

Movie Review: A No Holds Barred Review of Noah: The Movie (2014)

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Up until yesterday, I had heard a whole lot of hype about the Noah movie and honestly, couldn't care less. It's a Hollywood production and, like *The Passion of the Christ*, I thought it would be an attempt by some biblically illiterate celebrities (for example) and a theologically lobotomized director/producer (for example) to atone for all the trash that they've unleashed upon the world at 24 frames per second (or now 48). There's a huge difference between films made by Christians and films made by "Hollywood Christians" (the difference being a biblical worldview vs. an explicitly pagan worldview hiding behind re-defined biblical terminology), and I generally ignore all the "Christian/religious" media that emerges from Hollywood. To use a biblical term, films made by "Hollywood Christians" are generally moronic. (For the sake of clarity, I use the phrase "Hollywood Christians" as a catchall for everyone who would self-identify as some form of "Christian").

Uh oh.

"Explicitly pagan"?

"Moronic"?

Isn't that harsh and even arrogant language?

Am I saying that all the people who claim to be believers in Hollywood aren't really Christians?

No. Not at all.

Am I saying that if you like the movie Noah that you're a Bad Christian?

No. Not at all (though you probably have lack of discernment).

What I am saying is that the movies that Hollywood puts out under the guise of attracting the believing movie-goers are subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) attacks on Christians and Christianity as a whole. Movies are a large vessel for the distribution of ideas, and spiritual warfare is ideological warfare; it's the combat of truth and error. Watching movies is spiritual warfare.

But before I go off on an entirely different blog post, I'll simply say that I've generally thought that Hollywood puts out "Christian" movies that are so bad, they beg to be avoided by discerning believers.

BEG.

I wasn't expecting that much from Noah, but I thought that it was probably going to be a feel good cuddle-fest where Noah is a kind and loving guy who gathers all the animals around him like Cinderella, builds a boat, and then sails on some rolling waves with his family with them all singing southern gospel songs in an Indonesian accent.



Do you get that from this poster?

Nope? Me neither.

The poster told me that it was going to be a dark and emo-styled movie where a singer from a Mars Hill worship band builds a boat and barely escapes with his life while everyone else dies...or something like that. I expected it to be somewhat true to the Biblical account.

Outside of a few names, a few vague details (like the animals showing up) and the presence of a flood, it wasn't even remotely close.

No, scratch that. It's not that it wasn't close; it's that the director completely turned the story on its head...to the point that this was one of the first movies I've seen in the last decade that actually made me angry because it was so obviously agenda-driven and absolutely evil. People have tried to excuse the director in saying that he's "not a theologian", but the movie is so bad that I wonder if he's even bothered reading the story (he gets the story so wrong I honestly wonder if he's spent any time reading it). More than that, I wonder if the director thinks that Christians are simple-minded fools who cannot spot basic errors or would find no offense at having their entire belief system being horrifically blasphemed.

Wait a minute.

Go back.

Did I say that Noah is evil?

That's right.

Evil.

As in "openly serving to brainwash the masses about the God of the Bible", regardless of the efforts of the National Religious Broadcasters and Paramount Picture to soften what they know will be seen as a violent attack on the story of Noah. They can say all they want about the movie being "inspired by the story of Noah", but come on! If someone made a movie about Harvey Milk that portrayed him as openly denying the charges of being homosexual and actually campaigning against gay rights, would anyone buy the "inspired by the life of Harvey Milk" line?

I wonder if Phil Cooke, or Jerry Johnson, or Alissa Wilkinson, or any of the "respected leaders" promoted on Charisma have even read the story of Noah with any degree of actual attention. (Also, the Charismatic movement seems to be home to all the folks I can find who support the movie. Just making a passing observation there...)

The movie is evil.

As in, Noah worships Satan in the movie. That's right.

Okay. I'm ranting now like some crazed madman. Evil? Really?

Well, I went and saw the movie last night. The 10:05 showing with a pen and paper. Empty theater so I used my phone as a light and took three pages of notes. Allow me to share what I jotted down.

