

The Lord Reassures Moses about the Promised Exodus

Exodus 6

Exodus 6:1-13 – *“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”² And 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 Lord I was not known to them.⁴ I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers.⁵ And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.⁶ Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I am the Lord; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.⁷ I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.⁸ And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord.”⁹ So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.*

*¹⁰ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹¹ “Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land.”
¹² And Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, “The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?”
¹³ Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.”*

Background Notes

The genealogy of Moses and Aaron in Exodus 6 gives the lineage of the two prominent leaders that God had chosen to represent His people before Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt. Moses and Aaron were descendants of Levi, Jacob’s third son. Reuben and Simeon were Jacob’s first two sons, and that’s the reason they are mentioned briefly in verses 14-15. But then the text moves on to Levi, the third son, and the pedigree of Moses and Aaron.

At the end of Exodus 4 Moses and Aaron were encouraged because the people believed their message about the promises of God to deliver them. The people not only believed, but they worshipped the Lord. Exodus 4:31: *“And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them, and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.”*

However, in Exodus 5 we saw that after Moses’ first encounter with Pharaoh, things got worse for the children of Israel. The workload and the abuse of the Hebrew slaves increased. The Israelites had to get their own straw for making bricks, and the oppression and abuse by the Egyptians was greater. The response of the Israelites was not a response of belief and worship, but a negative response of not listening to Moses. Look at what Pharaoh said to the slave drivers in Exodus

5:9 – *“Make the work harder for the men so that they keep working and pay no attention to the lies.”* No wonder Moses was reluctant to return to Pharaoh a second time, demanding that the children of Israel be released.

In spite of Moses’ reluctance and excuses, and in spite of the negative attitude of the Israelite people, God patiently and graciously dealt with Moses and the children of Israel by reassuring them of His covenant relationship with them.

Doctrinal Points

1. God revealed Himself as LORD to His people in the Exodus.

Verses 2-3: *“God also said to Moses, ‘I am the Lord. 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.’”* “God Almighty” is *El Shaddai* in Hebrew. *El Shaddai* is the name of God by which He reveals Himself as the strong and powerful God of His people; thus in English it is translated “God Almighty.” God revealed Himself to the patriarchs by the name *El Shaddai*, or *God Almighty*, as in Genesis 17:1-2 – *“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, ‘I am God Almighty, walk before Me and be blameless. I will confirm My covenant between Me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.’”*

The last part of Exodus 6:3 has led to some confusion on the part of a number of Christians: *“but by My name as the LORD I did not make Myself known to them.”* What did God mean when he said that He “did not make Himself known” to the patriarchs by His name “LORD” or “Yahweh” (or “Jehovah,” as it is translated in the King James Version)? There are a number of verses in Genesis where it is obvious that the patriarchs knew God by the name *LORD*. In Genesis 13:4, Abraham called on the name of the *LORD* at Bethel. In Genesis 26:25, Isaac built an altar and called on the name of the *LORD* at Beersheba. And in Jacob’s blessing of Dan in Genesis 48:18 we read, *“For Thy Salvation I wait, oh LORD.”* So what’s the answer here, anyway? It seems that God had already made Himself known to the patriarchs as *LORD* before the time of Moses, and yet Exodus 6:3 says, *“by My name as the LORD I did not make Myself known to them.”*

The answer is that believers before the time of Moses knew of this name, the *LORD*, but they had not experienced the full meaning of the Name. The *LORD* (*Yahweh*, or *Jehovah*) is significant because this is the name God used with His people as a personal, covenant-keeping God. Believers before Moses and the Exodus knew that *LORD* (*Yahweh*, or *Jehovah*) was one of God’s names, but in the exodus of God’s people from Egypt they would come to know and experience that God is a personal God who keeps His covenants with His people.

Here’s an illustration. I am sometimes known as “Dr. Grace” at Emmaus Bible College. In fact, on the Bible I use in the classroom, some students had “Dr. Grace” inscribed on the cover -- so you know that is one of my names. But you don’t know me as Dr. Grace in the same way that my former students do, because you have never experienced the grace of Dr. Grace when you pass a test that you could have failed if Dr. Grace had not added a few “grace points” to your grade!

Do you see the illustration? The Israelites were about to know the Lord as *LORD* in a new way, as the *LORD* proved His name to His people, as a personal, covenant-keeping God. God revealed Himself as *LORD* to His people in the Exodus.

2. God Revealed Himself as Redeemer to His people in the Exodus.

Did you notice the seven “I wills” in verses 6-8? **I will** bring you out. **I will** rescue you. **I will** redeem you. **I will** take you as my people. **I will** be your God. **I will** bring you into the land. **I will** give the land to you. What a great list of promises, and all of them are under the great theme of redemption!

The word “redeem” here means that God would “buy back” and free the Israelites from their bondage and slavery in Egypt. There would be a cost, however, and we read about this cost in Exodus 12: for each home a spotless lamb had to be killed. The blood of that lamb had to be applied to the door of each house to protect the firstborn from the judgment of death that would come upon Egypt during the final plague.

What a wonderful picture of our own redemption! I Corinthians 5:7 says that *“Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us.”* The cost of our redemption was the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the “Lamb of God.” I Peter 1:18-19 says, *“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”* All this was pictured in the redemption of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. God revealed Himself as Redeemer to His people in the Exodus.

Practical Application

Let’s experience God’s outstretched arm and uplifted hand!

God’s “outstretched arm” refers to His power and strength (v6): *“...I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.”* And God’s “uplifted hand” speaks of the surety of His promises (v 8): *“I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.”* In verse 8 the Hebrew word for “swore” here is literally “*uplifted hand*.” In those days (and sometimes even today), when you took an oath you swore to it by lifting up your hand. When God lifts up His hand in solemn pledge we can be sure He will make good on His promise! So, the outstretched arm of God in verse 6 and the uplifted hand of God in verse 8 refer to His power **for** His people and His promises **to** His people.

Have you come to know and experience God’s outstretched arm and uplifted hand? As a believer, you can come to know God in this way. He is an all-powerful God who keeps His promises. If you bring your needs and cares to the Lord in prayer and look to your heavenly Father in faith, He will show you the power of His “outstretched arm” and the promise of His “uplifted hand”!

Our all-powerful God keeps His promises! Let’s experience God’s outstretched arm and uplifted hand.