

EXODUS

Chapter 6

God Promises Deliverance

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.’” 9 Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery. 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.” 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?” 13 But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge about the people of Israel and about Pharaoh king of Egypt: to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

6:1 *Now.* Without further delay, God will act. (CSB)

with a strong hand. The Lord’s plan for delivering Israel called for Pharaoh himself to drive the people out of Egypt (12:31–32). (TLSB)

6:2 *I am the LORD.* Appears four times in this passage: (1) to introduce the message; (2) to confirm God’s promise of redemption (v. 6) based on the evidence of vv. 2–5; (3) to underscore God’s intention to adopt Israel (v. 7); (4) to confirm his promise of the land and to conclude the message (v. 8). (CSB)

At the burning bush, God told Moses to use the name “LORD” when speaking to the people (3:15). This statement, expressing the Lord’s authority, is repeated in vv 6, 29. (TLSB)

6:3 *God Almighty.* The name God commonly used when He appeared to the patriarchs (Gn 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3) (TLSB)

by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. See notes on 3:14–15. This does not necessarily mean that the patriarchs were totally ignorant of the name Yahweh (“the LORD”), but it indicates that they did not understand its full implications as the name of the One who would redeem his people (see notes on v. 6; Ge 2:4). That fact could be comprehended only by the Israelites who were to experience the exodus, and by their descendants. (CSB)

The name LORD (Yahweh) appears frequently in Gn and is even found in statements of the patriarchs. However, the name is never explained (“make Myself known”), as in ch 3 or 6:6; 20:2. In Ex, the name becomes strongly associated with the Lord as deliverer or savior. (TLSB)

make myself known. This experiential sense of the verb “to know” is intended also in its repeated use throughout the account of the plagues (see v. 7; 7:17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 11:7) and in connection with the exodus itself (see 14:4, 18; 16:6, 8, 12; 18:11). (CSB)

6:4 The God who once established His covenant with Abraham (Gn 17:1–8) was the Lord who renewed His promise to the people of Israel (v 8). (TLSB)

6:6 *I will bring you out ... will deliver ... will redeem you.* The verbs stress the true significance of the name Yahweh—“the LORD”—who is the Redeemer of his people. (CSB)

First-person verbs emphasized the Lord’s promise to free His people from slavery. (TLSB)

great acts of judgment. See 7:4. The Lord’s acts include redemption (for Israel) and judgment (against Egypt). (CSB)

Wielding a weapon or striking a blow. (TLSB)

6:7–8 *brought you out from ... will bring you to.* Redemption means not only release from slavery and suffering but also deliverance to freedom and joy. (CSB)

6:7 *I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God.* Words that anticipate the covenant at Mount Sinai (see 19:5–6; see also Jer 31:33). (CSB)

God chose Israel to be His very own people (Ezk 20:5). References to this election recur often (Lv 26:12; Jer 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; Ezk 14:11; 36:28; 37:23, 27; Zec 8:8). (TLSB)

6:8 *I am the LORD.* God emphasized His authority at the beginning (v 2) and end of His message. The name encompasses His purpose of salvation. (TLSB)

6:9 A change had come over the people (cf 4:31), now hopeless and unimpressed by words. (TLSB)

6:11 *Go in.* The Lord instructed Moses to confront Pharaoh immediately, while still at the meeting place (cf 5:20). (TLSB)

6:12 Moses is demoralized and begins to blame himself for the trouble, reverting to earlier excuses. (TLSB)

I am of uncircumcised lips. Not only lips but also ears and heart (Lv 26:41; Ac 7:51) are described as uncircumcised and therefore sinful (cf Is 6:5). (TLSB)

6:13 *Moses and Aaron.* The genealogy contained in vv. 14–25 gives details concerning the background of Moses and Aaron. Only the first three of Jacob’s 12 sons (Reuben, Simeon and Levi) are listed since Moses and Aaron were from the third tribe. (CSB)

charge. Hbr *tsawah*, “command,” as in the commandments of the covenant. Rather than answer Moses’ question, the Lord ordered him and Aaron to get on with their assignment. (TLSB)

6:1–13 The Lord reveals the purpose attached to His sacred name: deliverance. Shakespeare’s famous question “What’s in a name?” dismisses the significance of names, but this does not apply to the name Yahweh! God says of His name: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Ex 20:7). This name is for worship and

teaching and is not to be abused by cursing and lies. This “name has been revealed and given to us so that it may be of constant use and profit” (LC I 63). • Lord, sanctify my heart and tongue that my words may truly honor You and Your holy name. Amen. (TLSB)

The Genealogy of Moses and Aaron

14 These are the heads of their fathers' houses: the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these are the clans of Reuben. **15** The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the clans of Simeon. **16** These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, the years of the life of Levi being 137 years. **17** The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their clans. **18** The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, the years of the life of Kohath being 133 years. **19** The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites according to their generations. **20** Amram took as his wife Jochebed his father's sister, and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being 137 years. **21** The sons of Izhar: Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. **22** The sons of Uzziel: Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri. **23** Aaron took as his wife Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and the sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. **24** The sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph; these are the clans of the Korahites. **25** Eleazar, Aaron's son, took as his wife one of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites by their clans. **26** These are the Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said: “Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their hosts.” **27** It was they who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing out the people of Israel from Egypt, this Moses and this Aaron. **28** On the day when the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, **29** the LORD said to Moses, “I am the LORD; tell Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you.” **30** But Moses said to the LORD, “Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips. How will Pharaoh listen to me?”

