

# THE PASSION OF CHRIST

By Daniel Clark

On Ash Wednesday, 2004, the movie, "The Passion of the Christ" opened and the Hollywood image of Jesus on the cross was, for the first time in modern history, challenged in full view of the world. Unfortunately, the crass world of the entertainment media does not shoulder most of the responsibility for the mental image of a relatively clean and neat execution of Jesus. Jesus with a few drops of blood falling from a crown of thorns, His side pierced by a spear and nails through His hands and feet was demolished forever in the minds of those who saw the movie as a tortuous preamble to the execution unfolds on the screen.

Replacing this comparatively civilized assault against the Expression of God in human form (Jesus) was a violent, inhuman bloody attack against an obviously undeserving ambassador of peace. The picture revealed in the Bible was much bloodier and inhuman than the movie depicts. The producer/director, Mel Gibson, explained in an interview that the picture was less gruesome because the viewing audience would not be able to endure beyond certain limits. He was correct. The Bible reveals a torture that included having His beard ripped out of His face by the roots. Isaiah 50:6: *I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.* (NIV)<sup>1</sup> He was unrecognizable as a man by the time He reached the cross on Golgotha.

Mel Gibson said that he believed the need to make this movie came by unktion of the Holy Spirit. There are many evidences that support his claim coming from world events, prophetic declaration and the film itself. There has never been a movie that generated as much attention and controversy as this one. Virtually every segment of the media has commented about it. And, the comments keep coming. The reasons for those comments are many.

For us Christians, it demolishes the religious minded view of a cheap salvation and the sound of truth ring loudly as we watch. One woman in California recognized the sheer determination that was required to get to the cross and our need for Him to get to the place where He could say, **"IT IS ACCOMPLISHED"**. Others recognize this movie is about the LOVE God has for us. Still others see, as Gibson commented, we are the ones who put the Lord on the cross and we are individually contributors to His suffering. Other comments range from awareness of spiritual darkness and oppression in the garden at Gethsemane to the gathering of spiritual wickedness to afflict the Son of God through the men who beat and bruised Him on His way to the cross.

The Christian knows Jesus could have stopped the vicious onslaught by simply refusing it but chose not to, so we could be redeemed from the curse released by Adam. The Christian also knows death on the cross did not end the torment, there was still three days in hell ahead of Him before God would deliver Him from a His oppressors and He would make them captive to Him.

Virtually everyone knows, sinner and saint alike, the tortures were undeserved, and this man Jesus **is** the Son of God, the Messiah, and that is the reason for the outcry from sources like the entertainment world. Hollywood has made movies equally or more graphically depicting gruesome torture on men but the filmmakers and audience both knew it was fiction (by definition a lie). In this case the filmmaker and audience both really know this movie is truth and that is what truly disturbs them. This movies script is found in the Bible. It is not a docudrama presenting a twisted truth promoting a political or social agenda. For the unsaved that would be much easier to digest because there is no personal accountability attached to it. Accountability is the central issue.

For one person "The Passion of the Christ" inspires a profound appreciation and thankfulness for the price that has been paid for our salvation and it is viewed as an act of love. Another person might easily see the movie as a bloody, gory story and point an accusing finger at the people that made it. Their problem is, the script is the inspired Word of God. That means the accusing finger is pointed at God. They are in an uncomfortable position to say the least.

John chapter one starts, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*<sup>1</sup>. The word translated Word is the Greek word Logos. Logos means more than the written word of God it is more accurate to say, the complete expression of God. That is who Jesus is, the complete expression of God the Father. The Bible is the Logos (Word) of God. This movie is the expression of God but limited to a specific segment of time or an event.

The Prophets of the day are and have been telling us that we are moving from the age of grace into an age of accountability and judgment and the astute person will expect to see the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of God. They will expect a shift of attention from selfish ambitions to benevolent pro-action as people begin doing well for others rather than themselves.

Before Gibson got "The Passion of the Christ" into the theaters the doomsayers had the attention of the media and forecast utter failure, for both the movie and Gibson. However, after it hit the market the media became consumed by its acceptance and the financial abundance that accompanied it. The big question became, what is Gibson going to do with the Mega millions. In the rush to give attention the fact that God is the one who set this into motion seems to have been lost. It is the Spirit of God that stirs the human heart to embrace the message. God made mankind with the ability to recognize truth. Isaiah 55:11 clearly states, "*so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*" (NIV)<sup>1</sup> When a Creative God says something, whatever He said becomes a creative decree and cannot fail to produce. God has been telling us, through the mouths of His Prophets, that He will bring judgment on His house first and that the world would see a massive turn toward Him in these days. Jesus said that if we lift Him high so men can see Him, He would draw them to

Himself. That is what is happening before your eyes. **Jesus has been lifted high so that men can see Him.**

It is amazing that Hollywood has indisputable evidence that the Word of God captures the hearts of men and continues to think more highly of itself; thinking it will get the same market acceptance by producing fictionalized religious movies. The response is to the Word of God not the drama of the story. There are plans to make a variety of religious movies in order to ride the religious wave. There have been reported plans to make movies about things as blatantly political as “the daughter of God, the female Messiah”. The writers and producers of such drivel clearly have not read or understood the Bible since God only created one man. And then removed a part of him and fashioned the woman from it. Obviously, they do not understand the male is incomplete without the female and the female is incomplete without the male. It is the two together that make a complete man. Of course, the homosexual/lesbian groups cannot agree with that simple truth. But then, neither of these groups is capable of reproducing without moving outside their professed perversion. Without recruiting either group becomes extinct in one generation. Such is the created order God established, you may not like gravity and may voice your opposition to it, at the top of your lungs but step off the top of a building and you will fall to the earth anyway. Some people say they believe in same sex marriage, but it is sin and sin inevitably bring death. That union cannot produce life. There will be no children from it.

The great gulf between life and death, good and evil, is widening. It is rapidly becoming impossible to straddle it. It is in the face of certain destruction that some people continue to try.

“The Passion of the Christ”, the widening chasm, the popularity of sexual perversions, the rise of selfish ambition are all signs of the times in which we live. For those who have, or will receive the gift of life offered to them I say, “You were born for such a time as this. Listen to your Creator and

you will accomplish your destiny in Christ Jesus. It cannot help but be glorious. And you shall live forever.

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