**Exodus 6:1-5**

[*https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/exod/exod-6/exodus-61-5/*](https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/exod/exod-6/exodus-61-5/)

*The first nine verses of chapter six contain the LORD’s answer to Moses’ complaint to the LORD. The first verse answers Moses’ complaint that the LORD has not fulfilled His promised deliverance. Verses 2 – 9 answer the question concerning who the source of the commands to leave Egypt is and repeats the promised deliverance.*

 Verse 1 contains the LORD’s response to Moses’ complaint that He has not fulfilled His promised deliverance (5:23) and all He has done has made the situation worse for His people. In His answer, *the Lord said to Moses* things that are comforting, gracious, and encouraging.

First, he told Moses that *Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh.* God does not dispute Moses’ complaint. But God has His own timing. God comforts Moses by telling him His timing is at hand. The LORD is telling Moses that He has the Egyptians where He wants them. God uses the term *compulsion*to describe how He will deal with Pharaoh. God will compel Pharaoh and Pharaoh will in turn compel Israel to leave. Everything is going according to His plan. The phrase *what I will do to Pharaoh*is always used with the plagues, so it is likely that this opens the chapter of God’s dealing with Pharaoh through miraculous intervention.

Note that there is no anger or judgment in what the LORD says here – only comfort.  The LORD was not infuriated at Moses’ for having a lack of faith in Him. There is no complaint that Moses didn’t believe in Him in light of the miracles He had already done in his presence. Instead He was very patient with Moses. Moses had done what God told him to do, and now complained to God that there was no evidence God was keeping His end of the deal. This would indicate that God is happy to answer our concerns when we are walking in obedience. But it is also clear that God is God, and will do things in His time and in His way.

God told Moses *for under compulsion he will let them go, and under compulsion he will drive them out of his land*. Moses saw no evidence the LORD had control of the situation. But the LORD is in complete control. The phrase “under compulsion” is literally “by my strong hand,” signifying that the LORD will powerfully intervene to force Pharaoh to let His people leave Egypt. In fact, the LORD’s compulsion will be so complete that Pharaoh will compel Israel to leave.

Verses 2 – 8 contain the LORD’s answer to Moses’ concern as to who is giving the commands that seem to do more harm than good to the Israelites. The answer employs a frequently-used literary pattern called “inclusio” An inclusio is a block of text that begins and ends with the same phrase (in this case, “I am the LORD”). The text between the two phrases is to be considered a unit of thought. In this inclusio, the LORD declared three things:

* Who He is (“I am the LORD (2, 8b)
* What He has done in the past (3 – 5)
* What He will do in the future (6 – 8a)

Verse 2 begins the inclusio with the statement to Moses *I am the Lord*. As stated earlier, the LORD (all capital letters) translates the Hebrew “Yahweh,” which can be translated “I AM.” The name emphasizes that God is the very essence of existence, of all that is. He is the Creator of all things, seen and unseen.

In verses 3 – 5, the LORD begins by *saying I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Lord, I did not make Myself known to them*. He is the same God as the patriarchs of old, but He did not make Himself known to them by this name: LORD.

God went by other names, such as the name translated *God Almighty*. In Hebrew, this is “El Shaddai.” This name for God can either mean “God of Nourishment” or “God of the Mountain.” The first stresses His tender care and the other implies His absolute rule over everything. The Greek Old Testament translates this as “God Almighty,” which also speaks of His absolute sovereignty. It is used in Genesis in 17:1, 28:3, 35:11, 43:14, and 48:3. It also occurs 30 times in Job and once in Ezekiel (10:5).

But God was also called Yahweh (LORD). Therefore, this phrase, *but by My name, Lord, I did not make Myself known to them*, can’t be read as saying that the name “Yahweh” was unknown to them. In [Genesis 15:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+15.7&t=NASB95) God spoke to Abraham and referred to Himself as LORD.  A reading of Genesis sees the name LORD used all the way back to Eve ([Genesis 4:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+4.1&t=NASB95)), Abraham (14:22, 24:3), Sarah (16:2, 5), Laban (31:49), and Joseph (39:2). In light of these verses in Genesis where a person is quoted as calling God “Yahweh” ([Genesis 4:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+4.1&t=NASB95), [9:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+9.26&t=NASB95), [16:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+16.5&t=NASB95), [24:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.3&t=NASB95), [24:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+24.7&t=NASB95), [26:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+26.22&t=NASB95), [29:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+29.32&t=NASB95)), and [Genesis 15:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+15.7&t=NASB95) where God refers to Himself as LORD to Abraham, this phrase cannot mean that the name was unknown before this passage.

The emphasis seems to be on *how* God is known. Abraham knew the name LORD, but God did not reveal Himself to Abraham as LORD. In light of how the word “to know” is used in verse 8 (where the knowing is based on experiencing the LORD’s fulfillment of His promises), it could mean that the patriarchs did not “know” him as the keeper of the covenant (which is a major aspect of Him being Yahweh) but as the almighty provider. Thus, this significance of the name “Yahweh” was not known before now.

It also could be that God became known to them experientially as LORD through the mighty acts of the plagues, which displayed that God is creator of all things. Israel came to know God’s sovereign power through first hand observation. The creation’s very existence depends upon the I AM, and the I AM demonstrated with great power and authority that all He created does His bidding.

Having identified Himself again to Moses, the LORD in verses 4 – 5 reassures him that He has (and has had for a long time) been keenly aware of Israel’s situation. He told Moses that, far from forgetting His promises, He remembers His interactions with the patriarchs. He reminded Moses by telling him *I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned.* The “covenant” mentioned here is probably the one made with Abraham promising him a relationship with God and possession of the land of Canaan ([Genesis 17:7 – 8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+17.7+%E2%80%93+8&t=NASB95)). This was reaffirmed to his descendants (for example, Jacob in [Genesis 35:9-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+35.9-12&t=NASB95) ). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received the covenant but did not experience the fulfillment of it. They were, in fact, “sojourners.” But consistent with the message to Moses, God always fulfills His promises, but in His time.

Along with this, the LORD reassured Moses that He was aware of the current situation of the Israelites, because He said that *Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage*. The word “I” is emphatic in the Hebrew, signifying that He personally knows the situation that the Israelites find themselves in. The LORD is fully aware of their outcry in the midst of their suffering. He says that*I have remembered My covenant*to given them the land God promised, and is now ready to lead them there*.*

In summary, the LORD needed to reassure Moses that He was aware of the situation and was ready to act on Israel’s behalf. He does this by listing the things He has already done:

* I appeared (verse 3)
* I established (verse 4)
* I heard (verse 5a)
* I remembered (verse 5)

**Biblical Text:**

**1 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he will let them go, and under compulsion he will drive them out of his land.” 2God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “I am the Lord; 3and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name, Lord, I did not make Myself known to them. 4I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned. 5Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.**