

# CHAPTER 6

## INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 6

The Lord encourages Moses to hope for success from his name Jehovah, and the covenant he had made with the fathers of his people, (<sup><006></sup>Exodus 6:1-5), orders him to assure the children of Israel that he would deliver them from their bondage and burdens, and bring them into the land of Canaan; but through their distress and anguish they hearkened not to him, (<sup><006></sup>Exodus 6:6-9) but Moses is sent again to Pharaoh to demand the dismissal of Israel, to which he seems unwilling, and both he and Aaron are charged both to go to the children of Israel, and to Pharaoh, (<sup><006></sup>Exodus 6:10-13), next follows a genealogy of the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, which seems to be given for the sake of Moses and Aaron, and to show their descent, (<sup><006></sup>Exodus 6:14-15), who were the persons appointed of God to be the instruments of bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, (<sup><006></sup>Exodus 6:26-30).

**Ver. 1.** *Then the Lord said unto Moses,* etc.] In answer to the questions put to him, and the expostulations made with him:

*now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh:* in inflicting punishments on him: for with a strong hand shall he let them go; being forced to it by the mighty hand of God upon him; and it is by some rendered, “because of a strong hand”<sup>f167</sup>; so Jarchi; for this is not to be understood of the hand of Pharaoh, but of the hand of God:

*and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land:* not only be willing that they should go, but be urgent upon them to be gone, (<sup><023></sup>Exodus 12:33).

**Ver. 2.** *And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord.*] Or Jehovah, the self-existent Being, the Being of beings, the everlasting I am, the unchangeable Jehovah, true, firm, and constant to his promises, ever to be believed, and always to be depended on.

**Ver. 3.** *And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by [the name] of God Almighty,* etc.] Able to fulfil all his purposes, promises,

and covenant, with whom nothing is impossible; or Elshaddai, God all-sufficient, who has a sufficiency of happiness in himself, and everything to supply the wants of his creatures in things temporal and spiritual, (see <sup><0170></sup>Genesis 17:1):

*but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them;* which he had in the preceding verse called himself by. This is not to be understood absolutely; for it is certain that he had made himself known by this name, and this name was known unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, (<sup><0136></sup>Genesis 15:6-8 26:2,24 28:13), and but comparatively, as some think; that is, he was not so much made known to them by the one name as the other; though it may be questioned whether the one was more used in speaking to them than the other; wherefore others think, as Saadiah Gaon, that the word only is to be supplied, as in (<sup><0328></sup>Genesis 32:28) and the sense to be, that by his name Jehovah he was not only made known to them, but by his name Elshaddai, and others also; and others reconcile the difficulty thus, that though the name Jehovah itself was known to the patriarchs, by which they were assured that God is eternal, immutable, and faithful to his promises; yet he was not known as to the efficacy of this name, or with respect to the actual performance of his promise, as he now would be by delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt, and bringing them into the land of Canaan; though perhaps, by reading the words with an interrogation, the clause will appear more plain, “and by my name Jehovah was I not known to them?” <sup>f168</sup> verily I was. Josephus <sup>f169</sup> says, this name was not before made known to men, and that it was not lawful for a man to speak it; and this is the common notion of the Jews, that it is ineffable, and not lawful to be pronounced, and therefore they put Adonai and Elohim in the room of it, and the vowel points of these words to it, which is a false and superstitious notion: this name was known among the Heathens; it is the same with **ιαω** in the oracle of Apollo <sup>f170</sup>; and Diodorus Siculus <sup>f171</sup> says, that with the Jews Moses is said to give laws from a God called “IAO”, and is the same which in Philo Byblius <sup>f172</sup> is called Jevo; and both are no other than a corruption of Jah or Jehovah; and perhaps the **τετρακτυς** of the Pythagoreans <sup>f173</sup>, by which they swore, is the same with the tetragrammaton, or this word of four letters, with the Jews.

**Ver. 4.** *And I have also established my covenant with them,* etc.] With Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with their posterity, so that it is sure and firm, and shall never be made null and void:

*to give them the land of Canaan*; or to their children, which were as themselves:

*the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers*; not being in actual possession of any part of it, but lived as pilgrims and strangers in it, as their posterity now did in another land not theirs; (see <sup><810></sup>Hebrews 11:9,13).

