

Christianity



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April 1st Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*: analysis of biblical accuracy and level of violence The tremendous sacrifice that Jesus made to redeem people's souls is central to the Christian religion. In order to understand the gravity of the task that the Son of God had to accomplish on Earth, we have to accept the fact that not only he had to endure unjust and terrible physical punishment after being betrayed by his own people, but he also had to fight his own fears and temptations in order to be able to accomplish the task. *The Passion of the Christ* is a movie that aims to present us the great sufferings that Jesus had to endure in order to save humanity and grant us with the possibility of an afterlife. It has indeed been argued that the movie is too violent, but I believe that the cruelty of the punishments in that time period cannot be ignored or diminished in scale and it is our duty to acknowledge the fact that Christ's trial, punishment and crucifixion were not easy. As Christians, we have the conceptual image of how Christ's sufferings were like and I believe that before the movie *The Passion of the Christ* we did not fully conceive or imagine how truly terrible His pain and suffering was.

Acknowledging this fact does not damage the image of Jesus Christ at all, it only makes it more powerful and we come to appreciate more and to understand more the amplitude of His sacrifice. At the same time, some argue that the movie is not entirely biblically accurate and that this could damage to the real version of the way we are supposed to perceive Christ's crucifixion. In my opinion, the movie is generally biblically accurate, presenting the main events starting with the capture, trial and continuing with the punishments and the crucifixion of Christ. After all, the movie reflects the director's idea over Christ's crucifixion and does not pretend to be a general truth. The movie is also an artistic creation, therefore, small

deviations for intensifying the story or stressing a point are allowed. After all, Mel Gibson is a person, like all the rest of us, who presented his vision over the passion and I believe that his portrayal of Jesus' final hours is quite accurate with exception of some extra biblical elements which will be discussed below. I would also like to stress that each of us has a different vision of Christ's sufferings and I am sure that that particular vision is not entirely biblically accurate and this is a normal thing, because we connect spiritually to Jesus' sufferings especially through this personal image we have built in our minds. I believe that the mob, the Jewish priests and their hierarchy as well as Pilate's actions are described in the movie according to the bible. The scenes with the physical punishment and the crucifixion do substantially match the historical data about the Roman forms of punishment and execution, with the exception of the fact that the nails were usually placed on the people's arms, not palms. Still, there are some elements in the movie that I identified as non-biblical. First of all, when Jesus prays in the garden, His encounter with the Devil, or temptation, is played out too much, for example, in the Bible Jesus does not crush a snake, but after all, we can attribute that to the director's vision about the temptation and Christ rising above it by crushing the snake. At the same time, also while praying in the garden Jesus says "take this chalice away from me..." while in the Bible his words are "take this cup away from me". Also, Jesus gets arrested by a single unit of Jewish guards, while the Bible depicts an angry crowd along with the Jewish officers. Second of all, after being arrested, Jesus gets thrown off a bridge and left hanging by the chains he was tied with, while he sees Judas under the bridge. Third of all, after the corporal punishment ordered by Pilate, who is depicted here as a good man, but in reality he was more of a

coward, Mary, Mother of Christ and Mary Magdalene are soaking up the blood with some towels brought by Pilate's wife, actions which are also unaccounted in the gospels. Actually, Mary's image as the Mother is portrayed too much during the movie that it almost gives her an allure of co-redeemer, which is not correct. However, even if the movie has some inaccuracies, I believe that as an artistic piece it has served its role of portraying the sufferings of Christ and making the viewer deeply aware of Christ's sacrifice. Sources: Bock, Darrell. " You Can't Whitewash the Events of the Bible." Beliefnet. 29 March 2011 .