

Blu-Ray Review: 'Priest' Looks Great Even if There's Nothing Below Surface

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 23, 2011 - 12:13pm

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CHICAGO – “Priest,” recently released on Blu-ray and DVD, is one of those films which suffers greatly by comparison to the works that clearly inspired it. On the level of character and storytelling, this thing is a derivative mess. You’ll never once give a damn about anything that’s happening, especially when the action slows down and the paper-thin dialogue kicks in. On the other hand, the film is surprisingly stylish and has a visual aesthetic that’s greatly enhanced by Blu-ray. It looks great on the surface. Just don’t examine it too closely.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.0/5.0**

Synopsis:

“In a post-apocalyptic world, a savage war between man and vampire raged for centuries. A warrior priest (Paul Bettany) receives word of fresh attacks but now it’s personal, his niece has been kidnapped by a new hive of merciless vampires. To save her, he must break his vow of peace and hunt down the hive before it’s too late. Based on the acclaimed graphic novel and packed with bloodthirsty action, this full throttle crusade takes you on the hunt for a deadly new breed of killer.”



Priest

Photo credit: Sony

With scathing reviews and way too much competition, "Priest" fell pretty flat at the box office, bringing in a scant \$29 million domestically (although the \$77 million worldwide tally isn't half-bad for a movie in which the biggest star is Paul Bettany). Most American viewers will be seeing it for the first time on Blu-ray or DVD (or iTunes or PSN or whatever you kids use for movies nowadays) and this is the kind of action-packed title that usually draws a big home audience. We're more forgiving in the comfort of our own home, especially when it comes to action, always the most rented genre on the market. Just give us the action goods and we'll be satisfied.

The action in "Priest" is pretty satisfying. Oh, it's totally ridiculous and derivative, but when the film pulls together Western, wire-fu, and vampire mythology into a bizarre stew of chaos in the final act, it kind of works. It's certainly not what so many modern action films have disappointedly ended up — boring. "Priest" is goofy, silly, self-serious, and often uninspired, but as Bettany and Karl Urban are supernaturally fighting on top of a speeding train, it's certainly not boring. And there's something to be said for that when all one expects from a rental like "Priest" is escapism. Sure, the storytelling could have been a lot stronger, the dialogue needed another rewrite, and I still don't think Cam Gigandet is going to be a star, but that all falls away when CGI vampires are being ripped into pieces by Maggie Q. Just ignore the dialogue and go along for the ride.

Which is easier to do in HD. "Priest" is a movie that won't work on your iPhone. It needs to be loud, in-your-face, and 1080p for its strengths to even come close to outweighing its weaknesses. Sony has put together a solid transfer (although some of the darker scenes seem more muted than they should) and collected some pretty strong special features. "Priest" is the kind of movie that will eventually have fans, probably more than some of the blockbuster hits from the now-closing summer season. They'll be happy with this release. Even if they don't know it yet.

Special Features:

- o Bullets and Crucifixes: Picture-in-Picture Experience
- o Deleted and Extended Scenes
- o The Bloody Frontier: Creating the World of Priest
- o Tools of the Trade: The Weapons and Vehicles
- o Filmmakers and Cast Commentary
- o MovieIQ+Sync
- o BD Live Enabled

"Priest" stars Paul Bettany, Cam Gigandet, Karl Urban, Maggie Q, Stephen Moyer, and Christopher Plummer. It was released on Blu-ray and DVD on August 16th, 2011.



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