

Sent and Courageous

MOSES

CHARACTERS: VOG (Voice of God), Moses

PROPS: staff, leprous glove hidden inside Moses' robes.

SETTING: Bare stage (or add burning bush)

RUN TIME: 3 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Exodus 3 & 4

VOG: Moses! Moses!

MOSES: Here I am. (*Moses looks around, finally up. When he realizes it is God speaking, he falls to his knees.*)

VOG: I have 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. (*Moses gets to his feet*) I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.

MOSES: (*Stunned*) Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

VOG: I will be with you. But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. (*MOSES nods in agreement*) So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

MOSES: (*worried*) What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you'?

VOG: Throw your staff on the ground. (*MOSES does so and jumps back, frightened*)

MOSES: It turned into a snake!

VOG: Reach out your hand and take it by the tail. (*MOSES cautiously does so and after a couple of false starts, picks it back up*) This 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. Put your hand inside your cloak. (*MOSES does so, slips on leper glove, pulls hand out and his face looks horrified at his hand*)

MOSES: My skin is leprous, as white as snow.

VOG: Now put it back into your cloak. (*MOSES does and pulls glove off. When his hand comes out MOSES looks relieved it is back to normal*)

VOG: If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first sign, they may believe the second. But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. (*Moses starts shaking his head 'yes'*) The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground.

(Moses starts shaking his head 'no' as he realizes just what this will entail and how dangerous it will be to go to Pharaoh)

MOSES: 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.

VOG: *(commanding)* 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? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.

MOSES: *(pleading)* Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.

VOG: *(angered)* Your brother, Aaron the Levite, will help you. You speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do.

NARRATOR: Moses, at 80 years of age, obeyed though the task was not easy. He spoke God's words to both Pharaoh and his people for the next 40 years.

PROPHETS

CHARACTERS: VOG (voice of God), David, Nathan, Satan, Samuel, Narrator, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jonah, King

PROPS: crown for KING, sackcloth optional

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 5 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 1 Samuel 16, 2 Samuel 1, 4, 12; Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 3 & 4, Jonah 1 & 3

At rise: Samuel, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jonah are standing center stage, head bowed until they are called by God.

NARRATOR: The prophets had no easy task, warning people who did not want to hear their messages, people who could have them killed for preaching God's word.

VOG: Samuel, how long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.

SAMUEL: How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.

VOG: I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.

SAMUEL: My life is in your hands, Lord. *(SAMUEL bows and exits)*

NARRATOR: Samuel did what the Lord said.

NOTE TO DIRECTORS: During the somewhat lengthy monologues it is imperative NATHAN and/or DAVID reacts to the words he is hearing. Feel free to change the scripted reaction but be sure to substitute something that compels audience attention.

At rise: NATHAN is seated, studying a scroll. He is interrupted by a voice from above.

VOG: Nathan, go tell David he has sinned. *(NATHAN looks up, and then falls to his knees in reverence, head down, scroll abandoned to fall to the floor as well)* I anointed him king over Israel, and delivered him from the hand of Saul. *(NATHAN raises head, and nods in agreement. He swallows and appears concerned he is hearing God's voice)*

I gave him all Israel and Judah and if all this had been too little, I would have given him even more. But he has despised my word by doing evil. *(NATHAN covers his mouth, eyes widen)* He has murdered Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites to take his wife Bathsheba. *(NATHAN is shocked, horrified)* Go tell him the sword will never depart from his house, because he despised me. *(VOG thunders this final word and NATHAN cowers, covering his head with his hands)* Out of his own household I will bring calamity on David! *(NATHAN waits a beat, staggers to his feet, collects the scroll and sits, stunned and horrified at the situation)*

SATAN enters

SATAN: I don't think you want to deliver that news. Remember what happened when Saul died and that Amalekite brought the news?

NATHAN: *(still in shock)* David had the messenger killed; *(Coming out of shock)* But the Amalekite lied.

SATAN: But Baanah and Rekab did not lie when they brought David word of Saul's son Ish-Bosheth's death. What happened to them?

NATHAN: David had them executed *(defending David)* But they were murderers, slipping into his house and stabbing him in the stomach while he was lying on the bed in his bedroom. It was cold blooded murder. They deserved to die.

SATAN: *(seeming to agree but just trying a new tactic)* Murderers. You can never tell what they might do next. Oh! That's right. David is a murderer! He's obviously trying to cover up his sin. He already murdered Uriah. What makes you think he won't kill you to keep it all quiet?

NATHAN: He might. But I must do what the Lord commands, even if it means my own death.

SATAN: Send a letter from out of town.

NATHAN: No. I will obey and trust in God.

