

Expository Files, 11.3

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Edited by Jon W. Quinn & Warren E. Berkley

Front Page

What Men-pleasers Do
(Gal. 1:10, 1 Thess. 2:4)
Warren E. Berkley

They seek the approval of men above the approval of God. The rule is, human beings have a propensity that welcomes the praise of their fellows. While there may be exceptions, the rule is we enjoy being complimented or honored. The danger is, we can easily become intoxicated and consumed by this need, then crave the praise of men. The next step in this moral digression is, to seek human approval as a personal priority. Those exposed by the Lord in Matthew 6 were guilty of this. They did their “charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them.” The same motive prompted their ostentatious praying and fasting. Among some of the leading Pharisees, there was at least intellectual confidence in the claims of Christ, but “they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God,” (Jno. 12:41). Again the problem was described by our Lord when He said: “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their father to the false prophets,” (Lk. 6:26). Men-pleasers seek the approval of men above the approval of God. ***Let us aim higher.*** The personal priority of every child of God must be, to seek the approval of God, regardless of how men respond to our preaching and practice. Our Father is a “rewarder of those who diligently seek Him,” (Heb. 11:6).

They adapt their message to their audiences. Men-pleasers deliver to their audiences that which will elicit their approval. They have made this their priority. In every time of controversy since Pentecost, there have been men catering to the crowd; even changing and adapting their message from audience to audience, not out of conviction, but to please and to become known as crowd pleasers. Paul and Timothy are examples of men who were

not willing to do this. Paul told the Corinthians: “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, **as I teach everywhere in every church,**” (1 Cor. 4:17). When people (baptized or not) “will not endure sound doctrine,” they should hear it anyway, regardless of response or consequence. When sound doctrine is not the desire of heart, audiences will “heap up for themselves teachers,” and men-pleasers will heap up for themselves a following. (See 2 Tim. 4:1-5) This craving to please your audience can quickly lead to language so concerned with diplomacy, it conveys nothing substantial or scriptural, only sentiment. {I have long believed that there are men teaching error of divorce and remarriage because they want to please the world. They found a way to teach it, twist it and spin it, to make it as easy as the world expects. }

They carefully avoid negative pronouncements. Though God requires preachers to “convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching,” this duty is neglected by men-pleasers in situations where such wouldn’t be welcomed. It is one thing to “speak the truth in love,” (Eph. 4:15), but to speak without truth is not loving, even if praised and applauded by men. There is the exhibition of this, when preachers step so delicately, they trample over truth to keep people happy. An honest reading of 1, 2 Timothy and Titus can bring us to a better understanding of real preaching, and supply both motive and method to avoid the immature, frenzied work to gain the good esteem of men, leaving truth unspoken and sinners lost. Preachers who are “running for office,” seeking trophies from men, building an image, leading a movement, proving their soundness by campaign, or otherwise ill-motivated will wind up withholding needed truth or twisting scripture. The response by faithful brethren should be to use every legitimate means to stop the mouths of vain talkers (Titus 1:9-13, Jude 3,).

They will use association to generate favor (politics). When preaching and practice is aimed to please a group, gain the favor of well-known brother or gain access to a circle or cliché, the point has been missed altogether. When a “brotherhood writer” pens an article to lobby for entrance or acceptance of men, he should not be published if the motive is known. Men-pleasers eventually fall into the sin of undisciplined fellowship, endorsement of anyone baptized and this means – giving no heed to God’s instructions as to one’s association (Rom. 16:17; Eph. 5:11, etc.). Do we not know that “friendship with the world is enmity with God?” (Jas. 4:4). And what a contrast, that some preachers seek reputation when Jesus “made Himself of

no reputation,” (Phil. 2:7)! {The inordinate desire to advance above others was part of the way of life Paul renounced in his obedience to the gospel, see Gal. 1:13-16.}

Every preacher needs to ask himself the question stated in Galatians 1:10. “Do I seek to please men?” Paul responded: “For if I still pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ.” Get the point? The men-pleaser in Gal. 1:10 is **not a servant of Christ**.

