



BLEATING ABOUT THE BUSH

Moses was considered to be THE great leader of the Children of Israel; but underneath it all, he was just an ordinary person like you or me, with ordinary fears and trepidation. 'But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no-one may boast...'

CAST Moses
 Voice of God

Moses is sitting on a rock, staff in hand, and bored. Various 'sheep' noises off stage. Looks at watch, decides its lunch time. Picks up his lunch box, and looks inside a sandwich.

Moses Oh no! Cold mutton again! As if I hadn't enough of sheep! All day long, sheep, sheep, sheep, seven days a week! Baaa-ring! Get it? That's the trouble with being in the wilderness, in a dead-end job with no prospects. You end up laughing at your own jokes! I've started talking to myself, too! I can't find anyone more intelligent! All you get from sheep is woolly remarks. Hah! I'll be hearing v-v-voices next! Still, what do you expect after 40 years? (starts eating sandwich Yeeeuuuugh! You'd never think I was once an Egyptian prince would you? Had to resign, extenuating circumstances... (shudders) Oooh, when I think back! I would have b-b-been b-b-betrayed by my people – outa jealousy! I think I'd rather be in d-d-desert with a load of sheep that in an Egyptian prison with a load of rats! or worse! (draws finger across throat. Takes another bite of sandwich, and throws the rest back in the lunch box)... When I think of the food in the Palace! Figs! Raisins. Honey cakes. V-v-v-ats of wine. Roast suckling pig! Mmmmmmm...oops (looks heavenward apologetically) Sorry! And the women! Cor! Always b-b-bathing themselves and anointing themselves with exotic perfumes. Mind you, if they'd had to work as hard as the Hebrew women, they wouldn't have l-looked so nice... or smelled so nice! You know, my wife was a l-

lovely little thing when I met her by the well. Fell for her in a big way, I did. Now look at her! Fat! And that mouth! Yak! Yak! Yak! It's a relief to come to work for a bit of peace! Have you read what she did at the end of Chapter 5? Oh, forgot, we haven't got that far, yet (gets up to count sheep). 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8, keep still while I count you! 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25... and 5 over there by the rock 4 under the bush and 5, 6, 7 in the hollow... (reckons up on fingers) Yea, that seems to be all of them... (sits down again and sighs heavily) Oh, God, I wish something exciting would h-h-happen... (sees burning bush) You'll have to do better than that! If I have seen one burning bush I've seen them all! I wish I had a shekel for every burning bush I've seen! hang on a minute, that's strange! It's burning, but it's not being burnt! I'd better go and see what's happening.

God (off stage) Moses, Moses! (Moses looks around to locate owner of voice) Moses!

Moses Oh, come off it, stop mucking about! A joke's a joke! Who is it? Reuel? Gershom? (brightens) Has your mother sent some more food?

God Moses!

Moses (realises source of voice, looks towards bush) I'm here!

God Do not come any closer, take off your shoes. The place where you are standing is holy (Moses takes them off!).

I am the God of your Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Moses hides his face) I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave-drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians...

Moses Oh, good, they will be pleased.

God ... And to bring them up, out of that land, into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey

Moses Ooooooh, it's such a long time since I tasted honey, can I go?

God Yes, go! I am sending you to the Pharaoh, to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.

Moses (Jaw drops. squeaks) But... Me.... God... Who am I? I mean I'm quite ha- ha-happy being a she-shepherd.

God I will certainly be with you. This will be a sign. When you've brought the people out of Egypt, you'll worship on this very mountain.

Moses (looks at the ground and shuffles his feet) Suppose I go to the Israelites and tell them 'The God of your Fathers has sent me to you' and they say 'What is His name?'... What shall I tell them?

God I AM WHO I AM! This is what you say to them – I AM has sent you.

Moses Oh...

God This is my name forever, the name for which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. Get the elders together, tell them I've watched their suffering, and I've promised to bring them to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, and all the Otherites, a land flowing with milk and honey. The elders will listen to you. Then you and the elders go to Pharaoh.

Tell him that the Lord God has met with you, and you need to go on a three-day hike into the desert, to make sacrifices to me. He won't let you go unless a mighty hand compels him, so I'll stretch out mine, and give them something to talk about. He'll let you go after that.

Moses But what if they don't b-b-believe me? Or listen to me? Or say 'The Lord wouldn't talk to you!'

God (sighs heavily) What is that in your hand?

Moses Err... a stick!

God Throw it on the ground.

Moses. (shrugs and throws it on the ground, out of sight of the audience. Hissing noises off. Moses leaps onto nearest 'rock') Aaaaargh! Take it away!

God Reach out your hand and take it by the tail.

Moses Oh, come on. I'm not daft! If anyone's stupid enough to pick up a snake, the tail's the last place they'd choose.

God So? PICK IT UP.

Moses I was afraid you'd say that! (picks up the stick and gapes in amazement).

God This is so that they will believe that the Lord the God of their Fathers has appeared to you. Put your hand in your pocket.

Moses It's not another snake, is it?

God Just do it!

Moses (he puts hand in pocket and brings it out with 'scabby' glove on it. Glove can be secured in position in pocket with sticky tape) Aaaaaargh! Oh, no!

God Put it back in your pocket. (he is only too glad to. Slips glove off, then is greatly relieved to find normal hand again) If they don't believe the first sign, they may believe the second. If they don't believe either, or listen to you, take some water from the Nile, and pour it onto the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground.

Moses Uuuuurgh. Um, God? I've never been el-el eloquent not ever, and especially since about five minutes ago. I am s-s-slow of s-speech and tongue.

God (sighs heavily again) What is this? The complaints department? You're talking to the manufacturer! Don't tell me what works and what doesn't!

Moses Oh Lord, here I am, send someone else to do it!

God Oh I give up! What about your brother Aaron, he can speak well. I have already told him to come and meet you and he'll be glad to see you. You tell him what to say – put the words into his mouth, and I'll help both of you to do and say the right things.

Moses oh, Jolly good (sets off).

God Moses?

Moses Yes?

God Aren't you forgetting something? The stick, man. You need the STICK to perform the MIRACLES!

Moses Oh. Right. Of course (he picks it up gingerly and exits).

God Sometimes I despair of the people I've made! Why are they so weak? It'd be easier to do the job without them! Still, I wouldn't have it any other way. How could they depend on Me if they weren't so weak? They have to learn that I can use whatever they've got to hand, the tools of their trade, to perform miracles! Still, bless them. Some of them will learn and some of them won't. Moses will learn, and will be an example to other believers, who will be encouraged when they read the books he's yet to write! What great things will be accomplished when they put their hands into Mine!