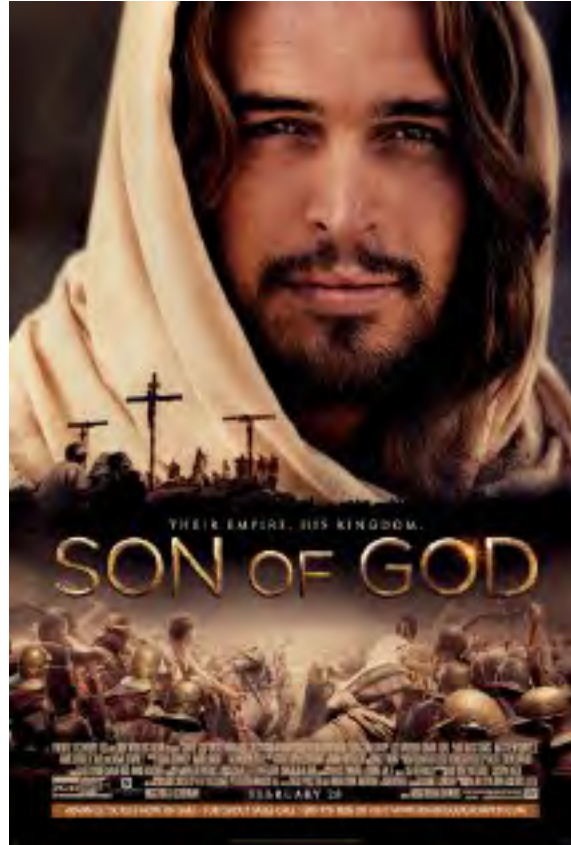


The Movie “Son of God” – an Amateur Review¹ – 11 March 2014, Anno Domini (In the Year of our Lord)



I had the opportunity to go to the theater last weekend at the behest of neighbors for the first time in 20+ years. This fact should alert you to the fact that I am neither a fan, nor a connoisseur of the motion picture industry. In fact, I consider it to have become a tool of the Fallen Angel of Eden. There are, I'll admit, some inspirational movies being produced that are exceptional – but they are exceptional for their rarity as well as their quality.

I will preface my review of the movie at hand (Son of God) by saying that I found the cinematography to have been wonderfully developed and tastefully done. I will add that perhaps 60% of the script was faithful to scripture. But what of the other 40%. Is a producer not allowed certain artistic liberties to add or detract certain events to add appeal to a historical movie? Perhaps so if this were a historical movie depicting the rise and fall of the Roman Empire; but this was no such movie. This movie purports to be a faithful rendering of the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ. In approaching such a daunting work, should one not do so with a high degree of reverence of the very Word of God coupled with a fear of falling short of that duty?

The script took greater liberties with the very Words of Jesus Christ than the most eccentric and man-centered modern Bible version on the market today. It is, therefore, my view that the movie is a poison to young minds, and older Christians

¹ This review is only amateur in the sense the writer is unpaid. Jerry Ogles is not just the Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Orthodox Church, but he is a biblical scholar, a warrior true to God and Country, as well as a pretty good man, father and an excellent communicator. He would downplay this, but it is truth.

whose Bible background is informed by liberal theology and lacking in depth of knowledge. It would be a blessing for a thirsty soul to be given a large glass that is 60% full of pure water, but it would be murder to provide that same thirsty soul with the same water that had been filled with 40% deadly poison. That represents the danger of such a production as "Son of God."

You may ask for specifics, and I will provide some; however, I found it impossible to remember them all and I did not go to the viewing prepared to take notes. However, I will address those shortcomings and outright falsehoods of the movie as I recall them.

The Miracle of the Man stricken with the Palsy. Referring to the account given of the event, we learn that men brought the paralytic to Christ borne on a stretcher. They made a hole in the roof in order by-pass the multitudes at the door of his dwelling. Jesus pronounced that the man's sins were forgiven which provoked the scribes who, rightfully, knew that only God could forgive sins – but they knew not that Christ was God. To drive His point home, Jesus commanded the paralytic to rise up and walk. *"I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."* (Mark 2:11-12) I have checked more than 15 other Bible versions (including the Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims) and all render essentially the same fact that the man immediately arose, took up his bed, and hurried home. In the movie, the man seems unable to rise on his own strength. Instead, Jesus takes him by the hands and lifts the man up on weak and shaky legs. Why was the wonder of this miracle so reduced to an apparent partial healing?

The First Draught of Fishes: In the early ministry of Christ, we read in Luke 5 of Jesus performing a miracle that is one of natural setting – the first great draught of fishes found in Luke 5: *" . . . he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. 6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. 7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken"* (Luke 5:4-9) In the movie, there was ONLY Jesus and Peter in the ship. The net did not break. There were several draughts caught instead on ONE large draught. No other ship was hailed to assist. Peter does not fall at the feet of Jesus. Would it not have been better to give the more glorious and accurate account of the miracle than such a watered-down version? Additionally, the miracle occurred after Jesus had asked Peter to push out from shore and he preached from Peter's ship to the multitudes ashore. This, too, was expunged from the Word in this movie.