6:14–27 Offers only a brief summary of a family that lived in Egypt for 430 years (12:40). This genealogy interrupts the history to emphasize that Moses and Aaron deserve a hearing from the people. Israelite genealogies emphasized kinship responsibilities, privileges, and inheritance. At this low point of the story, Moses reminds his hearers of who he is and the importance of the Levites for Israel's future. Cf Nu 3. (TLSB)

6:14–16 *Reuben ... Simeon ... Levi.* Counting through the list of Jacob's sons, Moses reached the tribe he plans to describe. Such a memory device assists the listeners (or readers), who would likely know such kinship by heart. (TLSB)

6:14 *heads of their fathers' houses.* Larger kinship groups. (TLSB)

6:15 *Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman.* Judah also fathered children by a Canaanite (Gn 38:2–5). (TLSB)

6:16 *Merari.* The name is of Egyptian origin, as are those of Putiel and Phinehas (see v. 25) and of Moses himself. (CSB)

Levi lived 137 years. See vv. 18, 20. In the OT, attention is usually called to a person's life span only when it exceeds 100 years. (CSB)

Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Only the descendants of Kohath, including Aaron and Moses, are listed in any detail. (TLSB)

6:19 *clans.* Broader families. (TLSB)

6:20 *Amram ... Aaron and Moses.* There is some reason to believe that Amram and Jochebed were not the immediate parents but the ancestors of Aaron and Moses. Kohath, Amram's father (see v. 18), was born before Jacob's (Israel's) descent into Egypt (see Ge 46:11), where the Israelites then stayed 430 years (see 12:40–41). Since Moses was 80 years old at the time of the exodus (see 7:7), he must have been born at least 350 years after Kohath, who consequently could not have been Moses' grandfather (see v. 18). Therefore Amram must not have been Moses' father, and the Hebrew verb for "bore" must have the same meaning it sometimes has in Ge 10. (CSB)

Jochebed. The name appears to mean "The LORD is glory." If so, it shows that the name Yahweh (here abbreviated as *Jo-*) was known before Moses was born. (CSB)

Amram's marriage to his aunt, as well as marriages between other family members, was later forbidden (Lv 18:9–18). (TLSB)

Aaron and Moses. Aaron, as the firstborn (see 7:7), is listed first in the official genealogy. (CSB)

Aaron's four sons are named but not Moses' sons (18:3). Aaron's sons grew more important through their role as priests. Moses' descendants became temple treasurers. (TLSB)

6:23 *Elisheba.* Aaron's wife from Judah. Her father and brother are named in David's family tree. The future priestly and royal tribes are joined in Aaron's household. (TLSB)

6:24 *clans of the Korahites.* Korah later led a rebellion against Moses and was swallowed up by the earth (Nu 16) though his sons were spared (Nu 26:10–11). Some psalms are attributed to the sons of Korah. (TLSB)

6:25 *Eleazar.* Succeeded his father, Aaron, as high priest (Nu 20:25–28). (TLSB)

Phinehas. Stood up for the Lord at Peor; therefore Israel's priests came from his family. (TLSB)

6:26–27 *Aaron ... Moses ... Moses ... Aaron.* Repeated to stress their importance. (TLSB)

6:26 *by their hosts.* Tribes were organized in battle array, which is how Israel marched through the wilderness. (Moses would have written Ex in the wilderness.) (TLSB)

6:28–29 *tell Pharaoh ... all that I say to you.* The story resumes from v 13 with the forceful reminder that Moses would be speaking the Word of the Lord. (TLSB)

6:30 *How will Pharaoh listen to me?* Repeated from v 12. The Lord answers in ch 7. Moses knew and rightly feared Pharaoh's power. In 10:28, Pharaoh threatened Moses with death. Readers may wonder why Pharaoh didn't just get rid of Moses since he was a nuisance. God was at work to preserve Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh surely recognized the regard Moses quickly gained with both the Israelites and the Egyptians (11:3) on account of the wonders God worked through him. Pharaoh became divided from his counselors, who at first thought they could humiliate and dismiss Moses (7:11) but later learned they could not (9:11–12). By the eighth plague, the leadership of Egypt was clearly divided (10:7), and Moses recorded some of the backroom politics, which served God's purposes in punishing the Egyptians and delivering all of Israel. (TLSB)

6:14–30 As a Levite, Moses has good family connections, but this does not translate into an eager willingness to serve the Lord. He continues to doubt that Pharaoh will ever let Israel go. How different is another Servant of the Lord with good family connections (Mt 1:1–17; Lk 3:23–38)! His attitude is spelled out in Luther's great hymn "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" (LSB 556, especially st 1, 6).

Jesus' willing obedience frees us from the eternal consequences of our sinful fears, doubts, and stubbornness. • Dear Father in heaven, my heart and voice sing Your wonders. I praise You for Your victory in Christ, who paid our ransom with His life. Amen.