

“THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST”: OUTREACH FOR ANTICHRIST

by Shaun Willcock

As the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, spans the globe, filling theatres, filling the hearts and minds of millions with deception, and filling Mel Gibson’s pockets with filthy lucre, it is necessary for the watchmen on the walls of Zion to speak up, loudly and clearly, to stand against the tide of popular opinion and condemn this movie in the strongest possible terms.

Utter spiritual blindness lies upon the “Evangelical” world today. Such total blindness, that many churches have reserved the entire movie theatre for themselves, and some have even held services *in* the movie theatre *after* the movie was screened!

Ted Haggard, president of the National Association of Evangelicals in the USA, said that this film will inspire believers for decades or even centuries (*Time*, March 1, 2004). Billy Graham has endorsed it strongly – a man who also endorsed Pope John Paul II, accepting it when the Papal Antichrist called him his brother – which reveals *his* spiritual blindness. Jack Graham, president of the Southern Baptist Convention in the USA, endorsed it. James Dobson, that promoter of psychoheresy, endorsed it. So have many others the world over. Utter blindness! “They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matt.15:14).

A very common argument used by those who justify this film is to say, “You can’t criticise or condemn it if you haven’t seen it yourself.” This is an argument Christians often hear, but it is such nonsense. I have never seen a man take another man’s life, but that does not stop me condemning murder as a terrible sin. I don’t have to see it for myself, I have the Word of God which tells me that it is a sin. I have never been to a sodomite party, but that does not stop me condemning the sodomite lifestyle as an abomination. I don’t have to see it for myself, I have the Word of God which tells me what an abomination it is, and there are the testimonies of those who tragically have been a part of that lifestyle. “You do not have to drink poison to know the effects it will produce in the body. You just need to read the label. We will do the same with this film. We will read what those who have produced this film have said about it.”¹

There are at least four reasons for rejecting *The Passion of the Christ*, and *any one* of these reasons is sufficient, *in itself*, for doing so. Even if the only information a true Christian had about this film was the information contained in just one of the points given below, that would be sufficient. No true Christian, or Christian church, would need any further reason to avoid it like the plague.

Let us, then, consider these four reasons for rejecting this film with detestation.

1. *This is a movie made by a vile Hollywood superstar.*

No true Christian, or Christian church, knowing anything about Mel Gibson, and knowing that this movie was made by him, would need any further reason to avoid it like the plague!

All that is necessary is to know something about the man, his lifestyle and beliefs, and for any true Christian, or true Christian church, this alone is sufficient reason to reject this movie with disgust, as something abominable.

The great tragedy of this whole sordid business is that so many, *claiming* to be Christians, see nothing much wrong with Hollywood. It wasn’t that long ago that Evangelical pastors regularly preached against ungodly movies and (long before movies were invented) ungodly stage plays. No members of their churches were permitted to attend the theatre or the cinema to watch ungodly productions. But as the tide of wickedness rose higher and higher, the voices boldly preaching against it grew fewer and fewer. The professing “Church” was engulfed by the world. The world *entered* the professing “Church”, and the “Church” justified this by saying it needed to be “relevant”, to “keep up with the times”, etc. Church members started attending ungodly movies, they let their guard down and began to soak up the filth of Hollywood in their own homes via their television sets... and the pastors did nothing. In fact, for the most part they were as guilty as their flocks. Holiness, separation from the world – such things became quaint left-overs of an earlier era. And today we see the tragic results all around us: men and women, hypocritically calling themselves “Christians”, for whom the TV guide is more important than the Bible, and who know the names and histories of their favourite movie stars better than the heroes of the faith. Church members do not face any disciplinary action from their ministers if they watch ungodly films today – in fact, they openly discuss the “latest releases” amongst

¹“*The Passion of the Christ: a Number of Important Questions Answered*, by Brian McClung. *The Burning Bush*, Volume 35, April 2004. Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church, Kilskeery, Northern Ireland.

themselves, with their ministers joining in! Television has brought the cesspool of Hollywood right into the home at the touch of a button, and the majority of those who name the name of Christ don't care. They happily indulge in it all, and look with disdain at those lone voices in the wilderness who dare to lift up their voices against such wickedness. Yet the Word of God speaks plainly: "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Psa.101:3); "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil.4:8).

