

Exodus 4:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

Analysis

And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send (וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנָי שְׁלַח־נָא בְיַד־תְּשַׁלַּח)—Moses' ultimate objection: **send... by the hand of him whom thou wilt send**—essentially, "send anyone but me!" This is no longer legitimate concern about ability but willful resistance. Moses has exhausted objections (credibility, v. 1; eloquence, v. 10) and now simply refuses. The Hebrew phrase (בְּיַד־תְּשַׁלַּח, beyad-tishlach) is ambiguous, sometimes interpreted "send by the hand [of someone] you will send [in the future]," possibly alluding prophetically to the coming Messiah. Regardless, Moses' resistance provokes God's anger (v. 14)—patience has limits. God's sovereignty means He'll accomplish His purposes, with or without our enthusiastic cooperation, though He prefers willing servants.

Historical Context

This exchange shows Moses' profound transformation from the impulsive youth who killed the Egyptian (2:12) to the overly cautious shepherd afraid of leadership. Forty years of Midian humbled Moses, but now he needed balance—neither arrogant self-confidence nor paralyzing self-doubt, but God-dependent confidence. God's anger (v. 14) was pedagogical, not vindictive—teaching Moses that calling isn't negotiable.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. When have you responded to God's clear call with 'send someone else,' and what were the consequences?
2. How do you discern the difference between legitimate concerns about calling and sinful resistance to God's will?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	בִּי	אֲדֹנָי	תִּשְׁלַח:	אֵל
And he said	O	my Lord	of him whom thou wilt send	H4994
H559	H994	H136	H7971	

בְּיָד	תִּשְׁלַח:
I pray thee by the hand	of him whom thou wilt send
H3027	H7971

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 4:1 (References Lord): And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.

Jonah 1:3 (References Lord): But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.