

The Bible Betrayed: Shepherds Stumbling the Sheep

April 13, 2015

Dear Kevin,

After viewing the latest Hollywood attempt at translating the Bible visually, it brought to mind a poem that Dave Hunt often quoted. Here it is in part, followed by my notes:

"Who would leave the noonday bright to grope 'mid shadows dim? And who would leave the fountainhead to drink the muddy stream, where men have mixed what God has said with every dreamer's dream?"

T. A. McMahon – The Berean Call Ministry

If one were to ask evangelical pastors if they believed in the *inerrancy*, the *authority*, and the *complete sufficiency* of the Bible, most would say yes. Sadly, however, few lead their flocks accordingly.

If the same were asked, "Is the Bible God's direct, miraculous communication to mankind?" most would reply, "Of course," and quote 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, [thoroughly] furnished unto all good works." However, not many pastors function according to the words of Jesus, who has commanded them (as He did Peter) to "feed my sheep." They have also disregarded Jesus' statement that: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4). For more than a decade, shepherds have been sending their flocks to feed on the "Bible" produced by the "hirelings" (John 10:12-13) of Hollywood.

A recent case of this took place when George Wood, C.E.O. of the Assemblies of God, David Jeremiah, conservative evangelical pastor and teacher, and the highly influential pastor Rick Warren (along with multitudes of other pastors) promoted the Roma Downey/Mark Burnett-produced NBC series *A.D.: The Bible Continues*, complete with resource materials to accompany the 12-part series. The production, in the words of producer Mark Burnett, is "*Game of Thrones* [HBO's violent and pornographic series featuring battling mythical kingdoms] meets the Bible." The idea is to infuse the Bible with "drama" in order to get people excited about it. This is accomplished by letting Hollywood do its thing, adding content not found in Scripture and avoiding things that are not politically or socially correct.

A few examples from the first installment include:

- *Dialogue*: The mother of Jesus has a great deal to say in this visual version of the Book of Acts (though none of her dialogue is found in the Bible's book of Acts); Peter complains that Christ's death means that the last three years of their lives were for nothing.
- *Action*: The angel who removes the stone from the tomb hurtles toward earth like a rocket man and is costumed as a black, sword-brandishing warrior.

- *Racial pluralism*: The apostles John and James as well as Mary Magdalene are also black.
- *Dramatic conflict*: Mary and Mary Magdalene are at odds with Peter; Pilate and his wife bicker over Jesus; the High Priest's wife reprimands Joseph of Arimathea for defending Jesus; insurrectionists want the followers of Jesus to join them.
- *Pathos*: The character Jesus screams out in pain as nails are driven into his hands and feet (although Isaiah 53 indicates that He was silent in His affliction) and he seems confused as he is crucified.
- *Chronological license*: According to the Scriptures, the three hours of darkness during which Christ suffered the wrath of God in payment for the sins of mankind takes place *prior* to His giving up His spirit. Not so in *A.D.*

All of the above are *extra-biblical at least*. Anyone who maintains that these things *could* have happened or are "close enough" to Scripture to be employed as a "conversation starter" has replaced what God has supernaturally communicated with speculation and has exchanged His truth for what man's imagination has supplied. Furthermore, he has missed or dismissed the crucial point: God's Word is *God's* Word, not man's.

Shepherds who claim to uphold the Scriptures yet support Hollywood's attempts at dramatizing the Bible need to heed what the true Word says - and repent: "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:5-6).