I will speak very plainly here: if any pastor, any teacher of the Word, has never raised his voice – loudly and without compromise – against the evils of the movie industry, nor ever insisted that the members of the church over which he has the oversight either reject with abhorrence the ungodly filth that emanates from the movie industry, or face church disciplinary action, he has, quite simply, *failed* in his sacred duty as a minister of the Word, a watchman, the Lord's servant called to watch and to warn. He needs to take a good, hard, honest, painful look at his own labours amongst them, and examine his own calling.

The fact that a movie like *The Passion*, made by such a man as Mel Gibson, could be so acceptable to the "Evangelical" world, is a terrible indictment upon the men filling "Evangelical" pulpits. A huge measure of the blame for the blubbing acceptance of this film by the so-called "Evangelical" world must be laid squarely at the feet of the so-called "pastors", the men who disgrace the pulpits of "Evangelical" churches today. The pews follow the pulpits. When the shepherds go astray, how swiftly the sheep follow. O how solemn that word in Jas.3:1: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that *we shall receive the greater condemnation [margin: judgement]*".

That multitudes of professing "Evangelicals" flock in their droves to watch this movie, first of all reveals the *utter spiritual blindness* that hangs, like a thick cloud, over the professing "Christian" world today; and secondly, it reveals the *shocking spiritual bankruptcy* of the vast majority of men standing behind pulpits today. God's judgement cannot be too far off. Gibson's production company, quick to seize the opportunity to make ever more money from the film, has marketed the film as "perhaps the best outreach opportunity in 2000 years" – and the "Evangelical" world has fallen for this slick marketing hype hook, line and sinker.

How possibly could a man like Mel Gibson make a sound biblical movie? Let us leave aside the man's Roman Catholicism for the moment, as we will come to this later, as well as the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be portrayed in *any* movie, as we will come to this later as well. Even apart from the fact that he is a traditionalist Roman Catholic, this man has starred in violent, brutal, gory movies, full of foul language and sexual immorality. How then can he turn his defiled hands to so solemn a subject as the crucifixion of the Lord of Glory (even apart from the fact that no sinful, mortal man can ever properly depict the Lord Christ in a film), and handle such a theme with reverence, holy awe, holy fear, and with his eye to the glory of God? It is absolutely impossible! The Bible was written by *holy* men of God, as they were moved by the *Holy* Ghost; and it is *holy* men of God, men called by the Holy Ghost, who are to teach and expound it to souls. The men of the world *cannot* teach the true Christian the true meaning of any portion of God's holy Word! And no Christian should ever go to the worldly for such instruction! What, then, are so-called "Evangelicals" doing, flocking to be taught the (supposed) meaning of the crucifixion by a wicked, immoral, idolatrous man like Gibson? And what are they doing, taking the work of such a man and attempting to use it for evangelism? Have they gone completely *mad*? Alas, tragically the answer is Yes. They are blind, they are mad, they are those who "eat and drink with the [spiritually] drunken" (Matt.24:49). Like drunk men, they cannot discern the truth, for indeed they are strangers to it.

