

MOVEMENT I — RELUCTANCE BEFORE RESISTANCE

1 Moses answered, **“What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you?’”** 2 Then the Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” “A staff,” he replied. ...5 “This,” said the Lord, “is so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you.” 6 Then the Lord said, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, the skin was leprous[a]—it had become as white as snow. 7 “Now put it back into your cloak,” he said. **10 Moses said to the Lord, “Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”** 11 *The Lord said to him, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? 12 Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”* **13 But Moses said, “Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.”** 14 *Then the Lord’s anger burned against Moses and he said, “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. 15 You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. 16 He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. 17 But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it.”* (Exodus 4: 1-2,5, 10-17)

OBEDIENCE EXPOSES THE BATTLE

5 Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.’” 2 Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go.”

6 That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and overseers in charge of the people: 7 “You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. 8 But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don’t reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ 9 Make the work harder for the people so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies.” (Exodus 5: 1-2, 6-9 NIV)

WHEN THINGS GET HARDER

19 The Israelite overseers realized they were in trouble when they were told, “You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day.” 20 When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, 21 and they said, “May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.” 22 Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? 23 Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.” (Exodus 5:19-23 NIV)

GOD REASSERTS HIS IDENTITY

6 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country.” 2 God also said to Moses, “I am the Lord. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty,[a] but by my name the Lord[b] I did not make myself fully known to them. 4 I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. 5 Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. 6 “Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. 7 I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.’” (Exodus 6:1--8 NIV)