

'Exodus' Movie Depicts God as 'Willful Child,' Reports NYT

As 2014's "Year of the Bible Movie" enters its final phase—and the run-up to this month's release of Ridley Scott's highly anticipated film *EXODUS: Gods and Kings*—Faith Driven Consumer continues to measure the success of Hollywood films courting faith-driven audiences.

Faith Driven Consumer recently released the first wave of results from an extensive new national survey, conducted by partner research firm American Insights, detailing what *Exodus* needs to do to be successful with both its core Faith Driven Consumer (17 percent of U.S. adult population) and broader Christian (77 percent of U.S. adult population) audiences.

In October, *The Hollywood Reporter* detailed concerns over *Exodus* in the wake of controversial comments by actor Christian Bale—who plays Moses in the film—in which he characterized Moses as both "barbaric" and "schizophrenic." Another story by *ABC News* on Nov. 25 quoted Bale as saying "What would happen to Moses if he arrived today? Drones would be sent out after him, right?"

Now, *The New York Times* is reporting that God appears in *Exodus* as a "willful" 11-year-old boy who is "*Children of the Corn* terrifying." Faith Driven Consumer founder Chris Stone offers his reaction to this revelation by the *NYT*.

"The portrayal of God as a willful, angry and petulant child in *Exodus* will be a deal breaker for most people of faith around the world. Christians, Jews and Muslims alike see this story as foundational and will find this false portrayal and image of God to be deeply incompatible both with Scripture and their deeply held beliefs," Stone says.

"Ridley Scott is an established director who can essentially make whatever film he wants, but when he creates a film based on a pivotal Biblical story and renders it significantly

unrecognizable, the marketplace will respond negatively. *Noah*—a \$125 million epic that failed to be faithful—left untold millions on the table. Rather than learning from Darren Aronofsky's mistake, it seems that Mr. Scott, with his own larger, \$200 million epic, has elected to double down.

"As a brand strategist, viewing it from the consumer's perspective, I find many of Scott's choices to be inconsistent with what the market wants. This is especially true given the significant untapped demand for these types of films—this one in particular. Evidently the filmmakers have a goal other than maximizing the film's appeal and its monetary success. The decision to cast an 11-year-old boy to play God, in and of itself, is likely to have a significant impact on *Exodus*' overall box office returns."