The reason this film is so acceptable to so many who profess (falsely) to be Christians, is because *Hollywood* is so acceptable to them. Hollywood, with all its violence, adultery, fornication, sodomy, foul language, etc., etc.! This is an extremely violent movie, and not that many years ago most people would not have been willing to watch a movie with such extreme brutality as this one; but years of constant, daily exposure to Hollywood "blood and gore" have *desensitised* people to such things, and today the average moviegoer is quite used to it, sees little or nothing wrong with it, and in fact all too often actually *craves* it! Like the ancient Romans in the amphitheatres, who had an insatiable bloodlust and watched with relish the agonies of Christians being torn to pieces by wild animals, today's moviegoer craves ever more "reality" in the movies he watches; and Hollywood (including Mr Gibson!) is all too ready to provide it for him. As film techniques and sets improve all the time, and cameras become ever more sophisticated, the world is being fed an ever-increasing diet of "reality" movies and shows; and how long will it be before there is a crossing over to the real thing? Are we really that far removed from the brutality of ancient times? No. Scratch the surface of his skin, and underneath the veneer of "civilization" the average "civilized man" is as barbaric as any ancient Roman citizen revelling in the spectacle of gladiators killing one another in the amphitheatre. The Bible reveals the *total depravity* of all mankind; and certainly this depravity is revealed in the so-called "entertainment" industry. And not just by the producers and actors, but by the *audiences* as well.

This is a film that was described by the non-Christian *Time* magazine as "crimson carnage from the moment Jesus is condemned, half an hour into the 127-min. film" (*Time*, March 1, 2004). It went on to say that this is a film for "cast-iron stomachs; people who can stand to be grossed out as they are edified." It stated that Mel Gibson has invented "a

new genre – the religious splatter-art film”. It is a “relentless, near pornographic feast of flayed flesh. Gibson gives us Christ’s blood, not in a Communion cup, but by the gallon. Blood spraying from Jesus’ shackled body; blood sluicing to the Cross’s foot.” It is so violent, that in some places cinemas have actually provided “sick bags” for the audience! And yet, despite such horrifying violence, many professing “Christians”, no less than those who make no such profession (thus showing that in reality there *is no* difference between them!), have an apparently insatiable appetite for movie violence and gore, and see no harm in it; and now they are able to go and satisfy their bloodlust by watching it in a supposedly “Christian” context!– thereby supposedly “sanctifying” it! How true the following comment: “The ghoulish relish of hordes of professing Christians for the violence of this film is in stark contrast with the attitude of the followers of Christ who witnessed His crucifixion – ‘And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things’ (Luke 23:49). They could not bear the sight of His sufferings up close but displayed the natural reaction of abhorrence at the sight of a loved one’s sufferings and so ‘stood afar off’.”²

Again let it be said: no true Christian, or Christian church, knowing anything about Mel Gibson, and knowing that this movie was made by him, would need any further reason to avoid it like the plague – even if nothing more was known about it than this!

2. *This is a Roman Catholic movie.*

No true Christian, or Christian church, knowing anything about Roman Catholicism, and knowing that this movie is a Roman Catholic movie, would need any further reason to avoid it like the plague!

All that is necessary is to know the truth about Roman Catholicism, and to know that this film was made by a Roman Catholic, and for any true Christian, or true Christian church, this alone is sufficient reason to reject this movie with abhorrence, as an abomination, an accursed thing, an unclean thing.

Mel Gibson is a traditionalist Roman Catholic and has used this film to promote Roman Catholicism. It received the personal endorsement of the pope. Enough said. That is all that Bible Protestants want to hear. Roman Catholicism is not of God. It is a false religious system, not a Christian church, not even a part of the true Church universal (Rev.17:1-6). And therefore, any movie made by a Roman Catholic is going to present a *Roman Catholic version of events*, not the true, biblical version.

Mel Gibson was raised a Roman Catholic, and considers himself to be a Roman Catholic traditionalist. He loves the Latin mass, the central blasphemy of the Roman Catholic religion. He had a priest of Rome on the set of the movie, who offered mass and heard the confessions of anyone who wished to confess. As reported in *The New Yorker*, Sept.15, 2003, when asked in an interview if someone can be saved apart from the Roman Catholic “Church”, Gibson replied, “There is no salvation for those outside the Church”. A devout, fanatical Romanist, spouting official Romish doctrine! And yet this is the man who is being hailed as a true Christian by blind “Evangelicals” the world over!