What Does Luke 14:12-14 Mean? ***Warren E. Berkley***

“Then He also said to him who invited Him, ‘When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor your rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.’” Luke 14:12-14

Like any other passage in the Bible, this one cannot be understood or applied if contextual information is ignored. The scene is Jesus in the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath and challenged the religious experts regarding their enforcement of the Sabbath (based on human tradition). Jesus observed how the guests “chose the best places,” and in response to this practice He “told a parable” to them. The point of the parable was: “For whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted,” (see all of this in Luke 14:1-11).

Beginning with verse 12, be sure you don’t miss **who Jesus was speaking to!** “Then He also said **to him who invited Him.**” This took place in “the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees.” Jesus observed the guests and their motives (see verse 7). He also witnessed the host and his motives. Luke gives us this information. It is apparently useful and necessary in understanding the teaching and making any application. When we read the opening of the paragraph, “when you give a dinner or a supper,” we ought to understand that as Jesus speaking to the Pharisee who hosted the feast. This is what Jesus said “to him who invited Him.”

Jesus admonished the host: “Do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor your rich neighbors.” If we had only this prohibition, we might be tempted to conclude that nobody should ever entertain or feed their friends or relatives, nor share their table with someone classified as “rich neighbors” (economic discrimination). This conclusion would come in conflict with other teachings we know to require that we afford care and hospitality toward others, without discrimination (Rom. 12:20; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 2:17, etc.).

Hence, this is not just a stand-alone prohibition! It has context. Remember, Jesus has observed the motives of both host and guests; the teaching springs from this scene! Apparently, the host invited guests to this feast with selfish expectation of his own future social advantage. That’s the meaning of the phrase, “lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid.”

I believe Jesus spoke this saying to an audience who needed to be admonished about their motives (both in hosting and attending a feast). The guests were guilty of choosing the best places to exalt themselves (read vs. 7-11). The host was guilty of inviting people, with selfish expectation of his own future social advantage. He invited people expecting future favor (“lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid”).

To stress the lesson this host needed to learn, Jesus stating the opposite; the greater motive: “But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” Jesus is not forbidding us to feed or entertain our relatives, friends or neighbors; nor is He recommending social/economic discrimination. **He is stating the case against the practice of hospitality which finds its purpose in expectation of personal favor (hoping your guests will return the favor; reciprocating).**

W. Clarkson well states the matter in Pulpit Commentary: “THE CORRECTION OF A COMMON FAULT. Jesus Christ did not, indeed, intend to condemn outright all family or social gatherings of a festive character. He had already sanctioned these by his own presence. The idiomatic language, ‘do not, but,’ signifies, not a positive interdiction of the one thing, but the superiority of the other.”

But may the lesson not be lost on us! To seek the best places; to exalt ourselves; to offer hospitality and blessing to others, with the motive and anticipation of our own social or financial gain is short-sighted and misses the purity of the generosity of the Lord. Our good works should, every one, be motivated by the greater, eternal reward. There is recompense far higher than the earthly benefits of throwing a party for our own temporal advantage.

Saved Only By The Glory Of The Lord

Numb. 14:10

Jay Horsley

Today we count as heroes timeless men of faith like Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb. Just think of all the baby boys that have been named in their honor and carry these dignified names. While we venerate them, we often forget how hated they were by the popular mind in their own day.

In **Numb. 13:2-16** Moses called for each tribe of Israel to send one of their leaders into the promised land to spy it out. They were to report back what people and resources and defenses were there. (**13:17-20**) These men surveyed the land for 40 days from top to bottom. (**13:21-26**) These leaders/spies came back and reported the facts about the land. They all reported the great fertility of the land and the strength of its inhabitants. With these facts there was no dispute, but most of the spies drew the wrong conclusion because they had no faith. They reported that the land was too much to take and the people became quite upset. Here we see an illustration of a truth that is often hard and disheartening to learn: that being a leader of God's people and being faithful to God is not always the same thing.

