

Why 'Exodus' Fails Bible-Believing Moviegoers

Editor's note: Faith Driven Consumer gave *Exodus* 2.5 out of 5 stars in its Faith-Friendly Film Review system, which are based on five core criteria: Overall Faith and/or Biblical Relevance; Faith-compatible Depiction of Characters and Character Relationships; Faith-compatible Depiction of Situations, Family Viewing Suitability; and Entertainment Value.

Maximizing return on investment is essential for Hollywood studios looking to survive in a highly competitive environment. In an increasingly diverse marketplace, filmmakers are being pressed to find and aggressively engage their most natural audiences. This is why Faith Driven Consumers have become so attractive. Box office returns and extensive research demonstrate that this underserved consumer can propel a film to success.

Consumers in general have a clear preference for movies that accurately portray their source material. Movies portraying biblical stories are no exception, and, in fact, Faith Driven Consumers are more aware of inaccuracies because they conflict with deeply held religious beliefs.

Ten years ago, the Faith Driven Consumer audience propelled a small, independent film called *The Passion of the Christ* to record-breaking results. This same audience—which has also made so many films successful this year—should have been foremost on the mind of Ridley Scott when crafting *Exodus*. As with *Noah*, this did not happen. *Noah* ultimately fell short of its potential at the box office, leaving hundreds of millions on the table. Today's result indicates *Exodus* is following the same precarious path.

Ridley Scott's failure thus far to deliver the core audience for *Exodus* speaks to a deep dysfunction within Hollywood, an elitist arrogance that supersedes good business sense. Both

Scott and Darren Aronofsky allowed their personal bias to create a chasm between their films and their natural audiences.

Consumers vote with their wallet. Conversely, filmmakers who respect the audience and their deeply held beliefs are rewarded. Recent movies like *Heaven is For Real*, *Son of God* and *God's Not Dead* prove the point.

We are encouraged to see hope on the horizon. Paramount learned a lesson with *Noah*, tapping Mark Burnett and Roma Downey to produce their upcoming film *Ben Hur*. 20th Century Fox, the studio behind *Son of God*, can use this moment to refocus. While *Son of God* succeeded, *Exodus* will likely be remembered as a painful missed opportunity.

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