Be warned, I'm going to re-tell the story of the movie and spoil everything. I'm also going to make nine observations that should drive home why I think this movie qualifies as "evil". My comments will be indented.

Observation One: The Opening.

So the movie opens up with a quote: "In the beginning there was nothing".

- Uh, nope. I believe the story starts off with "In the beginning GOD..." So much for a theistic worldview, let alone Christian. Sure, God is mentioned as the creator, but before there was a creation there wasn't nothing. There was the triune God. This glaring omission is rather indicative of the theme that runs throughout the movie; "God isn't there".

Observation Two: The History.

The "creation" is actually straight up naturalistic evolution of the Day-Age Theory variety. Apparently God spoke everything into existence and then took a hike...except for on the second "day" (which means somewhere over a few billion years) he made some sort of angelic creatures who, after sitting around for a few billion years, left heaven to help Adam & Eve. Strangely, Adam and Eve apparently didn't evolve but rather popped out of nowhere, glowing like one of these four:



(No, not Dr. Crusher. Guess again.)

Adam and Eve were banished from the garden for eating a fruit which the movie describes as choosing “darkness” rather than light, and then the Watchers show up.

- For those who read this blog, I’m not a fan of any sort of evolutionary theory, but I don’t really care about that. It’s a Hollywood movie and I’d expect nothing less than full-fledged evolution. That’s not really where the fight is here. The whole “glowing Adam and Eve” thing is dumb artistic license though (were their last names “Cullen”?). Did Jesus glow after he was resurrected and in his glorified body? The real fight involves just how twisted the story of creation becomes. Adam and Eve didn’t really know what was going on, ate something (for no reason that the movie describes) and then get punished by God, the seemingly-emo teenager.

Observation Three: The Watchers.

Remember the angelic creatures made on the second day? When they left heaven to help Adam & Eve they were actually kicked out and fell to earth like fireballs. When they hit the earth, they were covered in magma that sort of hardened into a suit over their glowing selves...kinda like some form of rock-armor suit...or kinda like the Gorignak from Galaxy Quest combined with the Vorlon suit from Babylon 5; big rock creature on the outside but glowing, flying pilot on the inside...



Babylon 5 Vorlon

Those angelic beings are called Watchers, and they're stuck on earth forever, unable to return to Heaven because they screwed up in a way that the movie doesn't clarify (something about wanting to help Adam and Eve after they rebelled). For some reason they have three legs and three arms (probably because some folks involved in the movie are foolish enough to think that gematria is deep and profound) and since they were stuck on earth, they taught the line of Cain all about technology. Using that knowledge, Cain's descendants populated and covered the whole earth in a sort of pre-industrialization technological level. The descendants of Cain have apparently logged the whole earth (the earth is covered in burned stumps in the movie), know about some complex machinery and smelting iron, and even have rudimentary canons that fire Zohar (or Tzohar; they both sound the same), a sort of magic rock that ignites when crushed.

- The Zohar is a reference to a written document of Kaballah; Jewish mysticism. The little glowing rocks don't play a big roll in the movie, but a large component of the content in the movie is taken from non-biblical literature of rather suspicious nature. No big surprise from Hollywood there; what with them being totally unable to discern what is a reliable source of information. Tzoharwas, in Jewish mysticism, the name of the window on the ark that let in light. It is a metaphor for a window between worlds (i.e. a window into the spiritual world for Noah). I'm not sure which was the reference in the movie (no subtitles) but either way, it's an interesting allusion that isn't a good one (given the symbolism in the movie).

When the descendants of Cain gained sufficient power, they turned on the Watchers and attacked them, so the Watchers basically ran away and moved into Mordor. In the movie, they live in a barren wasteland surrounded by a barrier of human skulls. Eventually, they're convinced to help Noah: they end up being the ones who build the ark (Noah helps, but a few dozen 50-foot-tall rock creatures do all the heavy lifting and construction) and then they defend Noah against the humans who attempt to board the ark by slaying thousands of humans. As the Watchers fall in battle, they explode and their glowing pilots explode out of the rock suits, killing dozens of people around them, and they return to heaven. When some of the Watchers figure out that dying in this battle results in acceptance back into Heaven, at least one of them commits suicide and heads straight there.