“It is crucial to realize that the images and language at the heart of ‘The Passion of the Christ’ flow directly out of Gibson’s personal dedication to Catholicism in one of its most traditional and mysterious forms – the 16th-century Latin Mass.... The goal of the movie is to shake modern audiences by brashly juxtaposing the ‘sacrifice of the cross with the sacrifice of the altar – which is the same thing,’ said Gibson.”³ So as far as Gibson is concerned, this film’s purpose is to show the supposed connection between the cross and the Roman Catholic blasphemy of the so-called “sacrifice of the mass”. This is exactly what Rome has always claimed: “The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*: ‘This divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and *is offered in an unbloody manner*.”⁴ This is an outright denial of the once-only, all-sufficient sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross for the sins of His people. The Lord’s words on the cross, “It is finished” (Jn.19:30), are not understood by any Roman Catholic; for they believe that in the mass, the sacrifice of Christ is *re-enacted*, day after day and year after year, hundreds of thousands of times around the world. Romanists do not understand Christ’s words to be referring to the fact that His great work was finished, and never to be repeated in any form or sense. *How then, how possibly*, could a movie about the crucifixion made by a devout Roman Catholic, ever be biblically accurate? It is impossible! And yet blind “Evangelical” pastors reserve entire movie theatres in order to show this film to their flocks!

Jim Caviezel, who pretends to play “Jesus” in the film, is a devout Roman Catholic, who uses the rosary, attends the

²*The Passion of the Christ: What Should Christians Think of It?* by Andy Foster. *The Burning Bush*, Volume 35, March 2004. Kilskeery Free Presbyterian Church, Kilskeery, Northern Ireland.

³<www.gosanangelo.com/sast/lv_religion/article/0,1897,SAST_4948_2601442,00.html> 2/18/04.

⁴*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, para.1367. Published in 1994.

mass regularly, and goes to confession. During the filming, he and Gibson went daily to mass together, with Caviezel saying, “I need that to play this guy” (a true Christian would not refer to his Lord and Saviour so irreverently as “this guy”), and he went to confession regularly, saying, “I didn’t want Lucifer to have any control over the performance” (little does he know that Satan controlled the entire performance from beginning to end, and still does!). He carried what he believed was a piece of the true cross on his person at all times (someone once said that there are so many “pieces of the true cross” in circulation, that if they could be gathered together, there would be enough wood for an entire forest!), as well as relics of various Roman Catholic “saints”. This is a man, however, who, for all his “devoutness”, has starred in movies filled with profanity, violence, sex, etc. His Romish devoutness did not stop him (by his own admission, as reported in *Newsweek*) using a filthy swear-word during the mock crucifixion – without showing any real remorse about it. And this is the man whose face will now be the image in the minds of millions of people the world over whenever they think of Christ! This immoral, ungodly Papist!

And what did Caviezel himself say about the film? “This film is something that I believe *was made by Mary for her Son.*”⁵

Caviezel stated that many in the film crew converted to Roman Catholicism. And yet blind “Evangelicals” hail it as a wonderful evangelistic tool! It has led even more poor souls into the clutches of the Antichrist – and they praise it as leading souls to Christ!

This is what a Roman Catholic website, Catholic Passion Outreach, had to say about the film: “The Passion of the Christ offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for you to spread, strengthen, and share the Catholic faith with your family and friends.”⁶ For all true Bible Protestants, the fact that this is a Roman Catholic movie is reason enough to utterly reject it. But we live in a day and an age when so many, *claiming* to be Christians, see nothing much wrong with Roman Catholicism. The diabolical ecumenical movement has done the devil’s work very well. It wasn’t that long ago when pastors regularly preached against Roman Catholicism, calling it what it is: the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the earth (Rev.17:5). No members of their churches were permitted to have any spiritual fellowship with Papists (2 Cor.6:14-18; Rev.18:4,5). But this has all changed now!