Then Caleb "*quieted the people before Moses, and said, 'We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.'*" (**13:30**) The man of faith took the position that if God promised it to them, they should "BY ALL MEANS GO." For the man of faith the potential opposition of the inhabitants was nothing compared to what God said that He would do. But the other spies thought only from a worldly perspective and contradicted Caleb and misled the people saying that the cities were too big and strong to take.

The people were so firmly convinced of the worldly conclusions of faithless men that *“the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.”* (14:1) How different the the history of this generation would have been had they taken to heart the word of God and the encouragements of faithful men. But they received and meditated on the words of the faithless.

The night of weeping led to a morning of grumbling. (14:2,3) They complained even of their deliverance from slavery because they contended it would only end in their death in the desert. Total lack of faith in God’s purposes led them to revolution against God’s appointed leaders. *“So they said to one another, ‘Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt.’”* (14:4)

At this point the few godly men among them did all they could to stop the rebellion. Even if vastly outnumbered, and that is often the case, godly men must stand firm. Moses and Aaron fell on their face in humility toward God and horror at the people’s rebellion. (14:5) Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes in great mourning and tried to convince the people to have confidence in the promises of God. *“If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us--a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.”* (14:8,9) They implored the people saying that they could have all the blessings that God offered if they would continue in His divine favor. ‘Don’t rebel and live so that they Lord is pleased with you, and all will go well with you,’ they preached.

This show of humility, reliance on God and call to faithfully fulfill God’s plan was met with even more belligerence. *“But all the congregation said to stone them with stones.”* (14:10a) They were enraged that any would stand in the way of their rebellious plans and moved to carry out all the violence that a revolution brings, in spite of the faithful who entreated them to follow God’s way. They were ready to kill. When you reject God’s purpose and promises so completely that you are ready to go back to the world instead of pressing on in faith, you will truly hate those who stand in your way by teaching God’s word.

The only thing that saved Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb that day was direct divine intervention. In our minds we can see the few faithful standing before the tabernacle facing the menacing crowd led by those with rocks. As they closed in, God showed which side He was on. *“Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.” (14:10b)* The light of God shining before them quieted the crowd that day and humbled them, at least for a time.

On this occasion God made a demonstration to show which side He was on. Everyone should have already known that based on what His word. We will not have miraculous demonstrations to tell us which side God approves and which He does not, but we do have His word. That will have to be enough for us. We must learn our lesson from God’s past speaking and appearing and apply it without being shown miraculously on every occasion.

But there are some who are so hardened in worldliness that even a glorious manifestation of God’s power will not stop them. In Acts 7 Stephen gave the Jews a recounting of their rebellions even as *“all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.” (Acts 6:15)* That worldly crew resisted both the word and the miracle and stoned Stephen. If you will reject the word you’ll reject a miracle also.

Be careful how you treat God’s word and those who faithfully proclaim it. Don’t wait for extraordinary evidence before you follow it. If you are not prepared to do what God has clearly said you’d probably reject a divine sign, even if He were inclined to give one. Don’t count on God going to extraordinary measures to stop or instruct you. He’s already told you. So be saved by the faithful word that you already have.

Everyone Who Shall Confess Me
(Matthew 10:32-33)
By Jon W. Quinn

Discipleship is not a secret to be kept. Belief in and loyalty to Jesus as Lord implies using our lives as dynamic confessions of our faith in Him. Jesus simply and bluntly said that the consequences of denying Him will be that He will deny us. He will not lie to the Father in our behalf. He will deny

that we are His disciples on the day of judgment if, in deed, we are not, even though we may have pretended to be when it had been convenient to do so.

Jesus said, "Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32,33).

