

in the character that is stressed in this other name which emphasizes His character as the Redeemer and Deliverer of His people. The other name, used sometimes in connection with the patriarchs, stresses more His character as the One Who cares for and nourishes His friends and followers. There is no inconsistency, but simply a different emphasis.

I know of one scholar who says that Exodus 6:3 should be taken as a question which could be paraphrased: "Was I not known to your fathers by this name as well as by the other?" This is grammatically possible, since there is no question mark in Hebrew, and our English custom of reversing the order of two words to indicate a question is also not a characteristic of Hebrew. The first explanation seems to me better, but I am not ready to rule out the other as impossible.

Whatever interpretation of Exodus 6:3 we adopt, it is quite unnecessary to interpret it in a way that contradicts great portions of the book of Genesis.

You asked, "what is the basis for the pronunciations Yahweh and Jehovah?"

Ancient Hebrew writing, like Egyptian hieroglyphics, did not indicate vowels, but only consonants. It was not until at least the fifth century A.D. that marks to indicate vowels were introduced. By this time the original vowels of this name had been forgotten, since it had long been customary not actually to pronounce it. We know that this custom was not in effect in Old Testament times, since many people were given names that included it as part of a compound. Thus Jehoiada means "Jehovah knows," and Jehoiachin means "Jehovah establishes." Similarly Zechariah means "Jehovah has remembered," and Hezekiah means "Jehovah has strengthened." Such names, and guesses about a possible etymology, give us our only clues as to how it was originally pronounced. Yahweh would be a reasonable way to represent a Hebrew verb form that would mean either "he causes to be," or "he causes to happen." The use of a related form of the same verb in Exodus 3:14 lends support to this suggestion. About 1930 many scholars felt that the names beginning with Jeho should be taken as proving that the original pronunciation was something like Yahu, and this form of the name appeared in a number of books. However, this suggestion soon disappeared from the literature. Nowadays, critics writing in English generally represent it as Yahweh.