

David Angus

MOSES and other stories from THE OLD TESTAMENT

Read by **Aled Jones**



1	Moses and other stories - introduction	2:37
2	The Creation of the World	4:31
3	Adam and Eve	3:31
4	One day, as Eve walked alone in the garden...	2:56
5	The snake had been right about one thing...	2:53
6	Cain and Abel	4:23
7	Noah's Ark	4:26
8	Now as you can imagine, all the people around...	3:33
9	At the Ark, Noah and his family gazed in wonder...	4:15
10	Abraham	3:07
11	The day that they actually reached the borders...	2:57
12	Well, Abraham stayed in that country...	2:53
13	He could not bear to tell Sara what he was going to do...	2:56
14	Joseph	2:41
15	One day the elder brothers were out tending their flocks...	2:27
16	When they arrived in Egypt...	3:05
17	One night Pharaoh had a dream that puzzled him greatly...	3:47
18	For the next seven years Joseph travelled...	4:04
20	When at last Joseph saw his young brother Benjamin...	4:17

21	Moses	2:47
22	One day a young Israelite woman named Jochebed...	1:56
23	Moses grew up in his mother's house...	4:26
24	One day, Moses was grazing his sheep...	3:59
25	The next day Moses and Aaron went to the royal palace...	2:41
26	God was true to His word...	4:20
27	All day they walked behind the pillar of dust...	3:38
28	So Moses, rejoicing led his people out of Egypt...	1:56
29	When God spoke to Moses at the top of the mountain...	2:50
30	The Israelites waited and waited for his return...	3:34
31	Samson and Delilah	3:40
32	Now it was known that Samson had fallen in love...	3:38
33	David and Goliath	3:04
34	Not one of the Israelites would accept the challenge...	3:12
35	Solomon	2:35
36	That very day there was a chance to test his new wisdom...	3:00
37	Daniel	3:09
38	Well, as soon as Daniel heard this decree...	2:21
39	Jonah and the Whale	3:19
40	He was woken by a terrible noise...	2:53
41	Jonah went into Nineveh, a great city...	4:10

Total time: 2:12:50

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Everywhere in the world, where men and women have lived together, and developed into tribes or nations, countries or societies, they have always sought to explain how the world was made and how they came to be there. These stories, or 'myths of creation', nearly always have a creator, or god, as the central figure of the story. From this personality all life is thought to spring, and the rules by which life must be governed, are then laid down by this Supreme Being.

The stories of the Old Testament, which is made up of thirty-nine books, are those of the ancient Jews, or Israelites, who lived in, and around the countries that today are called Palestine and Israel. The first five books are still the sacred texts of the Jewish religion. They call them the Torah, which means the 'teaching of the law'. Their names are *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*.

These books are also sacred to Islam and, since Jesus Christ was a Jew, and grew up in that faith, the Old Testament is also the

first part of 'The Holy Bible', which is the sacred scripture of Christianity. Christians call these first five books the Pentateuch, an ancient Greek word that means quite simply, 'five books'. Christianity, Islam and Judaism are three of the most widespread religions of the world. So it's fair to say that, given the huge spread of these beliefs among mankind, there have been very few stories told in the world's history more influential than these.

They are also very old. Historians believe that the oldest books of the Bible date from about 1450 BC and the stories themselves are certainly much more ancient. Before the art of writing, people must have learned them from their parents and then passed them on to their own children. Today, in the practice of the Jewish religion, children are still required to learn great tracts of the scriptures, and so this 'oral tradition' is preserved.

When a Jewish boy reaches the age of thirteen he becomes Bar Mitzvah, which

means a 'son of the commandment'. He is then considered an adult and on the Sabbath day, after his thirteenth birthday, he is invited to lead the prayers in the synagogue. A Jewish girl becomes Bat-Mitzvah, or 'daughter of the commandment' at the age of twelve.

Every Sabbath day Jewish congregations read from the Torah in the synagogue. It takes a year of weekly readings to complete the whole five books. The day when the last part is reached and *Genesis*, Chapter One, is due to be read again, is a feast day called 'Sinchat Torah' – 'The celebration of the Law'.

