

## The true story of Moses (chapter 1)

Once upon a time, long long ago, in a far away land called Egypt, there lived a prince named Moses.

Most of us have heard about Moses and many have seen his life story depicted in the epic movie *The Ten Commandments* or in the animated film called *The Prince of Egypt*.

Moses was a noble individual of great character and compassion. That said there are some facts about Moses' life that are not well known and they are now going to be revealed.

You know, Moses had a loving, compassionate heart and a deep sense of justice. This of course got him into a heap of trouble when in a fit of righteous indignation; he murdered a cruel Egyptian task master who was horribly abusing an unfortunate Hebrew slave. As a result of this act Moses was advised to disappear for a while until things blew over. That night his escape was arranged. He was given the clothes of an Egyptian soldier to wear. He was issued a regular army horse, not the specially bred horse of an Egyptian prince and he was issued some supplies. Under the cover of darkness he slipped into the desert.

Moses had to adjust to an entirely new way of life. The desert life was a far cry from the privileged life of an Egyptian prince. He wasn't used to his horse and his horse wasn't too thrilled about him either. They had a problem; they were not familiar with each other. Moses left in such a hurry that he was not even told the horse's name or anything about his disposition. It did not take very long for Moses to run out of supplies for himself and his horse. The horse being instinctive was able to direct them both to an area where there was vegetation. When they arrived there, the horse unexpectedly bucked Moses and Moses fell to the ground hard. Dazed, suffering from hunger and dehydration and unable to distinguish what was or wasn't safe to eat, he mistakenly ate the fruit of a desert plant which had some "unique properties." Moses felt quite ill and then he began to hallucinate. Half stoned Moses began to wander around the desert, when suddenly and quite unexpectedly a desert shrub that appeared to be on fire attempted to engage him in a conversation.

Imagine if you will, that you were walking around the desert alone, hungry, perhaps disoriented when a shrub that appeared to be on fire, suddenly addressed you with a deep authoritative voice. It must have been a deep authoritative voice, because a voice that would have sounded like, perhaps, Pee Wee Herman might not be very convincing.

So Moses decided to play along with his hallucination and engage in a conversation with a small flaming desert shrub.

Here's how the actual conversation went:

The shrub calls out to Moses: *Moses!*

Moses startled and scared: Huh? Who said that?

Shrub: *I am the God of your Fathers*

Moses turning towards the shrub; "You're kidding me! You're a shrub in the middle of the desert that is on fire. Let me go find some water and I will save you from burning up.

"What a weird dream this is", Moses thought to himself.

*Shrub: Moses! I am not a burning shrub. I'm just playing one so you will not be overwhelmed by my presence. I am the God of your Fathers!! Really I'm serious!!*

Moses: You sure look like a shrub to me.

*Shrub: Jesus Christ!*

Moses: What??

Shrub: Forget it

*Shrub says: "Hello" in a Pee Wee Herman voice. Moses snapping to attention: Yes, God, bush thingy!*

*Shrub: Like I was saying I am the God of your Fathers and I have been hearing the cries of my people and I have been told I have to do something*

*about it. It's disturbing my neighbors and they are threatening to call the police.*

Moses: I did not know you had neighbors God of my Fathers. I guess the God of my Mothers has to live somewhere. So tell me what's your plan to quiet your people?

*Shrub: I am going to bring a series of calamities onto the nation of Egypt, until the Pharaoh changes his mind about how he is treating my people.*

Moses: Wow! That's rough! You are going to bring all kinds of destruction onto the entire nation of Egypt because of the pharaoh? That doesn't seem fair. Are you going to at least give the Pharaoh a chance to change his mind before you make the whole country suffer for his misdeeds?

*Shrub: Yes*

Moses: How are you going to do it?

*Shrub: I'm not you are!*

Moses: What the F---!! No way!! You're joking. Am I being punked? Where's Ashton Kutcher?

*Shrub: I'm only a shrub what can I do? I'm not suited for travel.*

Moses: Hey that's not fair!

*Shrub: It's good to be the shrub. Listen Moses the Pharaoh has hardened his heart and he has again increased the suffering of my people to what are now completely intolerable levels.*

Moses: Why would he do that?

*Shrub: "I dunno", beats me. (God starts whistling)*

Moses: Are you sure you didn't have anything to do with it?

*Shrub: No, I swear to Me, I didn't.*

Moses: Are you crossing your branches?

*Shrub: No!!!*

Moses: I swear I just saw you cross your two branches behind your trunk.

*Shrub: No I didn't!!!*

Moses: Ok Lord!! (Sarcastically)

*Shrub: Moses, the pharaoh has gone too far this time and he has now taken away my people's bathroom privileges.*

Moses: What?!! You're shitting me!! That's crazy.

*Shrub: You're telling me! This is why they are wailing so loudly. It's disturbing everybody up in heaven and because they are my people everyone is getting on my case to do something about the racket.*

*Shrub: Moses please go back to Egypt and tell the Pharaoh to "Let my people go or else!!"*

Moses: Who should I say told me?

*Shrub: Tell them "Elmer" sent you*

Moses: Elmer the shrub, c'mon Lord you can't be serious.

*Shrub: Yes, Elmer It's a Hebrew acronym Moses. Aleph, Mem, Raish – it stands for El Maleh Rachamim or God filled with compassion, for those who will be hearing this story in about 3500 years from today.*

Moses: So I am to tell the Pharaoh that Elmer the compassionate and remarkably slow and evenly burning desert shrub is going to destroy Egypt if the Pharaoh whose heart I suspect you hardened doesn't change his mind and restore bathroom privileges to the Hebrew slaves.