- Uh, yeah. WHAT? A few moments into this movie it turns into "Lord of the Flood rings". Let's clarify here a second. The "angelic beings" aren't the Nephilim, as some people have thought. The Nephilim weren't cast out of heaven, but were "were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown" (Gen. 6:4) who were on the planet at the same time as the "Sons of God" in Gen. 6:2. The beings in the movie also aren't the "Sons of God" in Gen. 6:2 since whoever the "Sons of God" were, they "saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose". The Watchers are demons, if they're anything.

Noah's allies in the movie are demons who cannot return to Heaven because they rebelled against God...except that they eventually do return to Heaven when they die in jihad. That's right; they're demons who are saved by their good works...erm, which are actually horridly evil. I don't have a clue what in the world the people making this movie were thinking, but it seems like they were reading everything but the Bible when it came to finding ideas for the plot.

Observation Four: The Devil.

The movie doesn't explain the Devil at all, but it does contain a cryptic image of a snake shedding its skin in the grass of the garden. In the first scene with Noah, he's a boy and is about to be blessed by his father, Lamech. His father pulls out a snakeskin, wraps it around his arm, it starts to glow, and then some descendants of Cain show up, kill him, and take the snakeskin (which they call a "relic"). Later on, Ham steals the snakeskin from Tubal-Cain and it ends up back with Noah. We learn that it is the skin of the snake from the Garden of Eden, and it apparently is the tool by which Noah's birthright to protect the earth is handed down through the generations of the line of Seth. I assume that it's somehow related to where Methuselah gets all his magic powers, seeing that the skin is handed down via the line of Seth and they're the only ones with magic abilities in the movie.

- What in the WORLD? Noah's helpers are demons and his right to protect the earth comes from The Devil? Satan is the indirect savior of the world (his henchmen build the ark) and source of any direct help to Noah at all in this movie (Methuselah uses the magic he got somewhere, likely from the snakeskin, to explain the vague visions that God gives to Noah...among other things). Let that sink in a moment.

I believe that would be called an "evil" idea.

Observation Five: The Crazy Warlock Methuselah.

In this movie, Methuselah is still alive at the coming of the flood and gladly accepts his own death, smiling and eating berries like a lunatic. He lives in a smoky cave where he receives his oracles (which seems to allude to some of the ancient oracles of Greece and Rome), and he has magic powers.

Remember the Watchers? Well, when mankind turned on them and attacked them, Methuselah defended them with his flaming sword. There's a scene where the poor and defenseless Watchers are trying to escape a large army of men and Methuselah stands in a field. He pulls out his sword, plunges it into the ground and creates a flaming shock wave that ignites thousands of people as the Watchers get away.



Also, when Noah has a vision of a bunch of dead bodies in water and Methuselah's mountain, Noah goes there to see his grandfather. Methuselah drugs him, Noah wigs out and has a second vision of a bunch of swimming animals under a large wooden platform (we see the ark, but only from underwater).

Methuselah heals Ila's womb (Noah's adopted daughter who is also Shem's wife). Ila is barren after being stabbed in the gut as a child, but Methuselah touches her and totally heals her womb (he also can put people to sleep with his touch in the movie).

Finally, Methuselah gives Noah a seed that someone stole from Eden. Noah plants it and it spawns a river and grows an immense forest in seconds. Noah then proceeds to chop down all the trees and make an ark (which is an amazingly stupid irony, given the message of the movie).

- In other words, Noah's grandfather was the protector of demons, using a flaming sword that he apparently got from somewhere (which sounds familiar, right?). This story appears to have come from Jewish legends (read the bottom part

about Methuselah here or check out this basic overview). Interesting how in Jewish legends, Methuselah killed demons but in this movie he killed men by the thousands. This movie neither respects the biblical text nor Jewish lore.

