

‘The God Man’: A New Jesus Film for a New Generation

I remember the day clearly. It was a beautiful Spring day, the sun was shining and I had a coffee in my hand as I shuffled out to my deck with a combination of excitement and terror. I was about to do something I hadn't done in six years.

I was going to jump back into the deep end of trying to film an invisible God, and I wasn't sure I could do it anymore. On top of that, I was going to try to make a film about Jesus in an attempt to show who He truly was to the world. This was a movie I could not screw up.

The last film I released was "Holy Ghost Reborn," in 2015. I filmed two movies, "Holy Ghost" and "Holy Ghost Reborn" together under the idea of attempting to make a film about the Holy Spirit that was, as much as possible, completely led by the Holy Spirit. The entire process stretched me to the breaking point. I remember being at the southern-most tip of South Africa as we filmed the final shot for the movies, and immediately after I said, "That's a wrap," I burst into tears and sobbed for about 10 minutes. The relief of having completed something so risky simply overtook me.

After those films I turned my attention to developing two television shows, "Adventures with God" and "Questions with God," and completed 80 episodes. I also helped produce Will Hacker's film, "Finger of God 2," so I was keeping myself busy for sure. But time moves quickly, and before I knew it six years had passed since I'd released a movie of my own, and eight years had passed since I had sat in the director's chair.

As I sipped my cup of coffee that morning, I had serious reservations that I could still hear that still, small voice

that had guided my films for so long.

I had an impression that the first place I should film was Alaska. OK, great. But where in Alaska? It's a pretty big state! I pulled up a map and said a simple prayer for God to show me where to go film.

I had done this once before while making "Holy Ghost," and God had highlighted Monaco (which turned out to be a beautiful part of that film), so I remembered what that moment had felt like.

As I searched around the map of Alaska, I would look at little towns and ask God, "How about here?" Everywhere I looked felt "cold" (it's the best way I can describe it) and I started to feel kind of stupid. But then I saw a very small town and my heart skipped a beat. Hope. It was an interesting name for a town for sure, but was what I was feeling from God or of my own making? I asked God to make it abundantly clear if that's where I was supposed to film.

That night I had a vivid dream. I was somewhere in the Arctic and I was with a film crew staring out at a body of water that contained a giant ice glacier. I knew that I had to get to that glacier to film. We walked down to the water's edge and I plunged into the water. As it reached my chest, I woke up. And just like that I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was supposed to film in Hope.

Of course, this was easier said than done. This was a tiny town with maybe 150 people, and the closest hotel was an hour drive away. Hardly ideal for a place I'd be filming at for a week. I prayed again for God to make a way if this was truly what He wanted. While making films like these, there's no point in trying to push something through on your own.

Fast forward to my interview with Rabbi Jason Sobel. While chatting in-between the interview, I learned that his assistant was actually from Alaska and had been to Hope

before. OK, interesting.

I asked if he knew anyone who was familiar with the town, and he said yes, in fact, he knew someone. I got her number and gave her a call and told her about my film. She said she knew the perfect person for me to reach out to. This woman owned one of the only restaurants in Hope, and also owned a series of small cottages that would be able to house me and my crew while we were there.

Again, interesting. I called her friend, told her what I was doing, and she admitted that normally she wouldn't be open to something like this, but she felt God's presence all over our conversation, so she'd do anything she could to help us out.

When I hung up the phone, I could only laugh. And I was forcefully reminded that God doesn't need much to work through someone. He simply needs a willing heart, someone who will say "yes" to Him even if they don't feel up to the task. Moses begged God to use someone else, yet he ultimately became one of the greatest friends of God in human history.

Matthew was a tax collector, despised by everyone, but he didn't hesitate when Jesus asked him to follow Him. Jonah said yes only after he was swallowed by a giant fish, and even then his yes was half-hearted. Yet God still used him to save an entire city from destruction. Jesus wasn't joking when he said that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. But picking up that yoke is often the most terrifying thing imaginable because we all know we're screw ups who probably aren't qualified for whatever God is asking us to do. But that's really the point.

"The God Man" is going to be the first of my films to be released in theaters across the country for one night only on June 6. It is the final film in a 15-year saga that began with "Finger of God."

This one means something different. Jesus is the answer to all

the world's problems, yet Christianity is under major assault in our culture right now.

We live in a world that views what is good as evil, and what is evil as good. Claiming that Jesus is the only way to God is now considered hate speech. Taking a firm, moral stand on popular issues invites vitriol and sometimes even violence from your opponents. In essence, the whole world seems to have gone mad.

Yet Jesus remains the same. He's not going to change, and He's not going anywhere. He still died for a world that hates Him, and He still offers a scandalous grace for salvation that, these days, feels even more scandalous than ever.

✖ And here I am, a small voice in the wider world, about to release a film that is pronounced in its simplicity. Jesus is the Son of God. He died for your sins, was resurrected from the dead and offers you not just salvation but also peace in a volatile world. Will people respond to the simplicity of the gospel?

Fortunately, that question doesn't rest on how great our communication is or how wonderful a movie is. Jesus is more than able to represent Himself, and my prayer is that this little film of mine helps, but also gets out of the way so that Jesus can meet with thousands of people in theaters around the country.

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Darren Wilson is the Founder of Wanderlust Productions. Darren's films include *Finger of God*, *Furious Love*, *Father of Lights*, *Holy Ghost* and *Holy Ghost Reborn*. His new film, *The God Man*, hits theaters for a one-night-only event on June 6. Visit to find a theater near you.