

So-Called 'Bible-Based' TV Show Sends All the Wrong Messages

If you're a film major and Bible history nerd, you might have become giddy with excitement when learning that ABC picked up a biblical drama series that will premier in the fall. The show, called *Of Kings and Prophets*, follows the fateful lives of King Saul, the future King David and the prophet Samuel. What could be better than watching David, the mighty warrior and man after God's own heart, duke it out with bears and lions, defeat a 9-foot-tall giant with a shepherd's sling, evade several assassination attempts (each ordered by his jealous king), and lead 600 soldiers in a campaign to subdue Israel's enemies?

ABC's network chief, Paul Lee, described *Of Kings and Prophets* as having, "all the intrigue and sex and power struggles of the real Bible." If the producers' intent in creating the trailer was to highlight those three provocative motifs, then they certainly succeeded; in just over two minutes, viewers will be surprised by the in-your-face sexual content that noticeably overshadowed any biblical themes of covenantal promises, God's sovereignty, divine calling, and the personal and national effects of sin. If any of the latter themes are in this TV series, then they grossly misunderstand the Christian audience and how to market to the majority of America that goes to church every week.

The trailer, which initially paints David as an innocent, God-fearing young man, implies that he later has what looks to be a romantic liaison with the king's wife. As for the king, he clearly has illicit affairs of his own. It's unclear whether or not *Of Kings and Prophets* will follow the more biblically faithful (yet also controversial to some) footsteps of *The*

Bible miniseries or its successful big-screen spin-off, *Son of God*. Based on the trailer alone, it's evident that the network marketers are not at all appealing to the values and principles of Christian audiences, much less seeking to provide tasteful, family-friendly viewing through which children and teens can see legendary Sunday school lessons come to life.

Of course, the "real Bible," to use Mr. Lee's phrase, and the Old Testament in particular, is filled with violence and examples of the Lord's wrath and judgment being unleashed on godless nations and individuals. Yes, sex and other R-rated scenarios come up more times than our Sunday school teachers reveal—most famously, David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba. However, gore and scandal shouldn't be glorified or used to entice and entertain, which is, precisely what the trailer does, boldly flashing images of seduction and scantily clad women.

In April of last year, MOVIEGUIDE® cited a Bible Gateway poll which asked, "Should Hollywood be making Bible-based movies?"

Sixty percent answered that Hollywood adaptations of Bible stories are acceptable only if they stick strictly to the Bible's original details. Twenty-eight percent of respondents indicated they think Bible stories are acceptable in cinemas and that artistic license can be utilized to tell them. Finally, about 11 percent believe that biblical material should never leap from page to screen. It is our prayer that one day, the wishes of that overwhelming majority will be honored with the production of more wholesome television series that reflect and respect Judeo-Christian values.

Of Kings and Prophets premieres later this year, and it's worth noting that trailers notoriously misrepresent both the storyteller's vision and the audience it's trying to reach. However, the trailer raises enough concerns. Families should definitely read the full Movieguide® content and worldview

review before tuning in.

Whether you have decided to oppose, support or respond apathetically to *Of Kings and Prophets*, MOVIEGUIDE® also encourages everyone to dedicate some time to revisit the true, Holy Spirit-inspired Old Testament accounts (see the books of Samuel, 1 Kings and 1 Chronicles) so that you will, “Always be ready to give an answer to every man who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).

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