



MOVIE REVIEW

By Albert James Dager

burning bush, the encounter begins. “God” tells Moses that he needs a general to lead his people out of bondage. Because of his military experience he has been chosen to take on that task. So Moses, at the great displeasure of his wife Zipporah whom he leaves behind, decides to return from exile in Midian (we’re informed that he was exiled after it was revealed to Pharaoh Ramses—who is now Pharaoh after his father Seti’s death—that he was a Hebrew).

Scripturally, Moses wasn’t exiled; he fled out of fear for having killed an Egyptian who was beating one of his brethren (Exodus 2:11-15). Nor did he leave Zipporah behind. He took her and their sons to Egypt with him (Exodus 4:20).

In this movie, Moses’ demand to Ramses is to free the Hebrews and give them “equal rights” as Egyptian citizens.

“Equal rights”? Was Al Sharpton lurking somewhere behind the set? That’s not exactly what God demanded of Pharaoh. He was to let God’s people go so they could journey to the Promised Land. God didn’t want His people left in Egypt to assimilate.

Apart from the impressive CIG effects, *Exodus: Gods and Kings* is a colossal mess, both scripturally and in just plain story-telling. The endemic unscriptural elements should boggle the mind of any true believer in Jesus. Or any devout Jew, for that matter. What this movie does to the Torah account of Moses is criminal.

Where to begin?

How about Moses not knowing he was a Hebrew? The truth is that Moses knew he was a Hebrew all along. Exodus 2:11-14 tells us that when Moses was grown, he went out to his brethren and looked upon their burdens. It was then that he killed the Egyptian who was striking “one of his brethren,” and hid his body in the sand. When he went out the next day, he tried to intervene between two Hebrews fighting together. But they challenged his authority to do so, revealing that they knew he had killed the Egyptian. When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. And that’s why Moses fled Egypt. He was not exiled.

How about where Moses’ sister Miriam is said to have raised both Moses and Seti’s son Ramses in Pharaoh’s household? The truth: there is nothing in Scripture about Miriam raising Moses, let alone Ramses, in Pharaoh’s house. All Miriam did was suggest to Pharaoh’s daughter that Moses be given to a Hebrew woman to nurse him until he was weaned; then he would be returned to Pharaoh’s daughter. Miriam took Moses to their mother to be weaned (Exodus 2:1-10).

SO YOU THOUGHT *Noah* was bad? You thought no one could convolute God’s Word worse than producer-writer Darren Aronofsky did in portraying the builder of the Ark as an irascible, misanthropist? How about portraying God as just such a character? In *Exodus: Gods and Kings*, “God” is a petulant 11-year-old boy with a buzz cut, whose judgment on Pharaoh and the Egyptians plays out as a temper tantrum. I mean, “God” is just so mad at those bad Egyptians for enslaving the Jews for 400 years that he screams and rants at Moses for not enthusiastically falling into line with his plan of destruction.

God as a buzz-cut 11-year-old? I’m kidding, right? Who in his right mind would cast the Almighty in such a manner? Well, the “Christian” novel *The Shack*, written by William Young, casts Him as a black woman. And that book has received rave reviews from “Christian” and secular reviewers alike. In truth, “God” has been portrayed in many ways, depending on the perverted imagination of human writers who have no respect for God’s Word or person. It is blasphemy how this movie portrays our great God and Savior. Of those involved, it may truly be said, “There is no fear of God in their eyes.”

And one of Scripture’s greatest heroes, Moses (played by Christian Bale [Ba’al!]), inexplicably wearing medieval armor as Pharaoh Seti’s general, comes across just as irascible, constantly arguing with “God” about how to free the Hebrews. After “God” appears to Moses as that little brat standing alongside the

Moses' encounter with "God" in the movie begins nine years later (not 40 years later as Scripture says) with Moses challenging Zipporah's warning that no one can go up the mountain where "God" is. He dares to lead his flock of sheep up the steep craggy slopes in a raging downpour (for some dumb reason). A rock and mud slide bury him up to his neck. When he regains consciousness he hears a boy's voice calling his name.

During this encounter, "God" tells Moses that he needs a general to fight. "For what?" asks Moses.

"I think you know," says "God."

