

A The request: "Let my people go."

❖ Pharaoh's response (Exodus 5:1-2)

- Thutmose III was a child when he was placed on the throne under the regency of Hatshepsut to prevent Moses from being proclaimed pharaoh. Moses fled Egypt when Thutmose was still a teenager.
- Forty years later, Moses found himself back in court. Had he come to claim his right to the throne? Not at all. The request was simple: "Let my people go" (Ex . 5:1).
- Thutmose's response is a challenge, not to Moses, but to God himself. In short, he was challenging God's very existence (Exod . 5:2).
- His attitude is used in Revelation as a symbol to represent the French nation during the 18th-century revolution (Rev. 11:8). Like Pharaoh, the French Republic declared religion abolished and declared itself an atheistic nation.

❖ The people's response (Exodus 5:3-21)

- When Moses performed the signs God had given him before the people, they believed and worshipped (Ex . 4:29-31). We can imagine how eagerly they waited for Pharaoh's response to their request.
- The response was truly unexpected. Pharaoh not only refused, but forced them to do the work without giving them the necessary materials, but demanding the same results (Ex . 5:6-8). What was the excuse for imposing such an irrational order?
- Moses and Aaron—according to Thutmose—made them "rest [*shabbat*] from their labors" (Ex. 5:5). If they had time to talk about religion and freedom, they would also have time to look for straw (Ex. 5:9, 17).
- When they were mistreated, the taskmasters complained to Pharaoh, but they were ignored. They then turned against Moses and Aaron, accusing them of making their situation worse (Ex. 5:20-21).

❖ God's response (Exodus 5:22-6:8)

- Pharaoh gets angry with Moses. The people get angry with Moses. Moses... isn't angry, but he is dismayed, and he turns to God with his doubts: "Why are you afflicting this people? Why did you send me?" (Ex. 5:22).
- Let us examine God's response (Ex. 6:1-8):
 - (a) What I have done: I appeared to the prophets; I established my covenant with them; I promised to give them the land of Canaan; I have heard the groaning of the people; I have remembered my promise.
 - (b) What I will do: I will remove the oppression of the Egyptians from them; I will free them from slavery; I will display my power; I will make them my people; I will be their God; I will give them the land of Canaan.

❖ Moses' response (Exodus 6:9-13)

- After God's encouraging words, Moses spoke to the people again, but they did not listen (Ex. 6:9). God then asked him to speak to Pharaoh again to ask for Israel's freedom (Ex. 6:10-11).
- Moses refused, and again brandished his excuses: If my people will not listen to me, how will Pharaoh hear me, when I speak so evilly as I do? (Ex. 6:12).
- Moses was down, depressed, and disappointed. But, like other great figures who felt the same way he did—such as Asaph and Job—he did not give in to despair. His trust in God was stronger than his current feelings.
- When we go through situations of discouragement, let us make the words of Asaph our own (Ps. 73:23-26 NIV).

B The role of Moses and Aaron (Exodus 6:28-7:7)

- ❖ After the initial failures in Egypt, God had to remind Moses again of Aaron's role as his helper and spokesman (Ex. 7:1-2).
- ❖ On this occasion, he made a comparison with the role of prophets. They receive a message from God and transmit it to us. In this sense, Moses plays the role of God, and Aaron that of the prophet.
- ❖ As would later happen with many of the prophets, God warned that his message would not be heard, and that he would have to act with great power (Ex. 7:3).
- ❖ Like later prophets, Moses was to speak to the people and Pharaoh, "whether they listen or turn away, for they are very rebellious" (Ezek. 2:7). This is also true of us, for we are the audible voice of God on this earth.