



Light of Messiah Ministries

.....proclaiming Jesus, the Jewish Messiah!

Volume 12 Issue 3



March 2004

The Passion: A Jewish Believer's View

I've seen it. The movie, "The Passion of the Christ." I have had the opportunity to read many reviews of the movie. I've heard many people's comments. Everyone who has seen the movie has left with their own perspectives and emotions.

I took two perspectives into the movie with me. I watched the movie through two lenses, my Christian lens, and my Jewish lens. Each perspective produced in me different thoughts and emotions.

The Murray who knows and loves Jesus left the movie with an overwhelming sense of awe and gratitude for what Messiah did for me. The graphic depiction of the crucifixion etched in my mind the suffering that Jesus took upon Himself for my sin. I know that Messiah had to die. Watching it on a big screen moved me tremendously.

However, I took another part of me into the theater. The Jewish Murray. I love my people. I am connected to my people. I feel for my people. **What brought me to tears, as much as witnessing the crucifixion, was watching some of my people reject our Messiah.** Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Jesus knew that it was His own Jewish people who were going to reject Him first. And so the way was opened for the Gentiles to come to faith in Messiah as well. **I know that it was a small minority of Jewish people who were calling for the crucifixion. I know that many Jewish people were accepting Jesus as Messiah and mourning the event. But, to see the desire of some Jewish people to crucify Him broke my heart.**

It was also the Jewish Murray who could feel for my people who do not



Happy Passover! The Lamb of God has come!

yet know Jesus. Some Jewish people are scared. It is understandable how a Jewish person can watch the movie and think that it might insight negative feelings towards the Jewish community. My people have lived with two thousand years of being called "Christ killers". Some of my people are frightened.

Several things have come to mind regarding our response to the movie and how we need to think moving forward. I would like to share my thoughts.

We Need to Understand Others

I can understand the Jewish community's fear and concern regarding the portrayal of the Jewish leaders in the movie. The movie was historically accurate, but that does not minimize the fact that it WAS the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day who spit on Him and called for His crucifixion. It was difficult for me to see that on film. It is especially hard for Jewish people who do not know Jesus to understand how that can be portrayed on film and not generate negative feelings towards the Jewish community. **In light of what has hap-**

pened to my people in the name of Jesus for 2000 years it is understandable that the Jewish community is fearful and wary. Worldwide, anti-Semitism is at a high. Most countries around the world are not the friends of Israel or the Jewish people. In Europe anti-Semitism is on the rise. **It is a scary time for the Jewish community.**

Being sensitive to other people groups has never been a strong point for the church. We have failed miserably in the arena of cultural and ethnic understanding. Now is our opportunity to communicate understanding to our Jewish friends and reach out to them. Rather than making the blanket statement, "The movie was not anti-Semitic", perhaps we should tell people that we understand how it can be perceived in that way, and sympathize with their fear. Maybe that way we will gain an ear that might listen to us later.

We Need To Be Faithful To The Gospel Message

No matter how hard it is, we cannot soften the gospel. The truth is, everyone needs Jesus to go to heaven. There are no exceptions. The film, "The Passion" was Mel Gibson's uncompromising depiction of history as it happened two thousand years ago, and his uncompromising view of the mission of Jesus.

Mel Gibson surely used his artistic license to portray the conflict between Satan and Jesus, good and evil. Not everything in the movie can be directly traced back to a specific scripture. **But, the overall message was communicated well. Jesus laid His life down for the sins of humanity. There can be no compromise.**

We Need To "Seize The Day"

One of the greatest things that has come out of the movie, "The Passion of the Christ" is the dialogue that has happened since its' release. I have never heard of so many people talking about Jesus in grocery stores, at the mall, and at work. The movie has made it ok to talk about Jesus!

We may not have this opportunity again for quite some time. As the intrigue of the movie fades away, the conversations may become less frequent. We must take hold of this opportunity.

We "seized the day" in our ministry. **Knowing that the opportunity was before us, and that we may not have the opportunity to address the issue again, we placed a full page ad in the Atlanta Journal Constitution asking the question, "Who killed Jesus?"** The response was incredible. For two days following the ad we received dozens of calls from Christians thanking us for our stand. We also received more than a few calls from Jewish people either expressing their opposition or genuinely inquiring. Some of the most exciting calls came from Christians who have Jewish friends and need our help sharing Jesus with them.

Overall I believe that the movie "The Passion of the Christ" was a well done movie that has given us the opportunity to talk about Jesus even more. Our ministry has benefited from its' release. **More people are asking questions. Jewish people are thinking more about the life of Jesus.** One Jewish lady who we have been meeting with for a while went to see the movie. After viewing it she commented, "After seeing the movie I can see how Christians believe he is the Son of God." Those are the kinds of comments we like to hear!



A Cool Ministry Story

I was on my way out of the office on a recent rainy day. It had been long one, and I was looking forward to getting home. Just before I left, the door opened and in walked a salesperson selling advertising in the Yellow Pages. That was not what I had planned nor was it something I wanted.

The salesperson introduced herself as Kristen and asked me if I had considered putting an ad in the Yellow Pages. I told her that we already advertised in the "real" Yellow Pages and were not interested right now. "You think I might 'convert' you", she asked? She smiled and then said, "I saw your sign outside and am making this courtesy call, but I saw you were a ministry, and I am Jewish."

Kristen is seriously searching for spiritual truth. I shared my story with her. She was fascinated. I had Kristen read Isaiah 53 to me. When she did I asked her who it sounded like to her. "Jesus, obviously", she said. When I told her that it was the Old Testament that she was reading, and that the prophecy had been written 750 years before Jesus ever walked on the earth, her mouth dropped open. "That's incredible", she said.

As she was leaving the office Kristen told me that she wanted to talk more. I gave her a book to read and we will be following up on her.

After she left I thanked God for the op-

portunity to talk to her. **It is incredible how God is moving among the Jewish people. Jewish people are clearly opening up to the Gospel and asking serious spiritual questions.**

Please keep us in your prayers and pray that God will bring more Jewish people across our path. **The Passover season is a critical time for our ministry and is an optimal time to talk to your Jewish friends about spiritual issues.** Bring them to one of our services and let us know how we can help you.

PASSOVER BANQUET 2004

Our annual Passover Banquet will be held at the J.W. Marriott at Lenox on Saturday evening, April 10th. Make your reservations now! Last year we had a waiting list, so don't procrastinate! We must have you reservations by Friday, April 4th. We encourage you to bring your friends and small groups as well as your Jewish friends. Please call our office to make reservations at 770-642-4706. You may also order tickets online at www.lightofmessiah.org.

Thank You!

It is an exciting time to be involved in Jewish ministry. God is moving!

As always thank you for standing with us in our ministry to the Jewish people. Please keep our staff in your prayers during this busy time of year for us.

Serving Him,

Murray Tilles...for the staff
Light of Messiah Ministries

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