Exodus 6:3 in Pentateuchal Criticism

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The verse with which this paper deals has no difficult words and presents no significant problems in translation. Nevertheless, Exodus 6:3 has become a very controversial passage in Pentateuchal criticism.[1] Because of the supposed historical incongruity of this verse with much of the book of Genesis (e.g., Gen. 4:26, "To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of the Lord ."[2]),[3] many Old Testament scholars found what they thought was the

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[1] E.g., Otto Essfeldt, "El and Yahweh," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 1 (1959):25-37, by assuming a modified form of Wellhausen's documentary hypothesis, theorizes that Exodus 6:2-3 indicates how Yahweh was at one time separate from El, but supplanted his supremacy by assuming his name and later becoming the one God of Israel. But G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment* (Chicago: H. Regnery Company, 1951), p. 13, rejects this idea. Furthermore, several scholars now reject the entire documentary theory because they are convinced that no distinction can be made on the basis of divine names and titles. E.g., Moses Hirsch Segal, "El, Elohim, and YHWH in the Bible," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 46 (1955):89-115.

[2] All Bible quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

[3] John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1910), pp. 126-127, asserts that Enosh "was the founder of the worship of Yahwe." He does this by noting that the expression *qr'bsm* literally means to invoke the divine name. But John T. Willis, *Genesis*, The Living Word Commentary (Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing Company, 1979), pp. 157-158, suggests the possibility that this expression simply means "to praise or give thanks to the Lord" (see Isa. 12:4; 1 Chron. 16:18; Pss. 105:1; 116:17). From this he concludes that "the emphasis would not be on the divine name 'Yahweh,' but on 'the calling the name of Yahweh,' and 'Yahweh' would be used because this was the name familiar to the author of Genesis. .. " Another possible explanation is offered by Samuel Sandmel, "Genesis 4:26b," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 32 (1961) :19-29. He notes three other possible textual understandings of the verse aside from the accepted text: (1) Rabbinic exegesis viewed the verb *huchal* as meaning "profaned" (i.e., "Then men profaned the name of God in their prayers."); (2) the LXX renders the same verb "hoped" (i.e., "He hoped to call on the name of the Lord God."); (3) Aquila, as preserved by Origen, renders the verse "Then there began the being named in the name of God" (i.e., the use of theophoric names). Sandmel rejects these possibilities and holds to the MT. He concludes, "Of course, the verse [Gen. 4:26] clashes [with Exod. 6:3, etc.]. But why emend the text?"

first clue to various documents existing in the Pentateuch.[4] Thus, Exodus 6:3 was ascribed to the Priestly source (P), while portions of Genesis containing YHWH (except for 17:1 and 21:1b) were ascribed to the Yahwistic writer (J).[5]

This alleged historical incongruity between the J and P sources was compounded when Exodus 3:13-15 was brought into the picture:

> Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Issac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.... "

In this passage Moses is at Mt. Horeb (cf. Exod. 3:1), while in Exodus 6:3 he is in Egypt (cf. Exod. 5:1) . No difficulty would exist had it not been for the supposition that both of these accounts are referring to the same calling of Moses by Yahweh. It is also said that both are recounting the first time the tetragrammaton was made known to Moses.[6]

[4] E.g., Arthur Gabriel Hebert, *The Authority of the Old Testament* (London, England: Faber and Faber, 1947), p. 30, writes, "The clue to the distinguishing of the various documents was first given in Exodus 6:3 where it is said that God was known to the Patriarchs as El Shaddai and not by his name Yahweh." Cf. also Harold Henry Rowley, *The Biblical Doctrine of Election* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1950), pp. 25-29; John Skinner, *The Divine Names in Genesis* (New York, NY: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914), pp. 12-13, 171ff.; Allen Hugh McNeile, *The Book of Exodus*, Westminster Commentary (London, England: Methuen & Company, 1908), pp. 34-35.

[5] In the English-speaking world, Samuel Rolles Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1891), was the first to use the Graf-Wellhausen documentary hypothesis to divide the Pentateuch into the JEDP sources. For a more recent study of the J source, see Peter F. Ellis, *The Yahwist: The Bible's First Theologian* (Notre Dame, IN: Fides Publishers, 1968).

[6] E.g., Martin Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Philadephia: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 33, 58; G. H. Parke-Taylor, *Yahweh: The Divine Name in the Bible* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1975), pp. 18-19; and especially Immanuel Lewy, "The Beginnings of the Worship of Yahweh: Conflicting Biblical Views," *Vetus Testamentum* 6 (1956):429-435.

