

ABC's 'Of Kings and Prophets' to Be Biblical Version of 'Game of Thrones'

This March, ABC is set to premiere *Of Kings and Prophets*, based of the books of 1 and 2 Samuel.

The catch? It's probably not geared toward your average Christian audience.

"We've sought to make the show modern ... This is a non-dragon version of *Game of Thrones*," executive producer Chris Brancato tells *Entertainment Weekly*.

For those who aren't familiar with HBO's *GoT*, that means *Of Kings and Prophets* is "suspenseful. It's extraordinarily violent. It's sexual. And it's a power struggle between two men. We don't view this as a revisionist history nor do we view it as a literal translation," Brancato says.

The show was originally scheduled to premiere last fall, but ABC pushed it to spring and re-filmed the pilot.

Now, the stories of King Saul and David will be told in a made-for-TV format.

"When you're talking about David, you're talking about a man who is revered by almost half the population of this planet," executive producer Reza Aslan tells *EW*.

"He is the model of kingship. ... His blood courses through the veins of Jesus Christ. And yet—and I think this is what makes him so fascinating—he's deeply flawed. He's vain. He's vengeful. He's lustful. He kills his friends and betrays his wives, and he had a lot of wives. But he also loves God, and God loves him. In fact he's the only character in the entire Bible that God gives a nickname to. God calls him 'The

Beloved.’ And I think it’s precisely that complexity of his character that will draw audiences to him, whether it’s a faith-based audience or not.”

Show creators told *Variety* they are wrestling with the semantics of what to—and what not to—show in regards to sex scenes.

Co-creator Adam Cooper told the magazine showrunners are considering an online version, which will have “more leeway.”

“For instance, how much skin or sexuality we can show? I think we can show it in its pure form, but I think we’re really talking about subtle distinctions between online and broadcast. It’s not like in the online version we’re going to be showing scenes with people’s heads being hacked off,” Cooper says.

According to ABC, the show is set to star Ray Winstone as King Saul, Olly Rix as David, Mohammad Bakri as Samuel, Simone Kessell as Queen Ahinoam, Nathaniel Parker as King Achish, Haaz Sleiman as Jonathan, James Floyd as Ishbaal, Maisie Richardson-Sellers as Michal, Jeanine Mason as Merav and David Walmsley as Joab.