

'Wrath of the Titans': Predictable, Better Than Its Predecessor

by Alan Mowbray



The recipe for *Wrath of the Titans*: Fire. Stern looks of determination. Destruction.

Add some slimy underworld demons. Mix with an old, somewhat decrepit, dysfunctional family of Greek gods who still haven't figured out their personal differences—let alone the differences of the world. Did I say destruction?

Top it off with some loud roars of anger, more stern looks of determination, and an incredibly, unbelievable amount of computer-generated stones and rocks exploded, crushed and destroyed. Add lava and stir.

This fantasy film is a sequel to the equally destructive and surprisingly successful *Clash of the Titans*, released in 2010. Better CGI and 3D rendering make this installment easier to watch than the last, which was rebooted from the classic *Clash of the Titans*, released in 1982. This isn't a flick for those who love snappy dialogue and deep characters, but judging from the audience that loaded up the theater where I was screening, *Wrath of the Titans* will be a hit with the age 13-24 crowd.

The story opens with a short rehash of *Clash of the Titans* then shifting to Perseus (Sam Worthington)—the half-human son of the god Zeus (Liam Neeson)—attempting to live a quieter life as a village fisherman and the sole parent to his 10-year-old son, Helius (John Bell). Having cast off his responsibilities as the son of Zeus, Perseus still senses something bad is brewing in the underworld.

Apparently in the 10 years since *Clash of the Titans*, people have stopped praying to the gods and that has weakened them. This lack of devotion by the people spurs an uprising of evil, which must be contained and destroyed. The fate of the world is in the hands of Perseus—whether he likes it or not.

I enjoy liking films. Being overly critical is not my way. So I'm not going to get into the deep minutiae of what the makers of *Wrath of the Titans* could have done. That being said, this is a very predictable movie from start to finish. At 99 minutes, it's also rather short.

The scenes moved along very quickly and occasionally I had this feeling that I missed something at times. The great climactic battle was neither great nor climactic. It was almost as if they got tired of making the movie and decided to end it as quickly as possible, hitting all the required points along the way. It's obvious that most of the film's budget was put into the decent CGI and action scenes rather than character development and dialogue.

But on a positive note, there were a couple of enjoyable characters, including Agenor (Toby Kebbell), the half human, half god son of Poseidon, who is considered to be an embarrassment to the family, brings some fun and endearment to the film. The character of Hephaestus (Bill Nighy), the eccentric blacksmith/weapons designer to the gods, is also well cast, and, his cyclops security guards were pretty cool.

Wrath of the Titans is no more than a depiction of myth and fantasy on the screen. But I noted throughout the film how these mythical gods were portrayed as flawed and just as human as people. Prior to the lights going down, I had looked around the theater at the few hundred teens and twentysomethings in attendance. Based on the movie's characterizations of the gods and demigods, I thought to myself, "How many will walk away, thinking, wondering, believing ... if that's what God is really like?" And that bothers me.

Rated PG-13 for intense sequences of fantasy violence, *Wrath of the Titans* will surely draw interest from the younger set. My recommendation: if your teen wants to see this and you deem his or her maturity is sufficient for this PG-13 rating, fine. But GO WITH THEM. Be there to reinforce who God is before and after the film. This is a great opportunity for you to point out the difference between the world's gods and the God of the Bible, explaining how and why the fantasy gods fail.

Also, the god Kronos—the evil father of Zeus and Hades (Ralph Fiennes)—is depicted as a towering, invincible, angry mass of rock, lava and smoke rather than what the Word of God reveals Satan the deceiver to be—fallen, small and already defeated.

There are some redeeming themes in the storyline: a father's love and the strides to which he will go for his son, the consequences of bitterness and believing in yourself instead of saying, "I can't do it." This is not a perfect film, but with a little planning and ingenuity, parents could easily turn it into a platform for discussing spiritual beliefs and morals with their teen.

Content Watch: Besides sequences of intense fantasy action violence, *Wrath of the Titans* features some frightening images of scary monsters and very brief sensuality (a kiss). I have yet to allow my almost 11-year-old son to watch the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy (probably a couple years yet), so I maintained that standard for this film. Caution is advised for younger children. There was no bad language of any kind that I noted.

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