Even though several scholars still look to the Kenites for the begin-nings of Yahweh-worship in Israel,[7] or perhaps to some other nation,[8] most would agree that the P source has the most accurate account of the three supposed biblical references.[9] It is thought that the J source was attempting to make Yahweh worship seem to exist from the beginning of time. It is also explained that the E source in Exodus 3 was attempting to show the significance of Mt. Sinai by putting Moses at Horeb (Sinai) when he encountered YHWH. This would explain why E has both the calling and the revelation accounts at Horeb instead of Egypt as in P.[10]

[7] Julian Morgenstern, "The Oldest Document of the Hexateuch," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 4 (1927):1-138, maintains that sections of Exod. 33-34; 4:24-26; and Num. 10:29-33a are part of an original document which he terms the Kenite Document (K). Harold Henry Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua: Biblical Traditions in the Light of Archaeology* (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 143-161, has one of the best defenses of this theory. Martin Noth, *Genesis: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (London: S. C. M. Press, 1961), p. 104, also supports this theory. But the Kenite hypothesis is by no means as certain. This has been pointed out by several scholars. E.g., William J. Phythian-Adams, *The Call of Israel* (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1934), pp. 72-77. Roland de Vaux, "Sur l'Origine Kenite ou Madianite du Yahvisme," in *William F. Albright Festschrift: Eretz-Israel*, ed. A. Malamat 9 (1969):32, makes this obser-vation: "Nous ne savons pas quelle divinite les Madianites adoraient, nous ne savons rien de leur culte ni de leur sacerdoce." H. Brekelmans, 'Exodus XVIII and the Origins of Yahwism in Israel, *Oudtestamentische Studien* 10 (1954):215-224, makes a strong case against the Kenite hypothesis by noting that Jethro's relationship with Moses was political and not religious.

[8] The exact etymological origin of the tetragrammaton has never been conclu-sively determined. For some possibilities, see William F. Albright, "Contributions to Biblical Archaeology and Philology: The Name Yahweh," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 43 (1924):370ff.; and Roland de Vaux, "The Revelation of the Divine Name YHWH," in *Proclamation and Presence: Old Testament Essays in Honour of Goynne Henton Davies*, eds. J. J. Durham and J. R. Porter (London: S. C. M. Press, 1970), pp. 48-75.

[9] E.g., James Plastaras, *The God of the Exodus: The Theology of the Exodus Nar-ratives* (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce Publishing Company, 1966), pp. 90-91. For an overall description of P, see Curt Kuhl, *The Old Testament: Its Origins and Com-position*, trans. C. T. M. Herriott (Richmond: John Knox Press, 11961), pp. 55-64. But see also Casper J. Labuschagne, "The Pattern of the Divine Speech Formulas in the Pentateuch," *Vetus Testamentum* 32 (1982):286-296, who denies the existence of a P source.

[10] For a good summary of this view, see Bernhard W. Anderson, "Names of God," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 2:409. He supports the idea of three separate traditions forming this alleged discrepancy.

But it must be asked at this point, is it necessary to attribute the accounts of Genesis 4:26b (15:1-2, etc.); Exodus 3:13-15; and Exodus 6:3 into three different sources? In view of (1) the historical background of the Exodus passages in their ancient Near Eastern setting, (2) the Hebrew text and syntax of Exodus 6:3, and (3) the theological significance of this passage in the book of Exodus as a whole, it would seem that such is not necessary.[11] Perhaps a discussion of these points will make this conclusion seem reasonable.

A study of the historical background of Exodus 6:3 and Exodus 3:13-15 reveals that neither passage suggests that this was when Moses first learned of the name YHWH.[12] But in Exodus 3:13, this conclusion seems to contradict this, for it speaks of Moses as having the people of Israel asking "What is his name?" Even though this inquiry may seem to suggest to the modern reader that Israel was ignorant of the tetragrammaton, this was not the case for the ancient Hebrew reader. When a person wished to know the simple name of someone or something in Hebrew, the interrogative pronoun *mi* was generally used (cf. Gen. 33:5; Num. 22:9; Josh. 9:8).[13] The interrogative pronoun *mah*, on the other hand, was generally used when one wanted to understand an inner quality or characteristic of someone or something (e.g., Exod. 16:15).[14]

This understanding seems natural since the explanation of the Name which is given in verse 14 suggests that the tetragrammaton was commonly known. Here Moses has just asked a question of character, i.e. "What kind of God are you?" The Lord responds paronomastically, "I am who I am."[15]

[11] Michael Butterworth, "The Revelation of the Divine Name?" *Indian Journal of Theology* 24 (1975):45-52, argues that Exod. 3 and 6 cannot be divided into sources.