- Beyond that, there's the unbelievable usage of magic in this movie. No mention of God, no prayer. Just straight up pagan magic where items have intrinsic power based on where they're found or who they come from. Sheer, unvarnished pagan magic. God is nowhere to be seen in any of the supernatural events in the movie.

Again, I'd dare suggest that pagan magic is "evil".

Observation Six: The Eco-Psycho message.

That's right. Eco-Psycho...as in "ecological" plus "psychopath". In this movie, mankind is a vermin on the earth that deserves the flood and gets no warning, no preaching, and outright condemnation. When Tubal-Cain and his hundreds of followers come to Noah, they express a loose belief in the coming flood and a desire to board the ark but Noah only says "there is no escape for you and your kind". Methuselah agrees with Noah, commenting on how the Creator (the God of this movie has no personal name at all) is going to destroy the earth because mankind has corrupted it...but the only "sins" we see are logging and eating meat. That's it. The earth is overrun by carnivores who cut down trees, and they all deserve to be slaughtered mercilessly for their non-vegan and clearcutting ways...not that there's any vegetables to eat. All the plants are gone and the entire earth is a barren wasteland...so the animals are all that there's left to eat.



Well, the animals seem to be all that's left, but Noah and his family get by by eating moss and other fuzzy things that grow on rocks.

Seriously.

The animals are innocent in the movie and get saved from the flood because they "still live like they did in Eden", but mankind doesn't live like they did in Eden (i.e. eat vegan) and therefore mankind doesn't deserve to live. The movie makes it clear that mankind is unworthy of life, especially as Methuselah and the Watchers kill thousands of men with absolutely no remorse whatsoever in the movie. The value of life in Noah is made very clear: plants are precious but people are parasites.

In fact, it's because Noah fails to do what God "tells him" (not that God makes anything clear in the movie at all, but more on that later) that mankind survives at all. Ham and Japheth don't have wives, Shem only has Ila (who's barren), and Noah actually thinks that he's building the ark to save the animals and then die. He's open about his expectation that Japheth, being the youngest, will die alone and the extermination of mankind is justice for all their logging and carnivorous ways.

The movie makes it clear that mankind is a mistake and God's trying to correct the mistake of mankind...but he fails by entrusting the job to poor old Noah. He's just unable to follow through with the wholesale slaughter that's required of him...not that Noah is a softie.

Noah sees slaves getting sold for some meat, but that doesn't bother him. He sees death everywhere, but that doesn't bother him. Noah has a chance to save Ham's girlfriend who is caught in some sort of bear trap, but he gladly leaves her to be trampled and that doesn't bother him. In fact, nothing bothers Noah...well, almost nothing. He sees a guy eating some raw meat and he's disgusted by that.

- That's right. The flood, from what the movie makes clear, seems to be aimed at mankind en toto, including Noah. He's only needed to save the animals and they're the only creatures who deserve to live. Beyond that, whoever wrote the script was brainless. I don't throw that word out lightly on this blog, but I throw it out now. I mean, if we're talking about the Genesis story at all, we cannot miss that Genesis 9:3-5 comes right after the flood. In that passage God says "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man." That tells us that (a) Noah was given animals as food after the flood and (b) people did not eat animals before the flood. If eating meat was the sin for which the earth was judged, it's really stupid that immediately after the flood God lifted that ban.

Oh, and logging was the other sin for which the flood came...good thing in the movie God provided a whole new forest for Noah to cut down and use to make the ark. No wait. Methuselah or Satan provided the forest. Never mind. Any efforts to make any sense of this movie beyond explaining it away as the self-contradictory ramblings of a deranged ecological psychopath fall on their face.

Observation Seven: Noah is a Homicidal Maniac.

In the creation story that is told, Adam and Eve have kids, Cain kills Able, and all men are (for some reason) "descendants of Cain" except for Noah, who's a descendant of Seth. Noah is married to Naamah (the sister of Tubal-Cain) for some strange reason; the line of Seth apparently has fought the line of Cain throughout history and hates them. Noah hates everyone on planet earth, except his family. He tolerates them, but doesn't really have a problem with them all dying after the flood.

