

Yahweh Known by the Patriarchs

Does Exodus 6:3 tell us that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never knew Yahweh's Name? Understand what this passage is really saying.

A **puzzling Bible verse** for many who are aware of the sacred Name Yahweh is found in Exodus 6:3, which reads:

"And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of G-d Almighty [El Shaddai] but by my name [YAHWEH] was I not known to them"

Some Bible expositors contend that this passage shows that Yahweh had not revealed His Name to the patriarchs. That even Moses did not know that His Name was Yahweh, but knew Him only as Elohim or El Shaddai. This notion is false, as we see from the events three chapters prior to this verse.

The Memorial Name Yahweh

When conscripted by Yahweh to be the leader for His people Israel, Moses wondered what he should say when presenting himself before Israel. Moses asked, *"The Elohim of your fathers has sent me unto you: and they shall say to me 'What is His Name?' what shall I say unto them?"* Exodus 3:13. From His response it is clear Yahweh invoked His personal Name and revealed it to Moses:

"Elohim said unto Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM:' and He said, Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me unto you.'

"And Elohim said moreover unto Moses, Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, 'YAHWEH, the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob, has sent me unto you:' this is My name forever, and this is My memorial unto all generations," Exodus 3:14-15.

When Moses had gone aside to see the burning bush, he was told to remove his shoes as Yahweh's presence consecrated the very ground upon which Moses stood.

This meeting with Yahweh took place after Moses had spent 40 years on the back side of the desert. Now Moses was commissioned to lead His people out of bondage, out of the land of Egypt.

At the burning bush Yahweh clearly reveals Himself to Moses. Despite this graphic encounter, the argument has been raised that Moses had never known Yahweh's Name, and Exodus 6:3 supposedly proves Moses did not even know how to pronounce the four letters known as the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) representing Yahweh's Name.

Yahweh's Name in Genesis

Moses is credited with writing the first five books of the Bible and in Genesis alone "Yahweh" appears 164 times! The first place we find Yahweh's Name is Genesis 2:4.

The first woman, Eve, is quoted in Genesis 4:1, *"I have gotten a man from Yahweh!"* Eve, the mother of all living (Gen. 3:20), acknowledged Yahweh by name as the Giver of her son.

Yahweh often introduces Himself as the Mighty One of Abram, Isaac and Jacob who all knew and worshiped Him as Yahweh.

When called out of Ur of the Chaldees, Abram built an altar unto Yahweh and also called upon the Name of Yahweh, Genesis 12:8.

Isaac was visited by Yahweh at Beersheba, and the promises made to Abraham were renewed with Isaac. There Isaac built an altar and called upon the Name of Yahweh, Genesis 26:25.

In a dream Jacob saw a staircase ascending to the heavens. *"Behold, Yahweh stood above it, and said, I am Yahweh Elohim of Abraham thy father, and the Elohim of Isaac: the land whereon you lit, to you will I give it, and to your seed,"* Genesis 28:13.

Thus, we see that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all knew and called upon the Name of the Sovereign Yahweh and worshiped in His Name.

Historical Importance of Names

How, then, do we explain Exodus 6:3, which says by the Name Yahweh He was not known unto them? This verse is puzzling to the western mind because we are not as aware of the importance of names as was the Semitic culture.

Those in the Middle East have a different concept of the essential value attached to one's name.

Perhaps the following comments will show why Yahweh chose to reveal His Name to those of Semitic culture and background who were psychologically better prepared to revere His Name.

"To a Semite the name establishes a mystic union between the knower and the known. To know the name of another is in some sense to have him in one's soul. To pronounce his name is to make Him present here...To disclose one's personal name is to surrender the inmost citadel of one's self and hand over its keys. It is to lay oneself open to the reality, power, influence, needs, and love of the other. This view of names is fraught with consequences when [Yahweh] reveals His name to people and people name Him and name themselves to Him," **Naming God**, Scharlemann, pp. 6-10.

Perhaps this gives a clue why Yahweh allowed His Name to be obscured or even replaced with titles. He desires to allow only those dedicated to Him to know and invoke His Name Yahweh, as a mark for those who truly love and serve Him.

A People Called By His Name

Israel anciently was known as "the people of Yahweh," and were in a covenant relationship with Him. They were to represent Him and His way of life here on earth, and be a model nation for the heathen around them.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land," 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Yahweh calls Israel "His people," and says they are called by His Name. This privilege of calling upon His Name Yahweh was only to Israel, His people.

In the Millennium Yahweh will make His Name known to all men, for Yahshua will rule with a rod of iron, and Yahweh's law will reign supreme: *"For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Yahweh, to serve him with one consent,"* Zephaniah 3:9. *"And Yahweh shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Yahweh, and his name one,"* Zechariah 14:9.

A Covenant Name

At this time Yahweh is selecting certain ones to learn of Him and to administer His laws and teach His way of life in the Kingdom, Acts 15:14-17.

To those now in training He reveals His Covenant and His Covenant Name. He is not trying to save the world now nor has He decreed that everyone is to know of His Name and Covenant today.

Yahweh is the exclusive Covenant Name made known to His people with whom He is in a deeper relationship. Those who love Him and keep His commandments, Exodus 20:5, are in a son-daughter relationship with Him.

Yahweh's Name was known to the ancient patriarchs, appearing numerous times in the Genesis account. Note that the word **name** does not occur in connection with "El Shaddai" (G-d Almighty, King James). Rather, He appeared "as" El Shaddai.

It was in the character of, or nature of El Shaddai that He appeared to the patriarchs. Yet, in the character of Yahweh, with all the rich meaning that the covenant Name implies, He had NOT YET made Himself completely manifest. That would come later with a people called Israel.

