

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
From *YouthWorker Journal* and YouthWorker.com

Exodus: Gods and Kings

The Movie Is Not Quite True to the Bible. Is that a Bad Thing?

By Paul Asay

What Happened:

Exodus: Gods and Kings was released this past weekend and went straight to the top of the box office, earning \$24.5 million. Given that the movie cost an estimated \$140 million, it may have a hard time recuperating its cost.

The movie has some great special effects and an outstanding cast led by Academy Award-winning actor Christian Bale, but the movie wasn't received well by critics and has been, ahem, plagued with controversy.

Part of the problem may be the liberties Director Ridley Scott took with the biblical story. Many of the plagues God visits upon the Egyptians may have a natural explanation in Scott's telling; Moses leads a guerilla war against their Egyptian overlords; and God in *Exodus* is portrayed as a petulant 11-year-old boy.

"With its skeptical take on faith, religion and God's always sovereign and sometimes supernatural hand in history, 20th Century Fox's highly anticipated release of *Exodus: Gods and Kings*...likely will disappoint faith audiences," according to *Faith Driven Consumer*. "The film will trouble those who take the biblical story about Moses and the miraculous deliverance of the Hebrews from 400 years of slavery in Egypt seriously."

It's not all negative, though. *Exodus* also gives moviegoers a Moses who learns to trust in God (even if God appears as a little boy) and leads His people to freedom. Pharaoh thunders, "I am a god!" and is punished for his arrogance.

Talk About It:

As do most movies, *Exodus: Gods and Kings* has its plusses and minuses, and it's largely up to the audience to determine whether one side outweighs the other. When you compare it with other biblical movies this year, it's not as accurate as *Son of God* but probably more accurate than the rock monsters in *Noah*.

Have you seen *Exodus: Gods and Kings*? Are you planning to see the film? How important is biblical accuracy to you when it comes to biblically based movies? Do you think movie makers should stick with the original script, or is it OK if they put their own spin on the story?

What do you think will be the impact of *Exodus* on moviegoers? Will it make non-Christians think about faith? Will it shake the beliefs of believers? Will it vanish without much impact at all?

What the Bible Says:

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

“You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you” (Deut. 4:2).

Paul Asay has written for The Washington Post, Christianity Today, Beliefnet.com and The (Colorado Springs) Gazette. He writes about culture for PluggedIn and wrote the Batman book God on the Streets of Gotham (Tyndale). He recently collaborated with Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family, on his book The Good Dad. He lives in Colorado Springs with wife, Wendy, and his two children. Check out his entertainment blog at Patheos.com/blogs/WatchingGod or follow him on Twitter @AsayPaul.