**Ver. 5.** *And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel*, etc.] For the Lord is not only the eternal and immutable Being in his purposes and promises, and a covenant keeping God; but he is compassionate and merciful, and sympathizes with his people in all their afflictions; he takes notice of their sighs and groans, as he now did those of his people in Egypt:

*whom the Egyptians keep in bondage*; and which was the reason of their groaning; their bondage being so hard and rigorous, in which they were detained by Pharaoh, who refused to let them go, though Moses in the name of the Lord had required him to do it:

*and I have remembered my covenant*; concerning bringing them out of Egypt into the land of Canaan, which he would quickly do, and thereby make it appear he was mindful of his covenant, which is indeed never forgotten by him, though it may seem to be.

**Ver. 6.** *Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord*, etc.] Eternal in his being, immutable in his counsels, faithful to his covenant, and able to fulfil it;

*and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians*; which lay heavy on them, and made them sigh and groan:

*and I will rid you out of their bondage*; in which they were kept, and by which their lives were made bitter:

*and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm*; with an arm stretched out from heaven to earth, as Aben Ezra expresses it; even by the exertion of his almighty power, openly and manifestly displayed in the lighting down of his arm upon the enemies of his people, and in delivering them out of their hands:

*and with great judgments*; upon the Egyptians, by many and sore plagues and punishments inflicted on them.

**Ver. 7.** *And I will take you to me for a people*, etc.] Out of the hands of the Egyptians, and out of their country, to be in a political sense his kingdom and subjects; and in a religious sense a holy people to himself, to fear, serve, worship, and glorify him, by walking according to laws and rules given them by him; and this he did by setting up and establishing a civil and ecclesiastical polity among them:

*and I will be to you a God*; their King and their God to rule over them, protect and defend them, they being a theocracy; and their covenant God and Father, giving them various spiritual privileges, the adoption, the glory, the covenant, the law, service, and promises:

*and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God*; by the promises fulfilled, the favours granted, and the deliverances wrought for them:

*which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians*; see the preceding verse (<sup><0006></sup>Exodus 6:6).

**Ver. 8.** *And I will bring you in unto the land*, etc.] The land of Canaan:

*concerning the which I did swear*; or lift up my hand <sup>f174</sup>, which was a gesture used in swearing, (<sup><0112></sup>Genesis 14:22)

*to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob*; (see <sup><0006></sup>Exodus 6:4):

*and I will give it you for an heritage*; to be possessed as an inheritance by them, so long as they were obedient to his will, or until the Messiah came:

*I am the Lord*; whose counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; whose promises are yea and amen; whose gifts and calling are without repentance; and who is able also to perform whatever he has said he will do.

**Ver. 9.** *And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel*, etc.] After this manner, and in the above words, declaring all that the Lord made known to him, and promised to do for them; which one would have thought would have revived their spirits, and refreshed and comforted their hearts under their troubles, and encouraged a lively exercise of faith and hope of deliverance:

*but they hearkened not unto Moses*; being disappointed of deliverance by him, and their afflictions being increased, and lying heavy upon them, they were heartless and hopeless;

*for anguish of spirit*; trouble of mind and grief of heart, with which they were swallowed up; or “for shortness of breath”<sup>f175</sup>, being so pressed that they could hardly breathe, and so were incapable of attending to what was spoken to them:

*and for cruel bondage*; under which they laboured, and from which they had scarce any respite, and saw no way of deliverance from it.

**Ver. 10.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] At another time, and renewed his orders to him to go again to Pharaoh, and require their dismissal:

*saying*; as follows:

**Ver. 11.** *Go in*, etc.] Into Pharaoh’s palace, and into his presence, to whom access seems not to be very difficult; and perhaps access to princes was not attended with so much ceremony then as it now is:

*speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt*; though a king, and a king of so large a country as Egypt, yet do not be afraid to speak to him; speak to him plainly and boldly, not in a supplicatory, but in an authoritative way, in the name of the King of kings:

*that he let the children of Israel go out of his land*; this demand had been made before, but was rejected with an haughty air, and now it is repeated, before the Lord proceeds to punish him for his disobedience, that his judgments upon him might appear more manifestly to be just and right.

