

'The Bible' Ratings Success Proves Wholesome TV Critics Wrong

Why is *The Bible* TV miniseries so successful? There are several statistics to consider, says Mitch Land, dean of the School of Communication & the Arts at Regent University, including:

- *The Bible's* ratings not only did well on cable, but across several media platforms (the March 10 program drew more viewers than anything broadcast on NBC during the entire week).
- *The Washington Times* reports that the premiere attracted 13.1 million viewers, cable's biggest number for the year, which outdid the ratings for both of the week's installments of *American Idol*.
- Its premiere night was 's best day ever.

"I'm not surprised by the lukewarm reaction of critics," Land says. "What matters to producers and to television executives are ratings, because ratings lead to profit. This series proves that religious content, produced right, will attract an audience, in fact a huge audience."

It's obvious the American viewing audience has a hunger for such programming and could care less about what the critics think, says Dr. Land, who points out that *The Bible* averaged 5 million adults aged 18-49, and 5.6 million adults aged 25-54.

Why does *The Bible* appeal to so many viewers? "The message of the Bible reaches into the very soul and spirit of humankind because its progressive revelation is the greatest story ever told," Land answers.

Land also points out that even well-known stars were “tweeting” positive remarks about the series, among them, *Glee* star Jane Lynch, singer Christina Aguilera, rapper P. Diddy, singer Nick Lachey, the Duchess of York Sarah Ferguson, and singer Shakira.

As to the present controversy revolving around the series’ Satan character resembling President Obama, Land says: “I find it astounding and ludicrous, that the buzz is over the actor who plays Satan in the miniseries, Mohamen Mehdi Ouazanni, and that he looks like President Obama. Perhaps the hype will drive even more viewers to the remaining episodes, which will conclude on Easter Sunday.”

Land, who has watched every episode carefully, finds the series’ thematic treatment to be biblical as well as clear that God works directly through his prophets, anointed—though flawed—kings, and even common folks such as Mary and Joseph to reach all of us, individually, to establish a relationship with Him.

“Indeed, the series presents an authentic view of Scripture rather than the polished and sterilized films of the past,” Land notes. “King David’s palace is grungy and crude. The alleyways and streets of Jerusalem are dusty and dry as they surely were in those days. Even the hands of the warriors appear calloused, rough and stained.”