

## FILM REVIEW: 'The Young Messiah' Chronicles Critical Year in the Life of the Christ Child

By Kam Williams  
For The Skanner News



Vincent Walsh as Joseph with Adam Greaves-Neal as the Christ Child

2015 was certainly a banner year for Christian-oriented fare, with over 30 faith-based films being released in theaters. 2016 appears to be following suit, with *Risen*, *The Lady in the Van* and *The Witch* among the offerings already featuring heavy religious overtones.

Directed by Cyrus Nowrasteh (*The Stoning of Soraya M.*), *The Young Messiah* is a Biblical bildungsroman chronicling critical events which transpired during a momentous year in the life of the Christ child (Adam Greaves-Neal). The intriguing historical drama was adapted from *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt*, a best seller by the legendary Anne Rice, the Grand Dame of Gothic Fiction.

That debut foray into Christian-themed literature represented a big departure for Rice who nevertheless earned *Beliefnet's* 2005 Book of the Year for her opus based on the Gospels as well as on theological scholarship. And now Nowrasteh has brought a version of the story to the big screen certain to capture the imagination of the target churchgoing demographic.

After all, the New Testament reveals precious little about Jesus' formative years, and this ambitious project manages to flesh them out ever so convincingly. As the film unfolds, we find Him living in Alexandria and behaving like your typical seven-year-old while His parents, Mary (Sara Lazzaro) and Joseph (Vincent Walsh), struggle with how to go about explaining the concept of God to His own Son.

We also learn that they have been living in exile because of King Herod's (Jonathan Bailey) order his soldiers to massacre all the young boys of Bethlehem. The maniacal despot was determined to prevent the rumored Messiah from ever seizing the throne.

Herod's demise frees the family to return home, although the obsessed centurion Severus (Sean Bean) is still searching for Jesus and sees a little King of the Jews lurking behind every rock.

Meanwhile, Jesus goes about inadvertently healing His sick uncle, curing a blind rabbi, and raising both a bully and a bird back from the dead. And He performs plenty of random acts of kindness, too.

But He remains desperate for an explanation of these superpowers until Mary finally 'fesses up about everything from the Immaculate Conception to the Virgin Birth to His divine destiny. A plausible, cinematic parable presuming to fill in gaps in the Biblical narrative of the Lord's early life.

Excellent ★★★★★  
Rated PG-13 for violence and mature themes  
Running time: 111 mi.  
Distributor: Focus Features

## CELEBRITY INTERVIEW: Terrence J

By Kam Williams  
For The Skanner News



Author/actor Terrence J

Terrence Jenkins, aka Terrence J, was born in Queens, New York on April 21, 1982, but raised in Raleigh and Rocky Mount, North Carolina. He earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Broadcast Journalism at North Carolina A&T University where he also worked as a DJ and was served as Student Body President.

In 2006, Terrence launched his television career as host of BET's "106 & Park." That same year, he made his movie debut alongside Zoe Saldana and Wood Harris in *The Heart Specialist*. He parlayed that success into roles in *Stomp the Yard 2*, *Think Like a Man* and *Sparkle*, to name a few. And just last year, he played himself in the big-screen version of *Entourage*.

Terrence has blossomed into a charismatic actor, philanthropist and author who is now one of the most recognizable faces in Hollywood, most recently, as the co-anchor of the news program "E! News." The three-time Emmy Award-nominee also spent seven years hosting BET's "106 & Park," the longest-running music countdown show in television history.

Terrence published his first literary work, *The Wealth of My Mother's Wisdom*, in 2014, and he's also a model and spokesperson for several brands, including Jeep Wrangler, Crown Royal Black Whiskey, Sean John and Snapple. He's appeared in *GQ* magazine four times in the past couple years, too. Away from work, Terrence is heavily

invested in numerous philanthropic endeavors. For instance, he served as a Centennial Ambassador in the National Park Service's 100th anniversary "Find Your Park" campaign.

Furthermore, he's a spokesperson for Ronald McDonald House Charities Future Achievers Scholarship campaign, a mentor with Steve Harvey's Disney Dreamers Academy, and an avid supporter of the Newark, New Jersey, Boys and Girls Club. Closely associated with the Obama Administration, Terrence has been tapped to host the White House student film festival.

Here, he talks about his latest outing opposite Cassie Ventura in *The Perfect Match*, a romantic comedy revolving around a shameless player who takes a dare to remain faithful to one woman for an entire month.

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