This idea of being obedient to God's laws, or 'commandments', is central to the stories of the Old Testament. After the creation of the earth, the next story, Adam and Eve, is the story of the first act of disobedience to God. By the time we reach the story of Noah, God is so disappointed with mankind, that he nearly wipes out the whole human race in a great flood. In the book of *Exodus*, God gives the Israelites laws, or 'commandments', so that henceforth they will know exactly how to behave. The 'covenant' between man and God is the promise to obey these commandments.

Because the Old Testament and the traditions of Judaism form the background to Christianity, the Pentateuch stories have always been read in Christian churches as well. The lands of Canaan, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Babylon, where the stories are set, lie in the Middle East. Many of the ideas of these ancient civilisations of the East, have, over time, become central to the way of life in the West.

For centuries in Europe, religious themes and stories were the inspiration, not only for laws and philosophies, but also for many of the greatest expressions of art. Music and poetry, painting and sculpture all served to bring these stories to the public in new and exciting ways. The Renaissance movement in Medieval Italy owed a great deal to the ideas and the art of the Ancient Greeks. But the subjects of Renaissance art were most frequently taken from the Bible.

Michelangelo's great work of sculpture 'The David' and his masterpiece of painting: the roof of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, with its famous image of God the Father giving living life to Adam, have become some of the most famous and iconic images in the world. The great masters Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, and Raphael all drew on the Old Testament for their work and the sculptor,

Donatello also made his own beautiful statue of the shepherd boy David.

In Medieval England, the origins of a great theatrical tradition began to take shape in the 'Mysteries', plays performed by working men on Feast days, and featuring many of the best of the Old Testament stories. Many of these plays are still performed today. The English Bible itself, in the 'approved' version, written in the reign of King James I, is considered by many people to be one of the finest examples of poetic literature in the English language. *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*, works of the great English poet John Milton, both take their inspiration from the Old Testament. In music there is Handel's wonderful *Zadok the Priest* and Verdi's opera *Nabucco*.

In our own time these stories continue to be told and re-told and to inspire new music and entertainment. One of the most popular has been the successful musical by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Hollywood also has explored these themes with blockbuster films like *The Ten Commandments* and more recently the popular children's cartoons of the stories of Moses: *Prince of Egypt* and *Joseph: Joseph*,

King of Dreams produced by the film makers DreamWorks.

Many people believe these stories to be inspired directly by God and to be the actual truth. Others see them as metaphors: examples that can help us to understand difficult questions. Whatever one's point of view, they continue to fascinate, and to inspire artists of all kinds to find new ways in which to tell them.

Notes by David Angus

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

BEETHOVEN OVERTURES VOLUME 1	8.550072
Slovak PO/Stephen Gunzenhauser	

BEETHOVEN OVERTURES VOLUME 2	8.553431
Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia/Béla Drahos	

The music was programmed by Sarah Butcher

Cover Picture: Infant Moses found in the Nile,
courtesy Mary Evans Picture Library/Douglas McCarthy

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Here are the main stories from the Old Testament: *Adam and Eve*, *Noah's Ark*, *Abraham and Isaac*, *Cain and Abel*, *Moses*, the *Ten Commandments*, *David and Goliath*, *Jonah and the Whale*, *Daniel in the Lion's Den* and many more. In these days when religion plays a diminishing role, it is important that we know the stories of the Bible not least because they appear again and again in art, literature, drama, music and even in films and computer games!



Aled Jones is the presenter of the Sunday breakfast show on Classic FM and Sunday morning interview programme on BBC Radio Wales. On television, he is one of the main presenters of BBC One's *Songs of Praise* and also hosts the BBC One Wales arts programme *On Show*. As a boy soprano, he sold more than six million records worldwide. In 2002, he returned to performing, this time as a baritone. His albums *Aled* and *Higher* have each sold more than 300,000 copies and his most recent album is *New Horizons*. His other recordings for Naxos Audiobooks include *The Story of Classical Music*.

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