Not only does he tolerate their deaths, but he openly delights in slaughtering people. He kills three people (one in cold blood), when they shoot an animal with an arrow. He kills around two dozen people trying to get into the ark. He's not about to let anyone repent of their sins or escape divine judgment.



(This picture is used in the advertising, but it's Noah guarding the entrance to the ark and not letting anyone in...)

What's worse is that when Methuselah heals Ila's womb (which Noah furiously claims to be "undermining the Creator") she gets pregnant. When Noah finds out, he is enraged and promises that if the child is a boy, it will die as the last man on earth but if the child is a girl, he will murder her the minute she emerges from the womb...so for the rest of the boat trip, Naamah and Ila and Shem plan to somehow escape Noah, the homicidal maniac. Naamah even gives Noah a lecture on the ethical horror of murdering his own infant granddaughters, but Noah doesn't listen to her for a second (crazy eyes and all). They search for dry land by sending out a raven (to escape Noah's desire to murder Ila's baby).

They also build a raft and stock it with supplies but Noah finds out and burns it, leaving everyone in terror. Then, when Ila has twin daughters, Noah chases her (carrying her two newborns) onto the roof of the ark while carrying a large knife. He almost stabs the first newborn but cannot because Noah says that he has nothing but love in his heart for them. Call me crazy, what exactly do you call a guy who chases you and threatens your newborn's life with a large knife, and then makes any reference to "love"?

Maniac?

Exactly.

Then, once the ark crashes into a mountainside (a dove flies by with an olive branch in its mouth, but it's somehow not a dove from the ark), Noah's family lands and starts a new society while Noah lives in a cave on the beach and gets sloshed on home-made hooch as self-induced punishment for not killing his granddaughters. Finally Ila talks some sense into him (maybe it's okay to act lovingly to people without expressing it with knives?) and Noah returns to his family, though Ham wanders off into the hillsides because he doesn't feel welcome at home anymore (since he doesn't have a wife).

- The character of Noah in this movie is so far removed from his biblical counterpart that he's absolutely unrecognizable. He's a maniac who is an idolater, a warlock, a murdering psycho, and in reality has absolutely no idea what's happening with the flood, other than the "Creator" is behind it. God gives him two visions and he fills the rest in with his rather overactive and psychotic imagination. Noah doesn't preach righteousness and repentance for 100+ years (2 Peter 2:5), and the Noah in this movie is a violent butcher of a man, completely the opposite of how Genesis 6:8-13 portrays him. He has no real knowledge of God outside of some vague idea that "the Creator" is behind everything, and he is essentially flailing for knowing what he's supposed to do because God doesn't give him much to go on outside of a nightmare.

Good thing he has a bunch of demons and a warlock to help him work out the details.

What's the worst is that Noah chases his granddaughters around the ark with a combat knife and then stops because he "loves" them, but then drunkenly laments his "love-fueled" inability to do the unthinkable for an indeterminate matter of weeks after the ark ends up on dry land.

Observation Eight : Tubal-Cain is the voice of reason.

In the movie, Tubal-Cain is the king of mankind, at least in the region of Noah. He's a brutal and violent man who calls out to God when it starts to rain, but God doesn't answer (more on this later). Tubal-Cain is what you'd expect (cruel, brutal, selfish, etc.) except for one thing. He sneaks onto the ark and hides out, and Ham finds him and gets a lecture on how Noah is wrong to think that mankind exists to serve the animals. Tubal-Cain defends his industrialization and proudly tells Ham that the animals exist to serve man and he doesn't regret subduing the earth. Tubal-Cain decries Noah's heartlessness to those outside the ark and tries to get Ham to help him betray Noah, but Ham ends up killing Tubal-Cain as he fights Noah.



- Subdue the earth? Where have we heard that talk? Oh yeah. That's the words of God from Genesis 1:28. So the "good guy" works with demons, is a mass murderer, and is utterly confused as to why...but the "bad guy" is quoting scripture.