**Ver. 12.** *And Moses spake before the Lord*, etc.] Who appeared in a visible form, and had spoke to him with an articulate voice, and before whom Moses stood, and made the following reply:

*saying, behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me*; even though he brought a comfortable message to them from the Lord, and delivered many gracious promises of his to them, assuring them of deliverance out of Egypt, and of their possession of the land of Canaan:

*how then shall Pharaoh hear me?* making a demand upon him to part with a people, from whose labour he receives so much advantage, and has such an addition to his revenues, and who is a mighty king, and haughty monarch. And this is further enforced from his own weakness and unfitness to speak to Pharaoh:

*who [am] of uncircumcised lips?* had an impediment in his speech, could not speak freely and readily, but with difficulty; perhaps stammered, and so uttered superfluous syllables, repeated them before he could fully pronounce what he aimed at; or in other words, he was not eloquent, which was his old objection, and had been fully answered before: and by this it appears that there was no alteration in the speech of Moses since God spoke with him at Mount Horeb. Some think Moses expected to have had this impediment removed, and tacitly hints at it here, not being so well satisfied with Aaron's being joined with him as his mouth and spokesman, which seemed to carry in it some reflection upon him.

**Ver. 13.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,* etc.] No notice is taken of the objection of Moses, having been sufficiently answered before, and Aaron is joined with him in the following charge:

*and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt;* that is, to go to the children of Israel and comfort them, and direct them what they should do, and how they should behave under their present circumstances; assuring them of deliverance, and to go to Pharaoh, and to make a fresh demand upon him to let Israel go; and in this work they had a solemn charge from God to continue, and not to desist from it, until they had finished it:

*to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;* which they were to be the instruments of: and that it might be known clearly from whom they descended, who had such a charge given them, and such honour put upon them, the following genealogy is recorded.

**Ver. 14.** *These be the heads of their father's houses,* etc.] Not of the families of Moses and Aaron, but of the children of Israel, though only the heads of three tribes are mentioned; and some think that these three are taken notice of, to show that they were not rejected of God, though they seem to be rather cursed than blessed by Jacob; and that though they were guilty of very great crimes, as Reuben of incest, and Simeon and Levi of murder, yet they truly repented, and obtained mercy of God, and were honoured in their offspring, of whom an account is here given; but the two first seem to be taken notice of for the sake of the third, and that order might be observed, and that it might plainly appear that the deliverers of Israel were Israelites:

*the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi;* whose names, and the order in which they are put, are the same as in (<sup><0449></sup>Genesis 46:9) these be the families of Reuben; the heads of them, or from whence they sprung.

**Ver. 15.** *And the sons of Simeon, Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman,* etc.] (See Gill on "<sup><0450></sup>Genesis 46:10")

*these are the families of Simeon;* who gave rise and name to the several families of that tribe now in Egypt.

**Ver. 16.** *And these are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their generations,* etc.] Whose sons, according to the order of their birth, were as follow:

*Gershom, and Kohath, and Merari;* (see <sup><0461></sup>Genesis 46:11):

*and the years of the life of Levi were one hundred and thirty seven years;* and exactly the same number of years is assigned him by Polyhistor from Demetrius <sup>f176</sup>, an Heathen writer. Jarchi says, that the reason why, the years of the life of Levi are reckoned is to show how long the bondage lasted; for there was no servitude as long as any of the tribes (or of the sons of Jacob) remained, according to (<sup><0106></sup>Exodus 1:6,8) and the Jewish chronologers <sup>f177</sup> affirm that Levi was the last of the patriarchs that died; and that he died in the year of the world 3332, and lived in Egypt ninety four years; and from his time, to the going out of Egypt, were only one hundred and sixteen years; and they further say the bondage could not last longer than one hundred and sixteen years, nor shorter than eighty seven. Bishop Usher <sup>f178</sup> places his death in A. M. 2385, and before Christ 1619: according to the Targum of Jonathan, he lived to see Moses and Aaron the deliverers of Israel; but that is false, since Joseph and all his brethren died before Moses was born, (<sup><0106></sup>Exodus 1:6).

