

119

MINISTRIES

“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”

Parashah Points: Va’era – Knowing God’s Name

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Va’era, which is Hebrew for “I appeared,” and it goes from Exodus 6:2 to Exodus 9:35.

This parashah begins with the Lord commanding Moses and Aaron to go back to Pharaoh and order him to let the people of Israel go.

The rest of the Torah Portion tells of the first seven plagues that God sent upon Egypt because of Pharaoh’s persistent refusal to obey God’s will.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to present a thought on God’s name, YHWH.

Exodus 6:2-3

[God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the Lord \[YHWH\]. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the Lord \[YHWH\] I did not make myself known to them.](#)

In this passage, God tells Moses that He did not make Himself known to the patriarchs by the name YHWH. This has raised some questions since the name YHWH appears 165 times in the book of Genesis! Many of these occurrences of the name in Genesis include people speaking the name and referring to God as YHWH. So, clearly, people knew the name YHWH long before the exodus event. How, then, do we make sense of this statement in Exodus 6?

The key to understanding what God means in this passage is to consider what it means to be “known”. The word here implies much more than head knowledge. YHWH is speaking of a deeper, intimate kind of knowing.

We can make sense of this in light of our own experiences with relationships. The way we “know”

someone depends on our relationship to that person. You might know someone as an acquaintance on Facebook who comments periodically on your posts. You know them, but your knowledge of them is far different than your knowledge of your spouse.

To put it another way, your knowledge of your co-worker might be very different than your knowledge of your best friend. Sometimes your co-worker becomes your best friend—and in that case, your knowledge of them is deepened. You no longer know them as just your co-worker. As your relationship grows, the greater depth of who they are is uncovered to you.

The patriarchs knew YHWH, but the deeper meaning of that name was not revealed to them like it was to the Israelites. The patriarchs knew YHWH as *El Shaddai*, which is often translated as “God Almighty.” This is based on a suggested parallel from Akkadian in addition to the Septuagint translation. But the Hebrew, as strange as it might sound, literally translates to, “God, my breast.” The Hebrew *shad* means “breast” and the *ai* ending is an archaic form meaning “my,” according to some scholars. Therefore, *El Shaddai* would give the sense of “the God who nurses.”

Thus, God tells Moses that the patriarchs experienced Him, but only partially, in the capacity of *El Shaddai*—as a nurturer and provider. But who He is in fullness, as YHWH, He is only now making known to the Exodus generation, to whom He will demonstrate His covenant faithfulness revealed in His name by fulfilling His promises to the patriarchs on a national scale.

The fuller revelation of the name YHWH, which means, “I will be what I will be,” is made known in the exodus story in a dramatic way. The Israelites will see the amazing signs and wonders of YHWH as He executes justice on their oppressors and delivers them. The Israelites will know Him as the God who keeps His promises, the God who shows them who He is and who He will be. They will know Him as YHWH.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net

TWITTER: [www.twitter.com/119Ministries#](https://twitter.com/119Ministries#)