

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

A Chaplain's Notes Special Edition – March 2004

If you have seen the movie, you will know what I mean when I say that the violence done toward Jesus is shockingly gruesome. But you can also sense that is not the major message of the movie.

You can sense that there is something going on beyond the violence. A dramatic feeling begins to surface that there must be some purpose to it all. There must be some reason for it. What is it?

The fact that Jesus remains calm. He does not speak one word of retaliation.



He does not fight back. He is like a lamb being lead to the slaughter. Why?

One thought, one key concept, unlocks the whole drama, and will either draw you to worship or to be repulsed. And the thought is this: what you are seeing being done to Jesus should actually be being done to YOU; Jesus is suffering what YOU deserve. That's right. You. And I. We deserve punishment. We deserve whipping. We deserve death. We deserve hell. You and I are so bad that we would not even tell our closest friends the darkest thoughts of our imaginations.

However God knows you. He knows everything about you.

And what we see in the movie is actually God's love for you in action! The Bible says: 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.'¹ Let me explain further.

Did you know that God absolutely totally despises every selfish, proud, greedy and cowardly thing you have ever done? God is so holy, that He

(1) John 3:16.

absolutely wants to and must punish evil. As it is written, 'The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.'²

The Bible goes on to say, 'The wages of sin is death. But, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God presented Jesus as a sacrifice to take away our sins and His wrath, through faith in Jesus' blood!'³



In fact, 'God made Jesus who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become totally new and clean people! For Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, to bring us back to God.'⁴

Yes, our sins separated us from God, but 'in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting our sins against us!!'⁵

What do you think about that? What will you do in response? You may wish to open your mouth and try and defend yourself. Give up. There is no hope for you in that. Just one look into God's holy law reveals that you are guilty before God. As it is written,

'Whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.'⁶

The only fitting response to make is to bow down and worship God; to confess you are a sinner and to say thank you for His love and grace, and love Him in return!!!

In the words of one of Jesus' first missionaries let me say: 'I urge you, as God's fellow worker, not to make a mockery of Jesus' death for you. For God says, 'In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.' I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation. I implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. Christ's love compels me to say this, because I am convinced that Jesus died for all of us.'⁷

And in the words of Scripture let me ask you: 'How severely do you think a person deserves to be punished who despises what Jesus did for them, who treats as a cheap thing the blood of Jesus which makes you holy in God's sight, and who insults the Spirit of grace?'⁸

Jesus died for you. Accept that fact of history. Bow to Jesus now as your Lord. It is written: 'And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.'⁹

The Passion of the Christ was for you!

With much love,

(2) Romans 1:18. (3) Romans 6:23; 5:6,8; 3:25. (4) 2Corinthians 5:21; 1Peter 3:18. (5) 2Corinthians 5:19. (6) Romans 3:19. (7) 2Corinthians 6:1,2; 5:20,14. (8) Hebrews 10:29. (9) 2Corinthians 5:15.

THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH (CIRCA 700BC)

The LORD says,

"My servant will succeed in his task; he will be highly honoured. Many people were shocked when they saw him; he was so disfigured that he hardly looked human. But now many nations will marvel at him, and kings will be speechless with amazement. They will see and understand something they had never known."

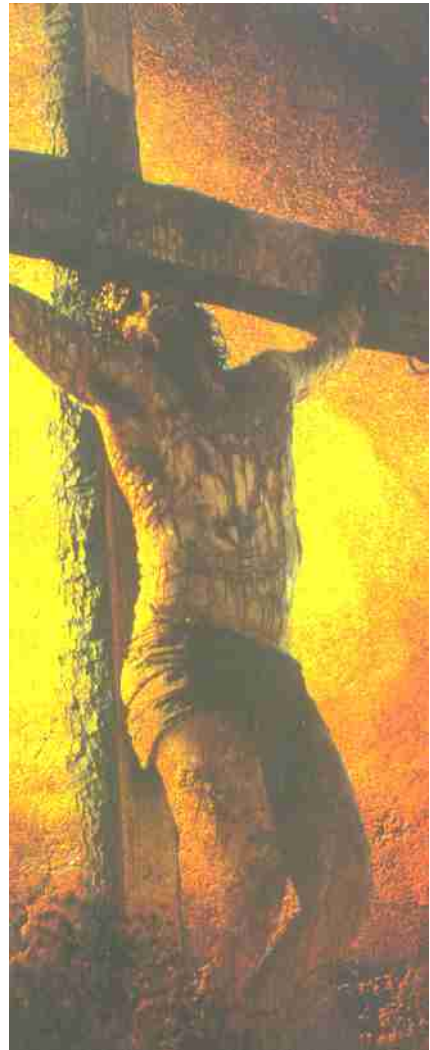
The people reply,

"Who would have believed what we now report? Who could have seen the LORD's hand in this? It was the will of the LORD that his servant grow like a plant taking root in dry ground. He had no dignity or beauty to make us take notice of him. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing that would draw us to him. We despised him and rejected him; he endured suffering and pain. No one would even look at him - we ignored him as if he were nothing.

"But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. All the while we thought that his suffering was punishment sent by God. But because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received. All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way. But the LORD made the punishment fall on him, the punishment all of us deserved.

"He was treated harshly, but endured it humbly; he never said a word. Like

a lamb about to be slaughtered, like a sheep about to be sheared, he never said a word. He was arrested and sentenced and led off to die, and no one cared about his fate. He was put to death for the sins of our people. He was placed in a grave with evil men, he was buried with the rich, even though he had never committed a crime or ever told a lie."



THE PROPHECY

(CONTINUED)

The LORD says,

"It was my will that he should suffer; his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness. And so he will see his descendants; he will live a long life, and through him my purpose will succeed. After a life of suffering, he will again have joy; he will know that he did not suffer in vain. My devoted servant, with whom I am pleased, will bear the punishment of many and for his sake I will forgive them. And so I will give him a place of honor, a place among great and powerful men. He willingly gave his life and shared the fate of evil men. He took the place of many sinners and prayed that they might be forgiven."

(Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12, GNB)

Prayer

Father God,

Thank you for how much you love me. Thank you that even though I am worthy of hell, you don't want to send me there, and that Jesus took my punishment instead.

Oh God, create in me a clean heart, and may I become the person You want me to be. I really want that. Please help me.

Thank you so much for your grace and goodness to me. I praise you forever!

Father, You are so good, and I glorify You!

Amen.

News & Events

You're invited to our next


CELEBRATION SUNDAY

*a Community Church
Service for everyone!!*

Topic: *Managing Stress*



- **Sunday March 21st**
(the 3rd Sunday of the month)

- **5pm - 6.15pm**
(followed by supper!) 

- **Preston Nth East
Primary School Hall**

Bring your whole family!



Peter Kutschker
Community Chaplain, East Preston /
Reservoir (03) 8430 8574
5/3 McLennan Place, Preston, 3072

A ministry supported by Regent Baptist Church
and LinC Northern Region