Again I will speak very plainly here: if any pastor, any teacher of the Word, has never raised his voice – loudly and without compromise – against Roman Catholicism, nor ever insisted that the members of the church over which he has the oversight reject with abhorrence everything to do with this abominable religio-political institution masquerading as a Christian church, or face church disciplinary action, he has, quite simply, *failed* in his sacred duty as a minister of the Word, a watchman, the Lord’s servant called to watch and to warn. He needs to take a good, hard, honest, painful look at his own labours amongst them, and examine his own calling. For after describing the Roman Catholic religion in 1 Tim.4:1-5, Paul writes to Timothy in v.6, “If thou put the brethren *in remembrance of these things*, thou shalt be a *good minister of Jesus Christ*, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.” A good minister of Christ puts the brethren in remembrance of the evils of Roman Catholicism. He who does *not* do so, is *not* a good minister of Christ!

Again let it be said: no true Christian, or Christian church, knowing anything about Roman Catholicism, and knowing that this movie is a Roman Catholic movie, would need any further reason to avoid it like the plague – even if nothing more was known about it than this!

3. *This is a film in which the Lord Jesus Christ is supposedly portrayed by a man.*

No true Christian, or Christian church, knowing that it is scripturally wrong for any man to depict the Lord Jesus Christ in art, or to portray Him in a film, would need any further reason to avoid it like the plague!

Even if the man who pretended to portray the Lord Jesus Christ was a good and moral man; and even if he was a Protestant and not a Roman Catholic; the fact remains that for any mortal man to attempt to portray Christ in a film, is contrary to the Word of God, “which makes it clear that any representations of any of the three divine persons of the Holy Trinity are sinful (Exod.20:4-6; Acts 17:29). Although the eternal Son became flesh, we have no idea what he looked like, and so any representation of him is purely imaginary, and inaccurate; and even if we did know exactly what he looked like, we still could not depict him, for his divine glory, which the apostles beheld (Jn.1:14), cannot be depicted; and yet, if only his humanity was depicted, then his nature would be divided – and that is heretical. Furthermore, as Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col.1:15; Heb.1:3), so that he could say to those who saw him that they had seen the Father (Jn.14:8,9), it follows that if we attempt to depict Christ, we attempt to depict the invisible God; but as we can only depict Christ inaccurately, we would thereby depict the invisible God inaccurately.

⁵*The Passion of the Christ: What Should Christians Think of It?* by Andy Foster.

⁶<http://216.239.51.104/search?q=cache:zUEbH4Mz2hgJ:passion.catholicexchange.com/> 2/17/04.

And in doing so, we would have made a similitude of God as a man, which would be sinful (Deut.4:15,16).”⁷

Roman Catholics have never had any scruples about pictorial representations of Christ. Their homes and places of worship are filled with images – idols – supposedly of “Christ” and of many others. They hang crucifixes up everywhere, with images of “Jesus” hanging upon them. They depict “Christ” in paintings, complete with halo around the head. And they *make use of* all these idolatrous images, the vain works of the imaginations of men, in their worship! For they actually bow down to them, and pray to them, contrary to God’s Word!

All such idolatry was always viewed with detestation by Christians. But in more recent times, the “Evangelical” world has become more and more accepting of such idolatrous images. Various movies through the years have contributed to this, in which attempts have been made to depict the Lord Christ. In the late 1970s, another pro-Papist film, *Jesus of Nazareth*, made by Franco Zeffirelli, was very popular in many parts of the world, and the actor who played “Jesus” in that film was deliberately made to look very much like the common images of “Jesus” in Roman Catholic art. Then there is the still-immensely popular film, *Jesus*, which Evangelicals the world over love to use as an “evangelistic tool”. And now this one.

It seems that modern “Evangelicals” are willing to forsake almost all biblical standards, and to adopt the Jesuit motto that “the end justifies the means.” If, to their minds, “souls are being saved” by watching the movie, or “Christians are being edified”, or “Christians are having their faith deepened”, then the end justifies the means. They *profess* to be “Bible-believers”, and very loudly and proudly say, “We believe nothing but what the Bible teaches!” But this is a lie. The reality is that they believe *many* things that are not taught in the Bible – *and they reject* many things that *are* taught in the Bible!