**Ver. 17.** *And the sons of Gershom, Libni, and Shimi, according to their families.*] He had only two sons, from whom came the families of the Libnites and Shimites; (see <sup><0421></sup>Numbers 3:21).

**Ver. 18.** *And the sons of Kohath, Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel,* etc.] So they are reckoned in (<sup><0338></sup>1 Chronicles 6:18) though only the family of the Hebronites are mentioned in (<sup><0268></sup>Numbers 26:58)

*and the years of the life of Kohath were one hundred and thirty three years.* A Jewish chronologer says <sup>f179</sup> he died one hundred years before the going out of Egypt: just the same number of years is ascribed to him by Polyhistor from Demetrius, an Heathen historian <sup>f180</sup>.

**Ver. 19.** *And the sons of Merari, Mahali, and Mushih,* etc.] From whence sprung the families of the Mahalites, and Mushites, (<sup>0033</sup>Numbers 3:33):

*these are the families of Levi, according to their generations:* the families that descended from him and his sons, according to the order of their birth.

**Ver. 20.** *And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife,* etc.] This Amram was the first son of Kohath, and the father of Moses, as after related, and so must be the same with the man of the house of Levi, and his wife the daughter of Levi, as in (<sup>0011</sup>Exodus 2:1) and though such a marriage was afterwards prohibited, Moses does not conceal it, though it may seem to reflect some dishonour on him and his family; he writing not for his own glory, but for the sake of truth, and the good of mankind, and especially the church and people of God. Indeed the Vulgate Latin version, and the Septuagint, Samaritan, and Syriac versions, make her to be his first cousin, the daughter of his father's brother, his uncle's daughter: and so does Polyhistor from Demetrius <sup>f181</sup>; but in (<sup>0059</sup>Numbers 26:59), she is expressly said to be a daughter of Levi, born to him in Egypt, and therefore must be his father's sister:

*and she bare him Aaron and Moses:* and Miriam also, though not mentioned, it being for the sake of these two that the genealogy is made:

*and the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty seven years:* just the age of his grandfather Levi, (<sup>0016</sup>Exodus 6:16). A Jewish chronologer <sup>f182</sup> says he died in the thirtieth year of Moses: but the Arabic writers <sup>f183</sup> say in the fifty sixth or fifty seventh, and at the end of A. M. 3810. Polyhistor <sup>f184</sup> from Demetrius makes his age to be one hundred and thirty six, and him to be the father of Moses and Aaron, and Aaron to be three years older than Moses, exactly according to the Scripture account.

**Ver. 21.** *And the sons of Izhar, Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri.*] These seem to be mentioned for the sake of Korah, concerning whom is a remarkable history in the following book; for the other two are nowhere else spoken of.



**Ver. 22.** *And the sons of Uzziel, Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Zichri.*] The two first of these were the men that were ordered by Moses to carry out of the camp the two sons of Aaron, who were killed by lightning for offering strange fire, (<sup><B004></sup>Leviticus 10:4).

**Ver. 23.** *And Aaron took him Elisheba,* etc.] The same name we pronounce Elizabeth; and of this name was the wife of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, (<sup><B005></sup>Luke 1:5), this woman Aaron took was

*the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Naashon;* a prince of the tribe of Judah, (<sup><B072></sup>Numbers 7:12), her he took to wife; or married; for though intermarriages with the several tribes were not allowed, nor used in after times, that they might be kept distinct, and the inheritances also, yet the tribe of Levi often took wives of other tribes, because they had no inheritance, and were to have none in the land of Canaan, so that confusion in tribes and inheritance was not made hereby; and it is observable, that these marriages were frequently with the tribe of Judah, as signifying the union of the kingly and priestly offices in Christ, who sprung from the tribe of Judah:

*and she bare him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar;* the two first of these died by fire from heaven in their father's lifetime, for offering strange fire to the Lord, (<sup><B002></sup>Leviticus 10:1,2). Eleazar succeeded his father in the priesthood, (<sup><B006></sup>Numbers 20:26) and of the sons of Ithamar executing the priest's office, (see <sup><B342></sup>1 Chronicles 24:2).