Do you call that evil?

God does.

“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!” – Isaiah 5:20.

Observation Nine: The “God” of Noah doesn’t exist.

Throughout the whole movie the God that is portrayed is more like Allah than Yahweh. The God that made Adam and Eve is unpredictable and malicious. He didn’t tell them not to eat the fruit but rather made the tree as two trees that cross each other to form an “x” (that’s obvious, right?). Adam and Eve didn’t know what God desired of them, and the movie portrays God as being highly chaotic in casting them out of a garden for eating a fruit (though the movie makes it abundantly clear that Adam & Eve, as well as all righteous people, were/are vegetarians).

Then there’s the silence. God doesn’t speak to anyone in the movie. Noah has a nightmare where he sees Adam and Eve, the snake, and then he’s underwater and surrounded by dead bodies. When he goes to visit Methuselah (at Hogwarts), Methuselah gives him a drugged drink that causes a second vision, but even if it’s from God the only difference is that Noah sees a bunch of animals swimming towards what looks like a wooden platform (they see the ark from under the water). Tubal-Cain calls out for divine revelation, but to no avail. Noah does as well, but to no avail. Apparently God doesn’t answer the unrighteous or the righteous (though Noah comes to realize that nobody is righteous...yay! The whole movie is redeemed because everyone is a sinner...and the only solution is genocide?). Noah begs God to help him understand whether or not he should kill his granddaughters, but there’s no answer. Noah is absolutely tormented by confusion in the movie, and it’s absolutely disgusting since scripture speaks of him as a prophet who got actual verbal revelation from God repeatedly (which is the definition of a prophet, right?)

Finally, the God of the movie isn’t involved in his creation either. The direct supernatural events aren’t caused by God, but magic. God maybe causes the quadruple rainbow shockwave at the end of the movie (it’s insinuated), but there’s no covenant with Noah and absolutely no explanation of what anything means since God doesn’t have a voice. He’s a total mute. He just made things, sat back, confuses everyone and then all of a sudden kills people for doing what he (at least in the Bible) commanded them to do.

In other words, the God of Noah looks a lot more like someone from comic books than the Bible.



(So Odin started out as Methuselah? Did he go colonize Asgard after the flood?)

- The God of this movie is Richard Dawkins’ Blind Watchmaker, a deistic God who basically starts the universe and then hides himself like mad. Not even the “fallen angels” have a clue what he’s doing, or how to appease him, or anything (and one would think that they’d have at least more insight than Noah...?!?).

As for the silence, one wonders exactly where the dimensions of the ark came from, seeing that nobody had likely ever heard of an ark in Noah’s day. One also wonders why Noah got in the ark anyway, seeing that he put all the animals to sleep with magic smoke. He wasn’t needed. The ark could have crashed, the crash could have awoken all the animals, and then everything could have started over without those pesky humans.

Ten: The Conclusion

Now I could go on about more details that the movie got totally wrong, but that list is long.

Noah isn't a Christian movie.

Noah isn't even about the biblical story of Noah.

Noah is a movie that steals some names, the concept of a flood, and then inserts everything else from non-canonical literature and various carnal imaginations, and undermines the entire story by flipping it on its head in the most extreme ways. It's a story where the hero is the most wicked man in the story and the demons are more of a help than God.

If this is "Christian cinema", Christians need to be really vocal about letting Hollywood know that we won't stand for this kind of garbage being passed off as some sort of "Christian" movie, or even a tolerable representation of Biblical events. Hollywood needs to realize that if Christians' cherished beliefs are urinated on, Christians will not support it.



I'd strongly recommend not seeing the movie, simply because dollars are the only form of communication Hollywood understands.

If this is "Christian cinema", Hollywood can stick to doing what it does best; making trashy action movies, teenage vampire romances or sappy romantic comedies written by elementary school kids. At least then we'll know what we're getting.

Until Next Time,

Lyndon "watch Noah at your own peril" Unger

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