Again let it be said: no true Christian, or Christian church, knowing that it is scripturally wrong for any man to depict the Lord Jesus Christ in art, or to portray Him in a film, would need any further reason to avoid it like the plague – even if nothing more was known about it than this!

4. *This is a film that is biblically inaccurate.*

No true Christian, or Christian church, knowing that this film is not faithful to the Scriptures, would need any further reason to avoid it like the plague!

Even if the man who made it was a good and moral man; and even if he was a Protestant and not a Roman Catholic; the fact remains that it is biblically inaccurate, and therefore is to be shunned by all Christians.

What is inaccurate about it? Many things; but here are just a few:

a. As stated above, it is sinful, in fact idolatrous, to attempt to portray the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not know what He looked like; and even if we did, no sinful man can depict Him. Only the human nature would be depicted (and not even that would be accurate), but the divine nature could never be depicted. And thus, as Christ cannot be *truly* depicted, any film in which some man supposedly acts as Him is biblically inaccurate! It is an inaccurate portrayal of the Son of God revealed in Holy Scripture. It cannot be otherwise.

b. Contrary to what so many “Evangelicals” seem to think, the film is *not* based solely on the Gospel accounts of Christ’s crucifixion. Gibson also based it, to a large extent, on the visions of two Roman Catholic nun-mystics, Anne Catherine Emmerich and Mary of Agreda. Emmerich claimed to have seen visions of the sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ, and these were recorded in her book, entitled *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. It is easy to see where Gibson got the title for his movie! As for Mary of Agreda, she wrote a book entitled *The Divine History and Life of the Virgin Mother of God as Manifested to Mary of Agreda*. Of Emmerich’s visions, Gibson openly admitted: “She supplied me with stuff I never would have thought of” (*The New Yorker*, September 15, 2003). If this was really a movie based on the Gospel accounts, why did Gibson need to “think of” *anything*? All that we need is in the Scriptures. But of course Rome has never believed that. Those two nuns did not believe it. That’s why they readily added their own “stuff”, and why Gibson readily swallowed it.

c. The film subtly gives the impression that it was actually Mary who offered Christ as a sacrifice, not God the Father. “‘The Passion of the Christ’ leaves us with a vision of the sacrifice of Christ that is only dolorous [dolorous: full of grief; sad; sorrowful; doleful; dismal] and which puts into sharp relief the Roman Catholic notion not only of the importance of Christ’s agony, but that of Mary in ‘offering her Son’. In an interview with Zenit, the Roman Catholic News Service, Father Thomas Rosica [the title of “Father” should not be given to any priest of Rome – SW]... illustrated how ‘The Passion of the Christ’, in keeping with Roman Catholic theology, uses extra-biblical content to massively exaggerate the role of Mary.... ‘The Mother of the Lord is inviting each of us to share her grief and behold her Son.’ This use of extra-biblical material, emphasis on physical suffering, exaggeration of the role of Mary, and explicitly Roman Catholic theology should not surprise us, however, as these are all hallmarks of the primary

⁷*Hollywood and the Christian*, by Shaun Willcock (pamphlet). Contending for the Faith Ministries, Lancaster, California, USA, in association with Bible Based Ministries, South Africa.

inspiration for this movie: [Anne Catherine Emmerich's] *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*.⁸

d. There are non-biblical “flashbacks” to Jesus’ childhood with Mary (again promoting Romanism, the cult of Mary).

e. Satan is depicted as “an androgynous creature, a Gollum with weird sex appeal, who slithers through the crowd, working mischief” (*Time*, March 1, 2004).

f. There is much more than this that is biblically inaccurate about the film, but the above will suffice. The bottom line is this is *not* a film based strictly on the Gospel accounts. It is a heretical mixture of aspects taken from the Gospel accounts, Roman Catholic mysticism, Mel Gibson’s own thoughts, unjustifiable poetic licence, and Roman Catholic doctrine.

Again let it be said: no true Christian, or Christian church, knowing that this film is biblically inaccurate, would need any further reason to avoid it like the plague – even if nothing more was known about it than this!