[12] McNeile, *The Book of Exodus*, p. 34, however, says that both essays depict God "revealing the Name for the first time."

[13] See Friedrich H. W. Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Emil Kautzsch, 2d English ed., revised by Arthur E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910; reprinted., 1980), pp. 113, 443-444.

[14] John Alexander Motyer, *The Revelation of the Divine Name* (London: Tyndale Press, 1959), pp. 18-21, agrees with this conclusion. He has made an excellent study of the use of the Hebrew interrogative pronouns. Cf. Martin Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and Covenant* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 48; and Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), p. 69.

[15] See Barry J. Beitzel, "Exodus 3:14 and the Divine Name: A Case of Biblical Paronomasia," *Trinity Journal*, n.s. 1 (1980):16.

This was not an evasive answer,[16] but a revelation of divine character.[17] Perhaps the emphasis is upon the ever-presence of the Lord: "I shall be there for whatever help I am to be there."[18] Or perhaps the emphsis should be upon the fact of his existence as in B. N. Wambacq's paraphrase: Je suis, J'existe. Au moment voulu, vous in aure' l'experience. Croyez-moi!"[19]

It ought also to be noticed that the context of Exodus 3 is against the idea that Moses and Israel did not know the name Yahweh (cf. verses 15-16). As Sigmund Mowinckel accurately notes,

> Yahweh is not telling his name to one who does not know it. Moses asks for some "control" evidence that his countrymen may know, when he returns to them, that it is really the god of their fathers that has sent him.... The whole conversation presupposes that the Israelites know this name already.[20]

The language used in Exodus 6:2-3 also presupposes a knowledge of the name of Yahweh. This is made clear when one understands the introductory phrase, 'ani YHWH, in the light of its ancient Near Eastern setting. From the perspective of this time period, this formula becomes the introduction of the well-known God of Israel, rather than a revelation

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[16] Bernardus Dirk Eerdmans, "ˋThe Name Jahu," *Oudtestamentische Studien* 5 (1948):12, thinks that this was an evasive answer. But against this view is Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance, vol. 1, pt. 1: *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, trans. G. T. Thompson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), pp. 386-391.

[17] Moses Hirsch Segal, *The Pentateuch: Its Composition and Its Authorship* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), p. 5, correctly notes, "The actual answer to the question: 'I am that I am' (v. 14) does not give the name of the Deity. It gives the significance and the interpretation of the name YHWH, but not the name itself."

[18] Kaufmann Kohler, "The Tetragrammaton and Its Uses," *Journal of Jewish Lore and Philosophy* 1 (1919):21, gives this as a possible rendering among several others.

[19] 'Eheyeh aser 'eheyeh," *Biblica* 59 (1978):336. This also seems to be the emphasis of the LXX in their rendering: *Ego eimi ho on*. See also Edward Schild, "On Exodus iii 14 -"I Am That I Am," *Vetus Testamentum* 4 (1954) :296-302, who translates it, "I am the One who is."

[20] C. R. North, "Pentateuchal Criticism," in *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, ed. Harold Henry Rowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 54, quoting Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Two Sources of Predeuteronomic Primeval History (JE) in Genesis I -XI* (Oslo, Norway: n.p., 1937), p. 55. Mowinckel made this statement in an attempt to justify his view that E uses YHWH in Genesis.

of the divine name.[21] For example, the introdctory formula in Yehawmilk's inscription is "I am Yehawmilk, king of Byblos ..."[22] Of Kilamuwa, king of Y'dy, it is written, "I am Kilamuwa, the son the Hayya."[23] Azitawadda begins, "I am Azitawadda, the blessed of Ba'l, the servant of Ba,l."[24] From these examples it becomes clear that the use of the first singular personal pronoun was often employed as introductory formulas by kings already known by the people. It is very plausible that Exodus 6:2 is following this custom.

The problem of Exodus 6:3 can also be approached by examining the syntax of the text. Several possibilities have been suggested, which would alter the general rendering of the text.[25] But the explanation that

[21] Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), pp. 76-77, gives four reasons for this verse not being a revelation of a new name not previously known: (1) The custom of Eastern monarchs was to begin with a similar introductory formula; (2) if it was a new revelation, it would read, "My name is YHWH," not "I am YHWH"; (3) the phrase "I am YHWH" is often used in the Old Testament and it is not understood as a revelation in these cases; (4) this formula is also in Exod. 6:6, 7, 8 and it is not understood as a revelation in these verses.

