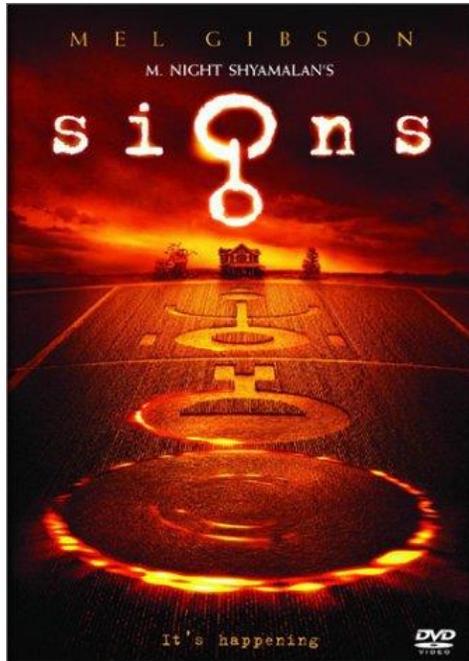


Signs

(2002, 1 hour and 46 minutes)

Directed by: M. Night Shyamalan

Starring: Mel Gibson, Joaquin Phoenix, Rory Culkin and Abigail Breslin



With all of Shyamalan's movies, people have come to expect a twist at the end, much like his debut movie, *The Sixth Sense*. While many of his movies are entertaining and many have caught me by surprise, I think that this is a movie that is, by far, the most profoundly theological that has come out of Hollywood. I went into the movie looking to be entertained, a little scared and finding an escape for a couple of hours. Instead, I came out with a deeper and more transcendent view of God.

Couched in the experience of an alien invasion, the movie recounts the experiences of the Hess family. Mel Gibson plays "Father" Hess, a former religious leader who has abandoned faith in God due to the untimely, unfortunate and accidental death of his wife. Throughout the movie, there are oddities that appear and are present as unconnected elements. His daughter wants water to drink but leaves aides dozens of glasses of water because they are "contaminated". His brother is a great baseball hitter but also holds the record for strike outs – because he always wants to swing away. His son is a severe asthmatic who experiences several distressing moments in the movie.

It is only at the end of the movie when the aliens are thwarted in their attempt to take over the world and all of the disjointed elements of the family come together that the theological message takes root. With the loss of Mrs. Hess, the obsession over aliens by his asthmatic son, the water phobia of his daughter and the batting uniqueness of his brother, the Reverend recovers his sense of God at the very end – when he sees that there are no accidents, no coincidences.

The theological theme of the movie is the sovereignty of God. There are no accidents; there are no coincidences and everything in life is done according to plan.

So often in our world, we see and wonder about things – about events and circumstances, about problems and difficulties and we see no connection, no meaning, no purpose to these things. Yet, the affirmation of *Signs* is that God is in complete control, whether we can see it or not. God is sovereign and there are no accidents.

While many might dispute the quality of the movie, the writing, the acting or the direction, I found it a movie to be both entertaining and profound (a rare feat for Hollywood). I was surprised and scared (after all it is a movie about aliens); I was sitting on the edge of my seat wondering what would happen to the boy and to the little girl. I was wondering all through the movie what the disparate elements had to do with one another.

And then I was surprised by the message – nothing happens by chance; God is in charge and I can trust Him. I didn't expect to be entertained as much as I was. I also didn't expect to have my faith affirmed – and in this movie, for this two hours, both happened!