



## Easter...Above All

March 22, 2005

**Mel Gibson** recently released a second "cut" of "**The Passion of the Christ**," fitting for the week before Easter.

The "**Emanuel**" of Christmas spoken of by the Prophet **Isaiah** 500 years before His birth was also described in His death in illuminating and undeniable detail by the Psalmist centuries before his crucifixion.

Easter represents to Christians worldwide, the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son for our sin, an **atonement sacrifice**, a **propitiation** (satisfaction of God's righteous judgment of all sin), words our present godlessly secular society wishes to ignore, if not forget altogether.

Of interest to the unbelieving, highly enlightened amongst us--you would think--is that He was spoken of hundreds of times before He was born, spanning 2 millennia. A fair and objective mind should find that not only interesting, but **compelling**.

**Herod** knew of His birth and sought to have Him killed as a baby. Like so many in modern America who want no evidence of His authority over all mankind, including Americans, he was willing and desirous of removing any memory of Him from Judean life. But it was more than that. To Herod, Jesus, even as a baby, was a threat to his power. And so it is today amongst men who love power, wealth and fame.

**John the Baptist**, in announcing His presence said, "**Behold, The lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world.**"

It was **John the Baptist**, who, when his mother **Elizabeth** was visited by **Mary**, the mother of Jesus, who moved noticeably in Elizabeth's womb in His presence. Will we be so moved? Are we now?

**Satan** also knew who He was and sought eagerly to destroy Him through Herod, and then deceive Him, the Christ Himself, just as he does today in the life and minds of all men. His authority was feared, not wanted.

**And we?** We know Who He is...and ignore Him. We want Him to save us...but leave us alone and to our own plans.

It was **Lew Wallace**, the famous Civil War General who set out to disprove the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth, who came to believe the great preponderance of evidence that Jesus was the Christ, the promised Messiah, the Savior of mankind. And then wrote a book about it. Ben Hur.

George Washington called Him, "The Way, the Truth and the Life."

It is this **Jesus** who gives us LIFE, true liberty from the enslaving power of sin and self, and the opportunity to pursue happiness. It is this **Jesus** who set us free from the power and bondage of sin that we might reveal to the world His kindness, His Mercy and His Grace. Grace the likes of which the writer of the hymn 'Amazing Grace' came to know as a slave trader set free from the fetters of his trade.

It was **Christ** who said, "**I am come that ye might have life and have it abundantly.**" And yet men and women run from Him, not to Him!

Amongst the great number of voices who use His name, not in reverence, but as a curse, He and His people are mocked, scorned, impugned (here in America), persecuted, tortured and murdered (around the world), as 'sheep for the slaughter' at the hands of the 'enlightened' amongst us whose self absorbed and foolish plans lead them to death and destruction...sooner or...later, all whilst they ignore and deny His authority over their lives as their Creator.

And many of these sit on the benches of our courts as 'judges'. Many more of them sit in academic institutions across the land, teaching our children, whom we have sent to them, for a 'higher' education. Others lurk on the internet seeking entrance into our homes to spoil the innocence of our children. Still others live in our communities seeking to ravage our children, both boys and girls.

Is it any wonder that the human species continues to wallow in a history of depravity, hatred, violence and jealousy, full of rage, covetousness and anger? Is it any wonder that we have nihilistic neo-nazi youth killing their fellow students and then themselves; child molesters, rapists, murderers and drug addicts, pimps, prostitutes and pornographers, anarchists, butchers, flag burners and pedophiles, homosexuals and lesbians, all expressing their Constitutional 'right' to 'freedom of expression'?

If it were not for Him who was born in a manger in Bethlehem, visited by Kings of the East, sought for by the authorities to destroy, crucified and risen from the dead...there would be no peace, of any kind, on the earth, certainly not in the hearts of men, nor in our families and communities, nor in our country.

**Worship Him and Him only this Easter, dear friends. For He alone is worthy!**

Look at your child and children, with the eyes of Christ. Love them with His enduring and sacrificial love. Hold them close as He longs to hold you. Teach them about Jesus and His love for them, His love for all mankind, and what He has done for each and all of us. And if you have wandered far from Him, know that He has overcome your wayward and saddened soul, your sin and shame, your guilt and self hatred. He gave Himself for you. And if you do not know much of that...go see **The Passion of the Christ**. Take it in to your heart and reflect quietly, thoughtfully, privately, about this Jesus.

Receive Him as a little child who ponders Him in the manger, innocent both, full of awe at a love beyond comprehension, never changing, ever present, that beckons our hearts to let our sin and shame slide away, carried away by His shed blood, covered, never to be considered again.

No self effort here dear friend. There is nothing you can do to earn His mercy...save accept His loving sacrifice on your behalf and in your place. He atoned for your sin, and satisfied the Father's justice. And took it all upon Himself...that you might be free, and if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed!

So as this Easter comes closer, consider the "Passion of Christ". Peer into the face of Him who was born of a virgin, slain before the foundations of the earth. Give Him your sin stained and soiled life, and then....let Him cleanse you by His Spirit. Receive Him in joy..."joy unspeakable" as you accept His forgiveness and His unchanging love toward you. This Easter, **above all previous Easters**, let Him lift your spirit in songs of rejoicing. Believe. Simply believe...that Jesus died for you and you can now be filled with His love, full of His grace, full of His Joy.

Will you let that happen now? You can. Simply believe. **"For by grace are you saved by faith. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."**

Thank you Father for Him who was born in Bethlehem, who lived, and died...and rose again, that we might have Life, His life, and have it "abundantly."

He is **"RISEN"** dear brothers and sisters! For it is God who is **WITH** us...and **IN** us, our Savior!

**Easter..."Above All Names"**

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