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Inside Bob Dylan's Jesus Years Busy Being Born... Again! **MVD** Visual

I have never really been a Bob Dylan fan. I did know him as the politically charged voice of folk music of the sixties and even became a well known and respected voice in the 70's. However there was a point in his musical career when Bob Dylan became a born again Christian. With this new change of life it affected every aspect of his life and career. His fans didn't much care for his new approach and many certainly didn't like that his concerts had turned into evangelist meetings. The critics nailed him to the wall, to quote San Francisco Chronicle writer Joel Segal Dylan had a "God Awful Gospel!" Fans of Dylan all have their opinions on this part of his career, but one thing you cannot take away from him is that he knew what he believed and he was passionate about it. You cannot fault a man or an artist for that, especially when that expression comes in the form of music.

Inside Bob Dylan's Jesus Years is a two hour documentary/interview made by director Joel Gilbert. This DVD, to me, was both intriguing and yet lacking in many areas. It was intriguing because Gilbert went to great lengths to interview men and women who had close ties with Dylan during these years, including his Bible study teacher Pastor Bill Dwyer, Jews for Jesus' Mitch Glaser, background vocalist Regina McCray and many others. The areas of lacking were the actual cinematography of the DVD and the lack of actual video footage of Dylan's concerts, instead opting for slide show style footage. The background music was at best annoying as you would think songs like "Gotta Serve Somebody" or "Saved" would have been featured since some of these songs were pinnacle during this era. Something that I found interesting (not good or bad) was that Gilbert had close to 30 minutes of interviews with Dylan associates during the 70's and there was no mention of Bob Dylan during these opening sequences. Actually the first 30 minutes consisted of Gilbert asking questions like, "What does it mean to be born again" or "Tell us about the Vineyard (church) movement." Being a Christian myself I enjoyed this part, but none of it was really pertinent to the remaining hour and a half.

Overall, Inside Dylan's Jesus Years was ok. I watched it but I watched it while watching the clock. It could have easily been a one hour documentary and it would have made it much better. Regardless though it was informative and gave me some insights to this part of his musical career and it even piqued my interest and I may go out and actually check some of these albums out. Bottom line is, if you are a Dylan fan and/or a Christian you might enjoy this two hour look into the life of Bob Dylan.

Reviewed by Jeff Holton

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