sixth with Exo 6:27, and the Exo 6:30 of this chapter is intimately connected with the 1st verse of the succeeding.

The principal subjects in this chapter have been so amply considered in the notes, that little of importance remains to be done. On the nature of a covenant (See Clarke's note on Exo 6:4). ample information may be obtained by referring to Gen 6:18, and Gen 15:9-18, which places the reader will do well to consult.

Supposing Moses to have really labored under some defect in speech, we may consider it as wisely designed to be a sort of counterbalance to his other excellences: at least this is an ordinary procedure of Divine Providence; personal accomplishments are counterbalanced by mental defects, and mental imperfections often by personal accomplishments. Thus the head cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee. And God does all this in great wisdom, to hide pride from man, and that no flesh may glory in his presence. To be contented with our formation, endowments, and external circumstances, requires not only much submission to the providence of God, but also much of the mind of Christ. On the other hand, should we feel vanity because of some personal or mental accomplishment, we have only to take a view of our whole to find sufficient cause of humiliation; and after all, the meek and gentle spirit only is, in the sight of God, of great price.

EXODUS 6:29 the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I am the LORD. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I speak to you."

EXODUS 6:30 Moses said before the LORD, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh listen to me?"