*Shrub: Yes and pharaoh will change his mind eventually.*

Moses: You mean you already know the outcome of all of this?

*Shrub: Didn't I tell you I was God?*

Moses: Some shrub! Unbelievable!

So Moses decided to adhere to the smoldering Shrub's request and he returned to Egypt. He obtained an audience with the Pharaoh and told him about his experience in the desert.

(This is the actual conversation)

Moses: Pharaoh I have met the God of the Hebrews.

Pharaoh: Yes who is it?

Moses: His name is Elmer and he is a smoldering shrub that lives in the desert.

Pharaoh: Jesus Christ Moses!!

Moses: Huh?

Pharaoh: Forget it. Moses are you OK? I think we sent you into the desert for too long.

Moses: I'm OK; Elmer the shrub gave me a message for you.

Pharaoh: What is it son?

Moses: Let my people go!!

Pharaoh: Go where?

Moses: He didn't say where.

Pharaoh: what?

Moses: The shrub is really pissed!

Pharaoh: You mean the burning shrub is burning mad?

Moses: (dejectedly) I guess you could say that.

Pharaoh: Moses, do you think it's easy to administer over these Hebrew slaves? There are a lot of them and they are a very argumentative bunch. They fight constantly between themselves and the only way we could keep them under control was to make things so difficult that they would not have the time or energy to fight with each other. But no matter how hard I made it, they still found the time to squabble. It was driving us all to exhaustion. Do you know how many pyramids we made them build that we didn't even need or want just to keep them occupied? Lots Moses, that's why the country ran out of bricks.

Moses: I never thought about it in this way.

Pharaoh: So tell me son, where does your shrub God want his people to go?

Moses: I don't know. He just said "Let them go"

Pharaoh: Moses, what do you really want from me?

Moses: Nothing! I'm just a messenger. I promised the shrub I would give you the message, that's all.

Anyway as you all know, things got very, very crazy in Egypt. As Elmer the smoldering shrub promised, Egypt was subjected to the miseries of the 10 plagues. The Hebrew slaves experiencing all of this chaos, started to consider whether perhaps there was a more suitable place to live where things were less chaotic than in Egypt. The 14 leaders of the Hebrews, the leaders of the 12 tribes, plus Joshua & Caleb approached Moses to ask him if there was a place they could live which was more hospitable than Egypt.

Moses not knowing what to say, and trying to avoid any further involvement with the Hebrews, considering what happened to him when he defended just one of them, thought of the most ridiculous thing he could think of and said to them: "Why don't you guys go back to Canaan" hoping the leaders would just leave him alone and never bother him again.

In response to Moses's suggestion the leaders say: Are you nuts? What have you been smoking in the desert Moses? We're Hebrews Moses!!

Don't give us any crazy stories about smoldering desert shrubs, like you told the Pharaoh. Mind you, we found that story so funny when we heard about it, that we totally pissed ourselves and that was quite a relief considering our situation.

If we go back to Canaan we would have to start all over again, besides someone else is living there. Moses, we are in the hundreds of thousands. How are the elderly, the sick and the very young ever going to be able to survive such a journey? Moses you are meshugeh!!

Moses: (playing along) the shrub said he would back you.

Elders: What!!! Are we being punked? Where's Ashton Kutcher?

Moses: The shrub is with you.

Elders: C'mon Moses, get serious, stop this crazy talk!!

Moses: The shrub created the chaos in Egypt.

Elders: A shrub did this? C'mon Moses we are Hebrews, We do not believe in smoldering shrubs.

Moses: Yes a special shrub named Elmer did this.

Elders: Jesus Christ Moses!

Moses: What?

Elders: Forget it.

The elders called a brief meeting. They thought Moses' idea was crazy but they didn't have anything better to offer the Hebrew slaves who were insistent that Egypt was simply too chaotic to live in. So they decided to take Moses up on his suggestion.

Elders: Ok, Moses we'll go.

Moses: What!?! (In total disbelief and shock)

Elders: We believe you, we're going, but we need your help. You're the only one who knows the desert. We don't know the desert like you do. Can you get us to Canaan? It's not that far, and then you can go back to Egypt.

Moses: OK, but only if you promise not to come back, even if you have a drought.

Elders: We promise.

As the story goes, the Hebrews leave Egypt under Moses' leadership and end up in the middle of the desert, very hot, very thirsty, pinned against the Red Sea with the furious Egyptian army bearing down on them. Everyone gets scared and a great outrage arises in the people. They start bitterly complaining to their 14 leaders and start calling for their heads. The leaders hastily convene emergency meeting with Moses.

“How in Gehenna did we end up in this mess? Who thought of this? He must pay with his life!!!

Suddenly a spirit of confusion enters into their tent and they cannot remember who led them into the desert. In fact no one could remember Moses' name except Moses and he wasn't saying anything. So they just stared at each other in a complete stupor.

“That was a freaking miracle, that shrub is truly awesome!” Moses thought to himself as he exited the tent.

As Moses walked away from the tent, he spoke to the shrub God and asked him: How did you do that? How did you make them forget their names while I remembered my name?

The shrub answered: Don't you know Moses?

Moses: I have no idea your Holy Shrubness.

Well Moses, “In the desert you can remember your name cause there ain't no one for (14)” to give you no pain”

Moses: Jesus Christ

God: Huh?

Moses: Forget it.