[22] "Yehawmilk of Biblos," trans. Franz Rosenthal, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3d. ed., edited by James B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 653 (hereafter cited as ANET).

[23] "Kilamuwa. of Y'DY-SAM'-AL," trans. Franz Rosenthal, in ANET, pp. 654-655.

[24] "Azitawadda of Adana," trans. Franz Rosenthal, in ANET, p.655.

[25] E.g., L. August Heerboth, "Was God Known to the Patriarchs as Jehovah?" *Concordia Theological Monthly* 4 (1933):345-349, argues that Exod. 6:3 should be a question, even though the he-interrogative is absent from the verse. He renders the verse, "I am Jehovah and have appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as God Almighty. And regarding my name Jehovah was I not known to them?" This interpretation has difficulties because (1) it does not fit the context of Exod. 6 well, and. (2) it is not supported by any Hebrew grammarian. See Hinckly Gilbert Mitchell, "The Omission of the Interrogative Particle," in *Old Testament and Semitic Studies in Memory of William Rainey Harper*, vol. 1, ed. Robert Francis Harper, Francis Brown, and George Foot Moore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1908), pp. 115-129, who restricts the number of occurrences in the Old Testament to 39, of which he attributes 12 or 17 to a corruption of the text. Exod. 6:3 was not one of the 39 occurrences. Another possible solution is offered by William J. Martin, *Stylistic Criteria and the Analysis of the Pentateuch* (London: Tyndale Press, 1955), pp. 16-17. He believes that the *lo'* in Exod. 6:3 should be *lo*. He thus renders the verse, "I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Issac, and to Jacob as God Almighty, and verily (*lo*), by my name the Lord I did make myself known to them." This idea, however, cannot be proved. There is no indication of a corrupt text in this verse. Yet a number still hold this view. Cf. Raymond F. Surberg, "Did the Patriarchs Know Yahweh?" *Springfielder* 36 (1972):125-126; and Robert Dick Wilson, "Yahweh (Jehovah) and Exodus 6:3," in *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation*, ed. Walter C. Kaiser (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1972), pp. 29-39.

can best be supported on an objective grammatical basis is the following rendering: "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty, but as for my reputation as the Lord, I was not known to them." This translation is supported by at least three grammatical reasons.

First, the *b* in the phrase *b^e'el shaddai* may mean "in the capacity of," "in the character of," or "as."[26] Second, since the latter half of the verse (i.e., *wush^emi* YHWH) has no governing preposition, the preposition from the first half of the verse probably governs both halves.[27] And third, the term *shemi* means "my reputation, fame, or character" in Exodus 6:3.[28] But the problem would not be resolved if one stopped here. The nagging question still persists: Why does Exodus 6:3 say that the patriarchs did not know the character of YHWH?[29] The answer comes when one realizes the meaning of knowing YHWH in the theology of the book of Exodus and in the theology of the Old Testament as a whole.[30]

To the Hebrew mind, knowledge and experience were closely con-nected. The Hebrew work yadae which is used in Exodus 6:3 in the niphal, means "to know," "to yearn to know," and "to come to know in the process of things" (i.e., by experience).[31] Therefore, when one speaks

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[26] See Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, p. 379; and Raymind Abba, "The Divine Name Yahweh," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80 (1961) :323-324, both of whom cite this verse as an example of this meaning.

[27] See Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, p. 384; and Motyer, *The Revelation of the Divine Name*, pp. 14-15.

[28] See Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907; reprint ed., 1966), p. 1028;; Max Reisel, The Mysterious Name of Y. H. W. H. (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Company, N.V., 1957), pp. 27-29; and Andrew Bruce Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. S. D. F. Salmond (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), pp. 68-69.

[29] Unacceptable is the solution of Fred G. Smith, "Observations on the Use of the Names and Titles of God in Genesis," *Evangelical Quarterly* 40 (1968) :103-109, who argues that the Genesis writer inserted the tetragrammaton into the Genesis text because at the time of its writing it was the common name of God. Smith, however, offers no explanation for Gen. 4:26 and admits that he is "baffled" by it. Furthermore, he does not explain Gen. 22:14, which would seem to be even more baffling to one who holds this view.

[30] See Elmer A. Martens, "Tackling Old Testament Theology," *Journal of the Evangelical Theololgical Society* 20 (1977):123-132, who views the pericope of Exod. 5:22-6:8 and the identity of Yahweh as the unifying theme of Old Testament theology. See also J. Gerald Janzen, "What's in a Name? `Yahweh' in Exodus 3 and the Wider Biblical Context," *Interpretation* 33 (1979):227-239.