Conclusion

What are some of the fruits of this film?

1. We are witnessing something extraordinary, something diabolically *evil*, in all this: this film has pushed the devil’s ecumenical movement forward! For many decades, Rome has been doing all in its power to woo the so-called “Evangelicals” into its embrace; and it was having much success. But this movie has pushed “Evangelicals” even further into the arms of “Mother Rome”! The barriers are collapsing. Evangelicals are rushing to embrace Roman Catholics as “brothers and sisters in Christ”, so great is their ignorance of the Bible. They are hailing Mel Gibson as a “born-again Catholic Christian”, an outright oxymoron, for no Roman Catholic is a true Christian. When the Lord saves an adherent of this false religion, He does not leave him in that error and heresy. He draws him out, just as He does for any member of any false religion whom He saves. If Gibson was truly converted to Christ, he would repent of his sins, which would include repenting of acting in and making his past movies, and he would forsake Romanism. This he has not done. “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt.7:16).

The Passion has been a giant leap forward for the ecumenical movement. It has promoted Roman Catholicism on a huge scale among “Evangelicals”. “Mel Gibson’s movie savages the Word of God for the benefit of an accursed church with an accursed gospel... We are at yet another turning point in the history of the Church.”⁹ Ex-priest Richard Bennett stated: “The Evangelical church’s acceptance of Gibson’s movie gives shocking – maybe apocalyptic – insight into the state of popular Christianity today. Will history reveal this day as the time when Evangelicalism, on a popular level, merged with the Roman Catholic Church?”¹⁰ Certainly it has greatly *promoted* the merger so desired by ecumenicals. The wall of separation between Roman Catholicism and so-called “Evangelicalism” has been crumbling for many decades, and this film is another, very powerful assault on that wall, causing it to crumble even further.

2. This film, like others before it and doubtless others to come after it, promotes the lie, and deceives people into thinking, that men can somehow be “evangelised” by watching brutal scenes of a crucifixion; that viewing such scenes can somehow produce and strengthen faith in Christ. “It is inferred that all that is necessary to make a sinner a believer is for him to see the sufferings of Christ with his natural eyes. This is a fallacy. Sight is not necessary to faith as Peter indicates when he wrote, ‘Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory’ (1 Peter 1:8). The concept of natural vision leading to faith is proved false by the original events of Christ’s suffering. Of all those who witnessed the original events in real life there are two conversions recorded – and it was the righteousness of Christ not the grotesqueness of His sufferings that impressed them (Luke 23:41,47). The reality and purpose of Christ’s sufferings are received by faith not by sight. The use of the film as a supposed aid to faith embraces the unscriptural notion that visual aids to faith are necessary.”¹¹

“With the exception of Paul, all of the Apostles were eye-witnesses of much of the sufferings of Christ. Not once do these men emphasize the gory details of the scenes they witnessed in order to impress their audiences or to produce

⁸<<http://216.239.51.104/search?q=cache:E3yWWAGCuC8J:forums.5solas.org/showthread.php%3Fgoto%3Dlastpost%26t%3D1518+%22s%202/19/04>

⁹*The Passion*, by Ralph Ovadal. Wisconsin Christians United, February 24, 2004. <www.wcuweb.com>

¹⁰“*The Passion of the Christ*”: Mel Gibson’s Vivid Deception, by Richard Bennett and J. Virgil Dunbar. Webpage: www.beareanbeacon.org.