The Raising of Lazarus: We read of this most amazing and awe-inspiring of miracles in John 11: *"43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."* (John 11:43-44) Please observe the glorious symbolism presented in these two verses. 1) Jesus stood without the tomb and called unto Lazarus, *"Come forth!"* No man, living or dead, can resist the Voice of the Lord in power.

Lazarus had been dead, but now what happens? HE COMES FORTH! How does he come forth? He comes forth bound head and foot with the tight wrappings of grave clothes. He had been bound by death just as the living dead (sinners) are bound head and foot by sin. He is blinded, just as the living dead of Ephesians 2 are blinded by sin. Jesus commands the onlookers to *"Loose him and let him go"* (set him free!). That is precisely what Jesus came to do: ". . . LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isaiah 61:1) This great miracle is reduced to the minimum as Jesus is falsely depicted entering the tomb, caressing the body of Lazarus a bit, then going to the head of Lazarus, rubbing his brow, then kissing the very top of his head – Benny Hinn style. Lazarus groggily opens his eyes at Jesus command, and must be helped up from the bier by the hands of Jesus under his shoulder. He wears no grave clothes or bindings, but a loose-fitting gown. It took far longer to stage this far-flung fantasy than it would have taken to accurately portray the greater and more glorious truth as described in the Bible. I am fairly certain that this is adding to, and taking away, from the very Words of God in the Bible. According to the Word of God, this will incur a curse and not a blessing when one claims to be relating the actual events of the Bible falsely.

Personalities Inaccurately Portrayed: **Judas** comes across as a bungling, but semi-innocent victim of circumstances. Of course, Jesus says that Judas was a devil and it would have been better for him that if he had never been born. Pontius Pilate is portrayed in a far worse light than Christ Himself judged him. Pilate diligently sought to free Jesus and pronounced him innocent. But he was a cowering politician who had no courage of principle. The movie depicts him as blood-thirsty and cruel. The wife of Pilate is shown in a greater role than the Bible gives her, and, by the way, so is Mary Magdalene. She is shown at EVERY place the disciples are gathered. In Matthew and Luke, we are told that Jesus left his disciples and took Peter, James and John near to His place of prayer in the Garden at Gethsemane. *"Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.* (Matt 26:36-38) Unfortunately, the movie feels the burden to include Mary Magdalene as one of those trusted disciples to whom Christ had said, *"Watch and Wait!"* This is brazen political correctness at the expense of God's Word!

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is shown in greater role than she actually performed – always present to support her Son (which she did not do while He was an itinerant preacher). She rushes to Jesus to comfort Him and wipe His brow as He staggers under the weight of the cross on the Via Dolorosa. On the cross, when Jesus beheld his mother, He spoke *"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!"* (John 19:26) In the movie, Jesus calls her **mother**. This is, perhaps, to remind us of the Roman heresy that Mary is Queen of Heaven and Mother of us all.

The Crucifixion: As Christ is being nailed to the cross, the movie shows the Passover Lamb being sacrificed in the Temple. This is totally un-factual. The Passover Lamb was traditionally and legally sacrificed at the ninth hour (3 PM) prior to the Passover observance. It was precisely the ninth hour that Jesus *"gave up the Ghost."* This is very symbolic of Christ as our Passover Lamb slain for us. Why change that symbology by reversing the time of sacrifice? At the death of Christ, the movie depicts no Centurion pronouncing, *"Truly, this was the Son of God."* (Matt 27:54 & Mark

15:39) Instead, there is only an awkward silence. What was the logic in leaving this testimony of the Centurion out? At the moment of Christ's death there happened an earthquake. According to Scripture: *"And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent"* (Matt 27:51, Mark 15:38) This is symbolic of a direct access being made available for all who believe to the Throne of Grace. The Veil separated the Holy of Holies from all but the High Priest; but our High Priest has become our Lord Jesus Christ. The Veil was torn from "top to bottom" to symbolize the Divine Will to make the access available. In the movie, the veil merely falls from its setting. Why this change?

At the Garden Tomb: According to the Gospel of St John: *"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher."* (John 20:1) In the movie, Mary comes in the heat of the day. She sees no angels, but ENTERS the tomb (contrary to scripture) and then, in her sorrow, sees Jesus standing at the entrance of the tomb. There are no profuse tears of remorse to blind her eyes, yet she at first does not recognize Jesus. Why was the moving and beautiful moments so changed? The stone was not rolled away, by the way, but busted to pieces.

The changes must have gone unnoticed, or appeared quite minor, by those in the audience of the theater. No one seemed to comment on the changes, but was deeply moved by emotion. It is good to feel an emotional lift when truth is exalted, but emotion for the sake of emotion leads to grievous error. As Jesus counseled the Woman who came for water at the Well Jacob had made; *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:24)

I came to this movie with the guarded hope that its producers, though making a brief accounting of the Life of Christ, would have at least remained faithful to Scripture in the things that they did present. Unfortunately, I was deeply disappointed. Truth was sacrificed for emotion and wrong doctrine.

I present these points simply as the observations of a man called to preach the Gospel of Christ. I do not say that any that go to such a movie is committing sin, or being disloyal to Christ, but I hope these points I raise may be helpful in dispelling the influences of egregious error contained in this motion picture.