Israel Truly Knew His Name

The deep significance of the Name Yahweh was made known to Israel. Yahweh's Name was not arbitrarily withheld, but only now was there history-making ACTION in liberating Israel from bondage from which we can draw deep significance.

In Exodus 6:5 Yahweh tells Moses He has heard the groaning of the enslaved Israelites and has remembered His Covenant that He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Prior to this time Yahweh had acted as the omnipotent El Shaddai, the Creator and omniscient Sovereign of the earth. Now He will demonstrate His redemptive power as He acts on behalf of His people Israel. Note how His Name and what it means is manifest by what He will do:

"Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Yahweh, 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 a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you an Elohim: and you shall know that I am Yahweh your Elohim, which brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am Yahweh," Exodus 6:6-8.

By His name Yahweh He was not really known to His people. But now in these three verses Yahweh lays open His plan to bring Israel out of bondage, redeem them, protect them, perform miracles, and take them for His own people. He will bring them into the Promised Land and give it to them for an heritage because He is Yahweh.

He will perform miracles for His people with plagues, manna, quail, the pillar of cloud and fire, clothing and shoes will not wear out—all of these He promises and more because He, Yahweh, is in a covenant relationship with Israel.

Until this point Israel did not know the true meaning of His Name, as Exodus 6:3 says.

Name and Glory Revealed

"Show me your glory," pleaded Moses with Yahweh. Israel had been redeemed from the death and the bondage of Egypt, and had ratified the Covenant proposed by Yahweh (Ex. 24:1-8). Moses felt insecure and needed more encouragement to carry on and asked Yahweh to show His resplendent glory, Exodus 33:18.

Moses was well aware of Yahweh's omnipotence and asked now to see His glory. Please notice that Yahweh proclaimed His Name at the same time He revealed His glory:

"And Yahweh descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the Name of Yahweh. And Yahweh passed by before him, and proclaimed, Yahweh, YAHWEH a merciful El and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped," Exodus 34:5-8.

Yahweh's Name is intimately bound up in His glory and righteous character. Moses cannot look directly into His face for he would likely be burned to a crisp. Moses sees Yahweh's glory and at the same time hears Him declare His covenant Name Yahweh.

Yahweh's Name and glory reveal that He is merciful and gracious, patient, full of goodness and truth, exceedingly merciful. All of these attributes are bound up in His glorious Name.

Moses heard Yahweh's Name firsthand right from Yahweh's mouth as he stood barefoot at the burning bush where he was drafted by Yahweh to become the deliverer of Israel. Moses also heard His voice again and saw His glory as Yahweh spoke to him in Exodus 6:1-8 and revealed His plans to free Israel from bondage and redeem them unto Himself.

Mother's Name: 'Yahweh-gloried'

Moses likely knew Yahweh's Name even as a child, for his mother's name was **Jochebed** (*SEC* No. 3115). "Yowkebed" literally means, "Glory of Yah," or "Yahweh-gloried." Notice:

"And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister," Numbers 26:59.

Would this be the reason Moses asked to see the "glory" of Yahweh in Exodus 33:18? With his mother's name Jochebed, it would only seem fitting that at some point Moses would want to see that special glory of Yahweh as a memorial of his wonderful mother.

When one learns the depth of meaning of Yahweh's Name, one soon realizes how great is His loving mercy and how great the future is for those who love Him. We must apply what we learn and hold fast to Yahweh's Name and His Word.

Evidence Is Plentiful

You can verify that our Heavenly Father's Name is indeed Yahweh. With the passing of time more evidence of this neglected truth will come to light. Many look forward to a special verification from the Dead Sea Scrolls yet to be revealed.

One discovers Yahweh's Name frequently in recently published dictionaries, encyclopedias, commentaries and modern Bible notes. The Name Yahweh is being used increasingly by the academic community, even those who may not be religious, such as historians, reporters, and newscasters.

Isn't it significant that when a scholar wants to appear "scholarly" in speaking of the personal Mighty One of the Scriptures, that he will use "Yahweh" instead of the common title?

A Study of His Name Yahweh

In the book, **Naming God**, we are told: "Yahweh's name has a deeper meaning than many realize. His name means that He is the only one having real existence; that He is the One Who is; that He is One Who causes all things to be and which He finally will be able to be. [Elohim] exists, reveals Himself, possesses a name and discloses it: He does all this in His history-making

action for justice, freedom, and fellowship; and it is in our corresponding collaborative action on behalf of a new earth where He can be [Elohim] and we can be human that we can meet, hear and invoke Yahweh," pp. 9-10.

The Bible teaches that baptism into Yahshua's saving Name is a necessary step in salvation. Yahshua promised that the Holy Spirit would surround and guide people into truth, but that upon being immersed, the Holy Spirit would indwell them, John 14:17.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yahshua Messiah for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," Acts 2:38.

Baptism into Yahshua's Name fulfills the necessary criterion of the trine formula given in Matthew 28:19. Yahshua carries the short form of the Father's name Who sent Him. John 14:26 states that the Holy Spirit is sent in the name of the Son, Yahshua.

Thus, we have the Father's Name "Yah," His Son's, Yahshua, and the Spirit given us at baptism. All three are present. The baptisms recorded in Acts are in the singular Name of Yahshua.

We are baptized into the Body of Yahshua. He is the Head of the Body. We become a part of His Body (1Cor. 12:13-27), following Him, taking on His Name.

When all the saints are sealed with the Name of the Father and the Son as spoken of in Revelation 14:1, the perfect number of 144,000 are redeemed as the firstfruits from the earth.

Meanwhile, the everlasting evangel now continues to be preached, calling more to be chosen and sealed in their foreheads before the winds of judgment are released.

Yahweh is calling you to come out of this "Egypt" of our pagan society and to be sealed in His Name, that you not be in bondage to the coming Beast System.

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