LIGHTS DOWN. OPTIONAL SONG: Trust and obey.

OPTIONAL SCENE 2 (If the emphasis is on this incident. Do not use scene 2 if the main thrust is speaking God's word no matter what)

At rise: David is playing his harp. Nathan enters and bows. David stops playing and motions for him to speak. DAVID needs to react facially and with body language throughout.

DAVID: What is it?

NATHAN: There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. *(DAVID nods, seems to recall times when he as a shepherd did the same things)* He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

DAVID: *(happily reminiscing)* This takes me back to the days of my youth.

NATHAN: Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.

DAVID springs from his seat, burning with anger) As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! *(Slams his hand into his fist)* He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity. *(Points and NATHAN then throws up his hands and turns away)*

NATHAN: You are the man! *(DAVID wheels back around to face NATHAN, still angry but confused as well)* This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives and all Israel and Judah. *(DAVID crosses his arms over his chest. His face is stern)* And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? *(DAVID's mouth drops open, he looks about ready to speak, to argue with NATHAN but Nathan takes a step closer to him and continues pointing at DAVID)*

You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. *(DAVID takes a step back in shock)* You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own. *(DAVID sinks in disbelief into his seat)*

This is what the Lord says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. *(DAVID bows his head in shame)* You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel. *(David is utterly grief stricken. Raises his face with tears in his eyes)*

DAVID: I have sinned against the Lord. *(DAVID puts his head into his hands)*

NATHAN: *(more gently)* The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. *(NATHAN goes to DAVID and places a hand on his shoulder)* But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die. *(DAVID is overcome with sorrow and sobs)*

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NARRATOR: Nathan stood by David his whole life, through all his difficulties and triumphs. His sons served as advisors to Solomon.

VOG: Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?

ISAIAH: Here am I. Send me!

VOG: Isaiah, go to the people of Israel, to reprimand them for their blindness and stupidity, and to warn them their ruin and destruction. (*ISAIAH bows and exits*)

NARRATOR: And Isaiah prophesied to the kings and people, to the good and the evil, in safety and in danger.

VOG: Ezekiel, Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak My words to them. Know that house of Israel will not want to listen to you because they do not want to listen to Me. (*SATAN enters, creeps up to EZEKIEL*)

SATAN: Don't bother. They are hardheaded and hardhearted.

VOG: Don't be afraid of them or discouraged by the look on their face. Tell them what I say whether they listen or not. You are my watchman. When you hear a word from My mouth, give them a warning from Me.

SATAN: This will be a thankless, dangerous task. Let someone else do it.

VOG: If I say to the wicked person, 'You will surely die,' but you do not warn him—you don't speak out to warn him about his wicked way in order to save his life—that wicked person will die for his iniquity. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood.

SATAN: That's not fair. Why should you be held responsible? Why waste your time with people who won't listen?

VOG: If you warn a wicked person and he does not turn from his wicked way, he will die for his wickedness, but you will have saved your life.

SATAN: Why should you be responsible for others? Let them take care of themselves.

VOG: Ezekiel, they will put ropes on you and bind you with them. But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you will say to them, 'This is what the Lord God says.' Let the one who listens, listen, and let the one who refuses, refuse—for they are a rebellious house.

SATAN: Tell God no. Let him find someone else for this unpleasant task.

EZEKIEL: I will go. I will speak your words and be your watchman. (*EZEKIEL exits. SATAN clenches his fists in frustration and marches over to JONAH*)

NARRATOR: Ezekiel spoke God's words for over 20 years in difficult circumstances.

VOG: Jonah! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.

SATAN: Nineveh is full of the Assyrians, your enemies and God a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love.

JONAH: True. God is a God who relents from sending calamity. I will not go. (*JONAH slinks away and SATAN grins with satisfaction*)

NARRATOR: Jonah had second thoughts after being swallowed by a huge fish for three days. Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time:

VOG: Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.

JONAH: I will obey. I will go. (*SATAN exits frustrated, slamming his fist into his palm, KING enters from opposite side of the stage. JONAH moves toward him and stops*)

NARRATOR: When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he took off his royal robes; (*KING does each of these as NARRATOR says them. NARRATOR will need to place his speaking to give KING time to comply*) covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust.

KING: Issue a proclamation that all people and even the animals are to fast in sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.

NARRATOR: When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

ESTHER

CHARACTERS: Narrator, Mordecai, Esther, King (non-speaking)

PROPS: Crown and scepter for KING

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 2 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Esther 3 and 4

At rise: Esther and Mordecai stand center stage.

NARRATOR: At the urging of the wicked Haman, King Xerxes signed a death warrant for all the Jews in Persia.