**Ver. 24.** *And the sons of Korah,* etc.] The eldest son of Izhar, who, though he proved a bad man, yet many of his posterity were good men, and are often mentioned in general in the titles of some of the psalms of David: the immediate sons of Korah were

*Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph.* Aben Ezra says, that Samuel the prophet was of the sons of Korah; perhaps what might lead him to it was, because his father's name was Elkanah, the name of one of these sons of Korah, but cannot be this Elkanah:

*these are the families of the Korhites;* the heads of them, or from whom they descended.

**Ver. 25.** *And Eleazar Aaron's son took him one of the daughters of Putiel to wife,* etc.] This was Aaron's eldest son. The person, whose daughter he married, Dr. Lightfoot<sup>f185</sup> conjectures was an Egyptian convert, perhaps of

the posterity of Potipherah, among whom Joseph had sowed the seeds of true religion, and supposes that the Egyptians used the name of Puti or Poti, either in memorial of their uncle Put, (<sup>(4016)</sup>Genesis 10:6) or in reverence of some deity of that name; but the Targum of Jonathan makes Putiel to be the same with Jethro; and so does Jarchi; but Aben Ezra seems to be most right, who takes him to be of the children of Israel, though the reason of his name is not known, and the daughter of such an one it is most likely a son of Aaron would marry:

*and she bore him Phinehas*; of whom (see <sup>(4051)</sup>Numbers 25:11):

*these are the heads of the Levites, according to their families*; from whence the Levites sprung, and their several families. It may be observed, that Moses says nothing of his own offspring, only of his brother Aaron's, partly out of modesty and humility, and partly because the priesthood was successive in the family of Aaron, but not the civil government in the family of Moses; and that he proceeds no further to give the genealogy of the remaining tribes, his chief view being to show the descent of Aaron and himself, that it might be with certainty known in after times who they were that were instruments of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, which would be matter of inquiry, and very desirable to be known.

**Ver. 26.** *These are that Aaron and Moses*, etc.] Aaron is set before Moses, because he was the eldest, and because he prophesied in Egypt before Moses, as Aben Ezra observes; though Moses was greater in dignity than he, and therefore the true reason may be the modesty of Moses; though in a following verse Moses is set before Aaron, to show that they were equal, as Jarchi thinks; and perhaps the thing was quite an indifference to the historian, and done without any care and intention, however these words are emphatically expressed, on purpose to point out the persons to future ages:

*to whom the Lord said, bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt*: which is the charge he gave them both, (<sup>(4063)</sup>Exodus 6:13), and the account of which is returned to again, after an interruption by the genealogy before recorded: Israel were to be brought out,

*according to their armies*; denoting their numbers, and the order in which they were to march out of Egypt, as they did, not by flight, nor in confusion, but in a formidable manner, and in great composure and order,

with these two men, Moses and Aaron, as their generals at the head of them.

**Ver. 27.** *These are they which spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt*, etc.] In the name of the Lord of hosts; and demanded the dismissal of Israel, in order *to bring the children of Israel from Egypt*; nor did they desist making application to him, until they had prevailed upon him to let them go:

*these are that Moses and Aaron*; which is repeated, that it may be observed who were the deliverers of Israel, what their names, of what tribe they were, and from whom they descended, and who sprung from them, at least from Aaron.

**Ver. 28.** *And it came to pass on the day when the Lord spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt.*] This verse depends upon the following for the sense of it, which shows what it was the Lord said to Moses in the day he spake to him in Egypt, when he was come thither, which is as follows:

**Ver. 29.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I am the Lord*, etc.] (see <sup><1182></sup>Exodus 6:2,6,8):

*speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee*; that he let Israel go; and that in case of refusal, that he would punish him and his people with this and the other plague, one after another, and at last slay him and their firstborn.

**Ver. 30.** *And Moses said before the Lord, behold, I am of uncircumcised lips*, etc.] As he had done, (<sup><1183></sup>Exodus 6:13), and this is only a repetition of what is there said, in order to lead on to what is related in the following chapter:

*how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?* so mean a person, and so poor a speaker, and he a mighty king, surrounded with wise counsellors and eloquent orators.