[31] Rudolf Bultmann, "ginosko, gnosis, epiginosko, epignosis," in *Theological Diction-ary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 1:696-697.

of knowing someone in the Old Testament, he is implying some kind of recalled experience (e.g., sexual--Gen. 4:1; visual--Gen. 12:11; political-Exod. 1:8).

In the book of Genesis the patriarchs knew God in the character of God Almighty.[32] John Alexander Motyer accurately notes the significance of this name in Genesis:

> . . . it was the claim of El Shaddai to be powerful where man
> was weakest, and He exerts this claim supremely by promising
> to an obscure and numerically tiny family that they should one
> day possess and populate a land which, in their day, was inhab-
> ited and owned by people immeasurably their superiors in
> number and power.[33]

Motyer substantiates this observation by pointing out three ways God made known his character as an Almighty God to the patriarchs. (1) He took over human incapacity in the lives of the patriarchs in order to raise up a great nation; (2) he changed the name of Abram and Jacob to symbolize their transformed human nature; (3) he promised to them boundless posterity in the land of promise.[34] In these important ways, the patriarchs came to know God as El Shaddai by experience.

When one turns to the book of Exodus, he sees that it was God's desire to fulfill his promise which he had made to the patriarchs. Before he could do this with any meaning, however, God had to show to the people what kind of God he was. This meant acting in a significant way, because at this time no one knew YHWH, since no one had experienced his forthcoming actions. This is seen very cleary in Exodus. It is recorded that Pharaoh did not know him (Exod. 5:2); the patriarchs had not known him (Exod. 6:3); Israel did not know him (Exod. 6:7); Egypt did not know him (Exod. 7:5); even Moses did not know him (Exod. 8:22).

Because of this widespread ignorance of YHWH-ignorance of his character, not of his name--something had to be done in order to educate the people. This first came in the form of the plagues (Exod. 7:5,17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29, 30; 10:2; 11:7) and second by the exodus itself (Exod. 6:7; 14:4,18; 16:6, 12). After these experiences it could then be said that

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[32] I. e., as El Shaddai. For the possible explanations of the meaning and origin of this name, see Lloyd R. Bailey, "Israelite 'El Sadday and Amorite Bel Sade," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87 (1968): 434-438; J. Ouellette, "More on 'El Sadday and Amorite Bel Sade," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969) :470-471; William F. Albright, "The Names Shaddai and Abram," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 54 (1935) :180-193; and Norman Walker, "A New Interpretation of the Divine Name 'Shaddai,' " *Zeitschrift ftir die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 72 (1960):64-66.

[33] *The Revelation of the Divine Name*, pp. 29-30.

[34] Ibid., p. 29.

the people knew YHWH (cf. Exod. 18:11; 29:46; Deut. 4:35, 39; 7:9; 29:2-6).

With this understanding in mind, the difficulty of Exodus 6:3 no longer seems to exist. This is so because knowing the Lord, which is a major theme of the book of Exodus,[35] could come only after the people of Israel had experienced the exodus. Therefore, the patriarchs (or anyone else for that matter) could not have possibly known YHWH in this way. Only those who were able to recall the most significant event recorded in the Old Testament were able to know YHWH in a fuller sense. This is not to say, however, that the patriarchs did not know the name YHWH. On the contrary, they knew and used the name often, but without the significance it took when God delivered his people and kept his promise.[36]

[35] This theme of knowing the Lord is picked up by the prophets. They lament the state of the people, since they do not know YHWH (e.g., Isa. 1:3; Jer. 9:3, 6), but they tell of a day when they would know the Lord. It would come only after they had experienced his judgment (e.g., Isa. 49:23, 26; 52:6; 60:16; Jer. 16:21; Ezek. 6:7, 10, 13, 14; 7:4).

[36] 1 Sam. 3 provides the best analogy for this point. Samuel was born to a YHWH-worshipping family. His mother prayed (1 Sam. 1:10ff.), worshipped (1 Sam. 1:19), and sacrificed to (1 Sam. 1:24) YHWH. His father also sacrificed to YHWH (1 Sam. 1:3, 21). When Samuel was young, he was dedicated to YHWH (1 Sam. 1:22) and he ministered before YHWH (1 Sam. 2:18) under Eli (1 Sam. 3:1), who was a priest of YHWH (1 Sam. 1:9). Year by year Samuel grew in the presence of YHWH (1 Sam. 2:21, 26). Yet, even with this background, I Sam. 3:7a says, "Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord (YHWH) . . ." Obviously, the meaning of this verse is that Samuel had not yet come to know the Lord by experience.