

## ***April 2013 newsletter articles for the Messenger***

Spring is coming! As inevitably as heat and humidity, even this long winter will finally end and planting, cultivating, harvesting will continue. God has put His Word on this, and His Word will not fail!

And while you are waiting on God, this long winter may remind us of the wait we have while we await a blessing from the Lord, an answer to prayer, or even for His second coming. It seems like He is taking forever to fulfill His Word. But just as certainly as Jesus came into the world to save us, so also He answers our prayers and will come again! Be patient. Take heart and wait upon the Lord! Jesus is coming!

Your servant in Christ,  
Pastor Wartick

**Spoiler alert: characters and plots are revealed here that, if you don't want to know them before you see the one of the movies, skip that part.**

I'm writing on March 29<sup>th</sup>. It is sleeting out and 32 degrees Fahrenheit. We are forecast to get 3-8 inches of snow before church time Sunday morning. So isn't March supposed to go "in like a lion and out like a lamb," or something like that? At least, that is how the old saying goes. So what is this white frozen stuff on the ground? So much for old sayings. At least it was a month of an unusual amount of Christian themed or based movies. I saw 3 of them, 2 on their opening day. In the interest of self-disclosure, I should say that I saw 2 and part of one. I fell asleep during "Son of God" and woke up for the trial and crucifixion. It was a bit frustrating that it didn't follow the Biblical text exactly, and left out one of the 7 words on the cross. At least it *tried* to stay close to the Biblical account. It's not bad at all. It is similar to the Bible film of recent, since the same people produced it and the same actors are in both films. I didn't see the Bible miniseries or from DVD yet, so I don't feel at liberty to say much more about it. See it yourself and see what you think. If you come, come tell me which word from the cross was left out. I'll put you in for a bonus point on Biblical knowledge, for what that's worth. And yes, I'm embarrassed that I, as a pastor, fell asleep during the "Son of God" movie. Thankfully there were only about a dozen people there to catch me.

Then there was "God's NOT Dead." Let's dispense with some of the annoying details, like I'm not a big fan of the Newsboys song by the same title or that they seem to have a poor working vocabulary when it comes to talking about "God and Jesus." To distinguish between God and Jesus like that sets off warning bells in my head about false theology in regard to the Trinity—better to use Biblical terminology, like God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a lot of decision theology, and lead singer Michael Tait has a really bad haircut.

On a more positive note, there is much that can be learned about defending the Christian faith-Christian apologetics- and -spoiler alert-not everything turns out all right at the end for everyone. I would encourage everyone to see this movie. I believe there is much to be gleaned from it, in spite of some personal annoyances to

me. To have a film about Christian apologetics is an exciting and brave adventure. The crowd—and there was a crowd—in the theater was obviously Christian, judging from the shirts and applauding at certain points in the film. I'm not sure the film would lead anyone to Jesus, but it certainly gives Christians some tools to share Jesus with the unbelieving world.

Then there was "Noah", Friday afternoon. The movie has been given thumbs up and down, called "pagan" and "epic", so who could resist at a reduced price matinee? Well-spoiler alert-I had had about enough at the introduction of the "watchers," or Nephilim (Gen. 6:4, Num. 13:33) as rock monsters. There is plenty to criticize, from the root of all evil being the destruction of the earth by deforestation, mining, and urbanization. It truly is, as some criticize, an environmentalist film to the extreme. Then there are the missing wives of Noah's sons, the magical elements (Methuselah seems to be a sort of shaman, the weird thing about the snakeskin), among other things.

There are also some interesting chronological things, like Tubal Cain still being around as the "King of the world" and Methuselah, who lived, according to the strictest literal reading of the Bible, until the year of the Flood. There is plenty of just straight out fiction, like Tubal-cain making it onto the ark, etc. etc. etc.) By the way, while some way we don't know a whole lot about Noah, here is all we know about Tubal-cain: Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. (Genesis 4:22 ESV) Thus far, God's Word.

That said, the movie does have some good things to say about universal evil, a universal flood, and there are some great computer generated graphics, especially regarding the loading of the animals onto the ark and the universal destruction of the earth at the time. However, if you are looking for a Bible-based, follows-the-Scriptures- and -theology-closely type of movie, go somewhere else. If you are a big fan of Russell Crowe, and great computer animated animals and battles, then you won't want to miss it.

Just one more thing: in all these movies, is there any chance at all we could find one that follows the Bible text verbatim, including elements of the culture that are helpful, with a Jesus and his disciples who look Jewish and do not speak in British/Irish/Australian accents?

The point of this, besides doing a little watchman duty here, is to say that there is an increasing interest in these kinds of movies right now, for a number of reasons. Watch with discernment. And, if in doubt, stick to the original plot-you can read the book.

In Christ,  
Pastor Wartick