

# MAN OF STEEL movie:



## Got Hope?

By Rusty Wright

**W**hat's the "S" stand for?' Lois Lane asks Superman in the new movie. 'It's not an "S"', responds the Man of Steel. 'On my world, it means "hope".'

A symbol of hope for humanity: that's how *Man of Steel* portrays the legendary hero.

There's plenty of action and drama: General Zod, a villain from Krypton,

warns Superman: 'Surrender within 24 hours, or watch this world suffer the consequences', and appeals to earthlings to turn him in. The explosive action and special effects were so fast-paced in places that I found myself wishing it would slow down so I could take a breath.

There's also light romance: journalist Lois Lane (Amy Adams) and Superman/Clark Kent (Henry Cavill) kindle some sparks as she seeks to unlock his past.

### Higher Purpose

But beyond the escapism, at its core the classic Superman story is about good vs evil. This movie highlights sense of purpose: young Clark's adoptive earth father, Jonathan (Kevin Costner), encourages his quest for identity: 'You were sent here for a reason'.

There's nobility and inspiration: Jor-El (Russell Crowe) predicts of his biological son Kal-El (Superman), whom he sends to earth from

Krypton: 'You will give the people of Earth an ideal to strive towards. They'll race behind you. They will stumble. They will fall. But in time, they will join you....In time, you will help them accomplish wonders'.

There's no Jimmy Olsen and no Kryptonite, but there is *Daily Planet* editor-in-chief Perry White (Laurence Fishburne). And there's a motif that might surprise you.

### Misinterpreting the Story?

When I first heard talk of biblical parallels in the Superman story, I thought that overzealous Christians were reading their biases into the popular tales. Then I looked deeper. They were right. *Superman Returns* (2006) clearly displayed biblical themes. *Man of Steel* is full of them.

CNN asked composer Hans Zimmer if there were any similarities between his two recent projects—*Man of Steel* and History Channel miniseries *The Bible*—since both involve a saviour figure (Jesus, Kal-El) sent by his father to Earth.

'Yes', Zimmer laughed. 'Once you see Superman, you'll see how close you are....Both stories are passions...about a struggle to do the right thing'.

### Multiple Parallels

Jor-El views Superman as Earth's saviour: 'You can save her [Lois]...you can save all of them'.

Public-rejection concerns accompany both figures. Kal-El's biological mother worries: 'He'll be an outcast. They'll kill him'. 'How?' replies Jor-El. 'He'll be a god to them.'

The adult Clark recalls: 'My [adoptive] father believed that if the world found out who I

really was, they'd reject me. He was convinced that the world wasn't ready'.

Jesus, of course, got a mixed reception. His close friend recalled: 'He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God'.<sup>1</sup>

### Life Insights

As for Superman's public reception...well, I don't want to spoil this movie for you. One could make a game of seeing how many biblical parallels you can find. (I've only mentioned a few here.) And you might want to consider some life insights from what you'll find there, too.

*Man of Steel* is a fun film, simple in plot but deep in theme as it taps profound human desires for self-identity, purpose, and hope. 'Hope' is especially timely in our world filled with nuclear rogues, homeland terrorists, devastating disease, and financial uncertainty.

But in real life, absent some trustworthy basis for lasting hope, are we all just whistling in the dark?

Paul, a first-century General Zod (of sorts) who became a follower of Jesus, wrote: 'I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope'.<sup>2</sup>

Got hope?

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> John 1:11–13

<sup>2</sup> Romans 15:3

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