So without any definitive plans given him, the thirty-something (not 80-year-old) Moses determines that "God" must want him to raise an army. Which he does—a guerilla force that embarks on terrorism, blowing up Egyptian store houses, and so on and so forth, and what have you. We're not told where the Egyptians got the explosives Moses' troops kindled. They must have mail-ordered them from China.

The truth: Moses never raised an army. He went to Pharaoh in obedience to God's orders.

Anyway, Ramses gets ticked off and begins hanging Hebrew families on a daily basis, demanding Moses be turned in. Moses stands there watching the hangings, as do his troops, but he is patient, taking his time in training his troops how to fight. But to no avail. The Hebrews are given even more burdensome tasks.

So "God" again appears to Moses:

Moses: "Where have you been?"

"God": "Watching you fail."

Moses: "I'm prepared to wait."

"God": "I'm not."

Moses: "Now you're impatient? After 400 years of slavery? What do I do—nothing?"

"God": "For now, you can watch."

So Moses is benched to watch as "God" takes it upon himself to unilaterally, without Moses' and Aaron's involvement, bring the plagues upon Egypt.

The truth: God used Moses to demand that Ramses release His people from bondage, each demand followed by a plague brought through Moses and Aaron (Exodus 4:21; 7:1-12:37).

As the plagues unfold, "God" again appears to Moses:

Moses (sarcastically): "Nice of you to come."

"God": "He's given you what you want."

Moses: "I was impressed at first, but not anymore. This is affecting everyone."

Evidently, "God" was wrong, because Ramses still didn't give Moses what he wanted—to give the Hebrews "equal rights."

After the locusts come upon the land, "God" again appears, this time really, really mad at him and the Egyptians: Moses asks "God," "Is that it? Are you done?"

"God" answers, screaming, "I want to see them on their knees, begging me to stop!"

Moses: "No! You can't do this. I want no part of this!"

So Moses goes to Pharaoh to warn him. He then goes to the Hebrews and tells them to slay some lambs and mark their doorposts with blood. But he has doubts:

"Pity the lambs if I'm wrong. If I'm right, we will bless them for eternity."

There is no Passover meal. Nor does Moses stay inside; he's out there watching what is happening to the Egyptians.

So after his son dies from the last plague, Ramses relents and lets the people leave. Moses leads them, but he doesn't know how to get to where they are going. There is no cloud by day or pillar of fire by night to guide them. After receiving news that Pharaoh is following with his army, Moses decides to take a mountain route to make it more difficult for Pharaoh's chariots to pursue along the narrow trail.

As Pharaoh presses on, most of his army falls down the mountain as they fail to maneuver the treacherous route at breakneck speed.

The Hebrews get to the Red Sea, but Moses doesn't know what to do. So after calling out to "God," "I need your help," he goes to sleep. When he wakes, he is surprised to find that the sea has gradually receded to where the people can wade to the other side in waist-deep water, some panicking as they and their animals fall under, almost drowning. As they are about to reach the other side, they see in the distance a huge wave forming. They scramble up the embankment as what is left of Pharaoh's army charges into the sea.

Moses, taking pity, turns his horse toward Pharaoh and beckons him to save himself by following him. Pharaoh lifts his sword and charges Moses, whereupon Moses turns to run for safety.

Too late. The wave crashes over them and Pharaoh's army, and buries them.

But, miracle of miracles! Moses pops up and manages to make it to shore. As does Pharaoh, somewhere—who knows?

The truth: Moses knew exactly what he was doing, and where he was going. At the edge of the Red Sea he also knew what God was going to do. He told the people, "Do not fear. Stand still, and see the salvation of Yahweh, which He will show you today, for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall see them again no longer, forever."

God told Moses to lift his rod to divide the sea. The people didn't wade through water; they went on dry ground as the water formed walls on both sides of them. Pharaoh and all his army drowned in the sea (Exodus 14:13-31).

In the movie, we next see Moses and "God" in a cave, as Moses by candlelight is engraving the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone. "God" looks disgusted.

"God": "What do you think of this?"

Moses: "I wouldn't do it if I didn't agree."

"God": "These laws will guide them in your stead. If you disagree you should put down the hammer."

But Moses silently continues to engrave.

As a decidedly older Moses is riding in a cart with a wooden box behind him, seemingly carrying something precious (the tablets, in the Ark of the Covenant no doubt, not carried by priests), "God" is walking beside the cart, nodding approvingly at Moses, then shrinking back to disappear in the crowd.

The End.

Mercifully. ❖