



'The Bible' series on History Channel (2013) review by: **Samuel Chance** for the *American Family Association of Indiana*.

Overview/Description:

"The Bible" series is a five part mini-series that was created and produced by **Roma Downey** (*touched by an angel*) and **Mark Burnett** (*Survivor, The Voice, Shark Tank, etc.*). The inspiration behind "The Bible" is to encourage more people to read and be interested in the events and truths of the Bible. Both Downey and Burnett claim to be Christians and come from Catholic backgrounds. The series covers from "Genesis to Revelation" in five two-hour parts, each of which contain two to four well executed and dramatized bible stories or events. These cover major bible stories such as Creation, The Fall of man, Noah's ark, David and Goliath, The Babylonian captivity, and the Virgin birth, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition it also touches on the story of Paul's conversation and the early church leaders.

Downey and Burnett said their "greatest hope" in making the series was that it would "affect a new generation of viewers and draw them back to the Bible." In an interview for the [Huffington Post](#) Burnett said "Part of what we hoped to accomplish with the series was to show that the Bible is not simply a collection of unconnected stories which are often discussed and analyzed in snippets with chapter and verse numbers; instead, we wanted to show how the Old Testament connects seamlessly to the New Testament. How they are one sweeping story with one grand, overriding message: God loves each one of us as if we were the only person in the entire world to love."

Positive Elements:

"The Bible" series strives to capture our heart as it brings the most powerful, influential and, dare I say, controversial book in history to life. And it does so quite well. The series covers the entire bible in five two-hour episodes. Although the producers do take some artistic liberties, they try to hold true to the spirit of the Bible and to their main purpose for creating the series (which was to encourage non-Christians to be interested in the truth of the Bible.). "The Bible" series

captures the events of the Bible very well, and does a good job of cultivating the viewer's imagination and making the viewer understand the gravity of the events they are witnessing. It causes the viewer feel as though the events happening on the screen are happening in real life, right in front of them. It allows those who would not otherwise read the Bible to gain knowledge of the gift and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the son of God.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that when biblical characters (*King Saul, David, Daniel, Jesus, etc.*) pray to God they do so by quoting Scripture. Also, the series begins with Noah retelling the story of creation to his three sons and their wives. This scene cleverly portrays a global flood by way of camera panning action. The series also does a wonderful job of showing the overriding themes of the Bible and includes personal intervention from God and His desire to reconcile man to Himself.

Content:

Parents need to know that this is not a sterile cleaned up version of Scripture. There is some violent content which includes several execution scenes and several graphic fight sequences, as well as a vivid crucifixion scene. The series also contains some other adult themes.

There are also a few theological inaccuracies in "The Bible" series. For example the series depicts the Persian King Cyrus as the one that had Daniel thrown into the lion's den, rather than King Darius, even though the Bible and archeological evidence clearly show that King Darius was the one who ordered the decree. The series also depicts Mary Magdalene as being part of Jesus's inner circle of disciples, and she is always shown with Jesus even when the Bible says that just the Twelve were present. For example, on the night of Jesus's betrayal, Mary is shown in the Garden of Gethsemane with the other disciples, even though the Bible clearly says that only the three disciples Andrew (Peter), James, and John were with Jesus in the garden on the night of his betrayal. The series also doesn't show Saul's name being changed to Paul, rather it just shows him as having the name Paul, even though his name was changed on the road to Damascus.

Conclusion:

Although this series is not completely accurate in every detail it is very well written and over all I would say that it is well worth the time to sit down and watch it with family and friends. While it is important to watch any television program with a discerning eye, we must also remember not to over analyze it. We must keep in mind that "The Bible" series was intended to get non-Christians into read and be interested in the Word of God, and it accomplishes this task quite well. With an abnormally high viewership of just over 13 million viewers each week it certainly fulfills its goal of reaching many with the Good News of Jesus. It clearly shows the connection from the Old Testament's fall of man and the need for a redeemer, to the Good News of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah. "The Bible" series communicates the desire God has for us to be reconciled to Him because He loves each and every one of us. And no matter what you decide about this production, it both accomplished its goal and produced much conversation about the Bible, and that is never a bad thing.