

Bible Defender Finds Plenty of Problems With 'Young Messiah'

Bible scholars know little about the early life of Jesus, but that hasn't stopped filmmakers from blending fact with fiction. The upcoming March 11 release of *The Young Messiah* is no exception, yet it's unfair to paint all productions with this brush.

The Jesus Film and some portions of *Jesus of Nazareth* accurately depict the angelic visitation to Mary as well as Jesus' three-day temple court experience (Luke 2:41-50). After Jerusalem, the Bible tells us little about Jesus until the age of 30 (Luke 2:51-52).

The Young Messiah, based upon Anne Rice's novel *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt*, is a fictional account of Jesus' life (age 7), the uncovering of secrets about his Messianic identity and his re-introduction into Israeli society.

But there are obvious scriptural, archaeological and chronological problems one must address. It is known, according to the Jewish historian Josephus, that King Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. and that Jesus was born no earlier than 6 B.C.

Prior to his death, the paranoid Herod orders the "Massacre of the Innocents" (Matt. 2:13-18) targeting males 2 years old and younger in Bethlehem and surrounding areas. Jesus' family flees to Egypt and then are told to return to Israel after the king's death via dreams (Matt. 2:13, 19-20). This would place Jesus at age 2 or less, not 7.

In addition to bad chronology, other cinematic Bible myths may include:

- Jesus accidentally killing a bully and resurrecting him.
- Joseph's prior marriage and son before Jesus' birth.
- Joseph's nonsexual, emotionally cold relationship with Mary (contradicts Mark 6:3, Matt. 13:55-56).
- The family struggle in telling Jesus about his true Messianic identity.
- Jesus and his family are almost trampled in Jerusalem during a Passover riot.
- Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, is killed by Roman soldiers.

Will you go see *The Young Messiah* even if it's fiction?

Rick Dack is founder and director of *Defending the Bible Int'l*, a ministry that conducts educational, apologetic classes for churches and faith-based schools.