

# Kinder, gentler Moses pictured in new Ten Commandments movie

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**By David Briggs**

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HOLLYWOOD (RNS)—The image of Charlton Heston as Moses has been carved into the minds of generations.

Few who have seen the Cecil B. DeMille blockbuster can forget Heston's majestic, commanding presence as he comes down from Mount Sinai and thunders to a wayward people, "Those who will not live by the law shall die by the law."

Now there is a new Moses for a new generation.



Christian Slater is the voice of Moses in a new animated film, *The Ten Commandments*.

The new, animated version of *The Ten Commandments* features a more compassionate Moses with the voice of Christian Slater, urging people to be faithful because, “God loves you.”

The love story in this movie is not the romantic triangle of Rameses, Moses and Princess Nefertiri that DeMille added to widen the audience for his 1956 movie. It is the love between God and God’s people, a side of Jehovah that often has been missing in biblical epics.

“God is not just this angry ogre,” Executive Producer Brad Cummings said. The film, he stressed, tries to “highlight his desire for a relationship with us.”

The decision to depict the God of Exodus as a loving parent who cares for his children is a welcome addition to popular portrayals of Old Testament stories where God is shown as judgmental, legalistic and wrathful, some observers say.

[Compare the original with the animated \*Ten Commandments\* here.](#)  
[Watch the trailer.](#)

Those earlier portrayals often reflected the misinterpretation that Jesus reveals God as compassionate and loving, but the Old Testament shows nothing but a God of wrath, they insist.

But modern biblical scholars increasingly assert that there is a lot of language of human and divine love in Hebrew Scriptures, said Ronald Brauner, a professor of Judaic studies at the Siegal College of Judaic Studies in Beachwood, Ohio.

The eternal, steadfast love of God is spoken of throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, he noted. Even the suffering Job says to God, “You have given me love and constant care.”

What is clear throughout the texts is “the love of the Divine Being to those people the Divine Being has created,” Brauner said.

In the Book of Exodus, the covenant between God and the Israelites—“my treasured possession among all the peoples”—described in chapter 19 also is a “manifestation of love,” Brauner said.

A goal of the new movie is to counter the stereotype that “God is angry in the Old Testament and thank God for Jesus in the New” Testament, Cummings said.

In the film, God speaks in the soothing tones of Elliott Gould.

Slater (Moses) avoids the stentorian speech of Heston’s character for a

more casual tone, speaking at various points in the film about God's love and desire to care for the people under His protection.

The idea of God's love "is really there. It's in the Bible," said screenwriter Ed Naha. "You just have to look for it."

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