MORDECAI: Dispatches have been sent to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month.

ESTHER: How horrible.

MORDECAI: Go into the king's presence and beg for mercy. Plead with him for your people.

ESTHER: (*Fearful*) Everyone knows that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death.

MORDECAI: Unless...

ESTHER: (*ESTHER turns away from MORDECAI*) Unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. (*ESTHER turns back to MORDECAI, trying to convince him she cannot do this*) But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.

MORDECAI: Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. (*MORDECAI clutches her hands*) For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. (*ESTHER rests her head on their clasped hands*) And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?

ESTHER: (*Raising her head, tears in her eyes*) Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law.

(*resolved*) And if I perish, I perish. (*MORDECAI exits. KING enters and as NARRATOR speaks, ESTHER goes to him, kneels, KING extends scepter, she rises and speaks*)

NARR: Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions. Esther risked her life and approached the king. He listened to her and the Jews were saved from destruction.

New Testament

CHARACTERS: Narrator, VOG, Ananias, Saul, Satan, John, Voice 1, Tax Collector, Soldiers (one is non-speaking), Herod, Narrator, Jesus, 4 disciples (Ananias, Saul, Peter (non-speaking), Andrew (non-speaking)

PROPS: scroll, optional crown for Herod

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 6 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Matthew 10 & 11, Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 10, John 20:21, Acts 9, 26:16-18; 2 Timothy 1:7

NOTE TO DIRECTORS: During the somewhat lengthy monologues it is imperative SAUL (and even SATAN) reacts to the words he is hearing. Feel free to change the scripted reaction but be sure to substitute something that compels audience attention.

At rise: JOHN is speaking to a crowd of people. Have the actors on stage, cheat with their backs slightly to the audience so it appears the audience is part of the crowd. They should react to JOHN's message as he speaks.

JOHN: (*animated, moving around, using his hands to emphasize what he says*) You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

VOICE 1: What should we do then?

JOHN: Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.

TAX COLLECTOR: What should we tax collectors do?

JOHN: Don't collect any more than you are required to.

SOLDIER: And what should we soldiers do?

JOHN: Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.

VOICE 1: Are you the Messiah?

JOHN: No. I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

HEROD: What about Kings?

JOHN: King Herod, your marriage to Herodias, your brother's wife, and all the other evil things you have done, are an affront to God. Repent! Change your ways!

HEROD: Arrest this man! (*SOLDIERS reluctantly do, taking JOHN off stage; the rest of the characters follow. JESUS enters*)

NARRATOR: John was beheaded for speaking God's truth. (*NARRATOR exits*)

JESUS: John was a prophet and more than a prophet. Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (*DISCIPLES enter and kneel around Jesus. He looks at them and as he places a hand on each one, they bow their heads, rise and exit to follow his orders*)

As the Father has sent me, I am sending you, like sheep among wolves. Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. (*touches Peter and he leaves*) On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. (*touches SAUL and he leaves*) But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. (*touches ANANIAS and leaves*)

You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. (*ANDREW leaves. NARRATOR, ANANIAS and SAUL should not exit off stage, only to one side of the stage. ANANIAS is studying a scroll. He is interrupted by a voice from above.*)

VOG: Ananias!

ANANIAS: (*falling to his knees*) Yes, Lord.

VOG: Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.

ANANIAS: (*Raising his face to VOG*) Lord, I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. *SATAN enters and stands close to ANANIAS stage whispering to him.*

SATAN: He held the cloaks of those who stoned Stephen. He breathes out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples.

ANANIAS: (*TO VOG*) Saul has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.

SATAN: whether men or women, he'll take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

VOG: Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.

ANANIAS: (*To SATAN*) Get behind me Satan, for God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. (*to VOG*) Yes, Lord. I will obey. I will speak your words.

SATAN exits halfway then turns to watch. SAUL blindly gropes his way on stage on his hands and knees. ANANIAS goes to SAUL, kneels beside him and lays his hands on him

NARRATOR: Ananias went to Saul and restored his sight.

ANANIAS: (*Kneeling beside SAUL*) Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again (*SAUL blinks and reacts to the return of his vision*) and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus has appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see. (*SAUL nods slowly, unsure of what is happening*) He will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. (*ANANIAS helps SAUL to his feet. SAUL nods in agreement*) God sends you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, (*SAUL and ANANIAS both look at SATAN. SATAN balls up his fists in anger and stalks off stage*) so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in God.

SAUL: I will obey (*ANANIAS and SAUL exit*)

NARRATOR: Saul was baptized and became a speaker, missionary and writer for God. (*exits*)

JESUS: (*speaking directly to the audience*)

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.