¹¹*The Passion of the Christ: What Should Christians Think of It?* by Andy Foster.

conversions. Certainly, no gospel presentation of Christ in Scripture ever had a ‘Restricted’ rating as this film does on account of its nauseating and stomach-churning violence! The published trailers for the movie contain graphic scenes that are physically sickening – but are spiritually revolting for the Christian because of their degrading view of the Saviour. God has chosen ‘the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe’ (1 Cor 1:21) and the tactics employed by the Apostles was simply the preaching of the gospel of Christ using discreet but plain language.”¹²

“His physical sufferings made no impression upon many who stood around the cross. Is this not testimony to their inefficacy as a means of witnessing? Grace alone saves the soul. Films of any sort are not means of grace. The enormity of His sufferings involved more than the physical pain. Others were crucified as well. What made Christ’s sufferings so unique was that His soul was becoming an offering for sin. ‘Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand,’ Isaiah 53:10. His soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death. No physical representation of these sufferings can ever be made. The communion feast is not a meditation upon His physical sufferings alone.”¹³

3. It will burn into the minds of millions a graphic image of “Christ” that is utterly false. For millions of people, the face of Jim Caviezel *will be* the face of Christ, as surely as multiplied millions for many centuries have had an image of Christ in their minds that was formed by gazing at statues, or paintings. This is all *idolatry*. “Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw *no manner of similitude* on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of *any figure*, the likeness of *male or female*” (Deut.4:15,16).

4. It will provide millions of people with a graphic concept of the events of the crucifixion that is *not truly* according to the Word of God. Yes, Jesus was brutally treated by His captors. Yes, crucifixion was a bloody, agonizing method of execution, and the Lord suffered it. But Gibson’s movie has much in it that is *not* in the biblical account, and also, it focuses narrowly on one aspect only – the brutality of the crucifixion. The *real meaning and purpose* of the crucifixion of the Lord is not given in truth.

5. Those who go to see it will be encouraged to go and see the other films that Gibson has made. This man, the star of many extremely violent movies in the past, is now being hailed everywhere as a “Christian actor”, who deserves the support of Christians for his “stand for the Gospel” in Hollywood! What utter drivel! But now, children and adults will say to themselves, “Well, if Mel Gibson made a movie about Christ, and if Mel Gibson loves the Lord as our pastors tell us he does, what’s wrong with seeing all his other movies as well? One can obviously be a Christian and still star in, and produce, all kinds of films. It doesn’t matter!” This is, in fact, what is already happening on an ever-increasing scale: actors and actresses coming forward and saying, “I’m a Christian; I love the Lord” – and yet having no qualms about acting in films containing sexual immorality, foul language, blasphemy, and graphic blood and gore. Such is the state of what passes for “Christianity” these days, that this is all acceptable. And so professing “christians” will go on indulging in “the lust of the flesh” and “the lust of the eyes” (1 Jn.2:16), and will justify it all in the name of “entertainment” and “Christian liberty”!

May the Lord’s people continue to preach the Gospel in these days of abounding wickedness and false “gospels”, and let none be tempted to say, “Well, at least it is causing people to think about the Lord Jesus Christ.” Do not be deceived! They will leave the theatres after having had their minds, and their senses, subjected to Roman Catholic indoctrination. The “Christ” they will be thinking about will be the false “Christ” of Romanism. And even if they are reduced to tears, this is the natural human response to intense suffering – aided of course by cleverly angled camera shots, dramatic poses and pauses, lighting, sound effects, and all the other Hollywood paraphernalia. There were a great many people who witnessed the *actual* crucifixion of the Lord Jesus – and yet were the multitudes converted? Did a revival break out? No. Why, then, would the Lord bless the efforts of a Roman Catholic Hollywood actor/producer, who has broken the Lord’s Word concerning idolatry and adding to Scripture, unto the salvation of lost souls? What abysmal darkness has descended on “Evangelicals”, that they could ever imagine such a thing? When the Lord of glory was crucified, the multitudes did not repent. Why would the Lord grant repentance to multitudes now, through a movie such as this? It is indeed a great outreach – but for Antichrist, not Christ.

Today, as always since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, the truth of God stands sure: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for *it* is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom.1:16); and, “For the *preaching* of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor.1:18); for “it pleased God by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe” (1 Cor.1:21).

¹²*The Passion of the Christ: What Should Christians Think of It?* by Andy Foster.

¹³“*The Passion of the Christ: a Number of Important Questions Answered*, by Brian McClung.

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