Jesus invites us to come after Him, but to do so we must be willing to deny self, pick up our cross, and follow Him (Luke 9:23). Consider some of the aspects of "confessing Jesus" as they relate to discipleship.

Whom Should We Confess?

"Everyone therefore who shall confess Me..." (Matthew 10:32a).

Jesus Christ is the center, the foundation and the substance of our confession. He is the exalted king and reigning Lord. His word alone rules our lives.

In all of our activities, teaching and words, we acknowledge His supremacy as our sole authority. His doctrine is our doctrine, and we have no other. Our plea is not "I think" or "it seems to me" or "I just know in my heart" but rather, "The Lord says..." or "It is written..." or "The Scriptures teach...". This keeps us safe from making mistakes (Jeremiah 10:23).

Neither do we appeal to a religious party. It is not a matter of "us" versus "them". "My church teaches such and such, what does your church teach?" is really the wrong emphasis for determining what is right. Rather, we appeal to the authority of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:10).

We do not appeal to a human creed. We do not believe that there is any profit in such lists of beliefs, but much damage can result from them. Division after division has occurred because men were not content to let Christ's word alone be our sole authority, as it was meant to be (Matthew 15:9).

What is truth and what is error, what is right and what is wrong, what is righteous and what is sin, has already been determined by the One we confess. Not by preacher, elder, parent, friend or religious leader, but by Jesus.

Peter confessed to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" and "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (Matthew 16:16; John 6:68). Paul said, "For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard that which I have entrusted to Him until that day." (2 Timothy 1:12). Let your confession, too, be of Jesus.

Before Whom Should We Confess Him?

"...who shall confess Me before men..." (Matthew 10:32b).

Our confession of Jesus is to be made before others. It is for them to both see and hear. But before what kind of men?

a). Before other disciples. This is referred to as "edification" in the Scriptures. It is one of the purposes of our coming together as a church (1 Corinthians 14:3,12,19,31; Ephesians 4:15,16). It is also on an individual level that we encourage and build up one another (Ephesians 4:29).

b). Before the world. This is referred to as "evangelism" and is often emphasized in the Scriptures. Jesus said we are to "let our light shine before men" (Matthew 5:16) and Paul told disciples to prove themselves "blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world." (Philippians 2:15).

If we become fearful, and refuse to make this confession of Jesus before His enemies, we will fail to be His disciples. It happened even during His walk here (John 12:42,43). Do not allow the world to intimidate you into silence.

How Should We Confess Him?

"...confess Me before men..." (Matthew 10:32).

There are two main forms that this confession takes, and both are vitally important to our walk of faith.

a). With our mouths . We speak to others about Jesus. First, there is the initial confession we make after we have come to believe that Jesus is God's Son and prior to our baptism into Him; "...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved" and "...and he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" (Romans 10:9; Acts 8:37).

Also, in our daily walks of life as disciples, we speak to others of Jesus. As disciples of the first century went from place to place, they "went about preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). We find them doing so privately and publicly, in the market place, in homes, by the side of the sea, in court rooms, at synagogues, and in prison, and were commended in the Scriptures of the Lord for doing so (1 Thessalonians 1:8).

b.) With our deeds . Some might occasionally speak of Jesus, but deny Him at the same time by their own unChristlike actions. On one occasion, Jesus asked, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord' and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Their actions were not consistent with what they claimed to believe with their mouths. The Scriptures say, "Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; and the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God has appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil/" (1 John 3:7).

Why We Should Confess Christ

"I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32b,33).

Jesus Christ is our greatest benefactor. We ought to be grateful enough to acknowledge His precious gifts by our daily confession. On one occasion, Jesus used nine men He had cleansed of leprosy as negative examples. After having been healed, they did not return to glorify God or express appreciation. By neglecting doing the thing they should have done

and saying the things they ought to have said, they failed to be what they ought to have been (Luke 17:11-19). What a vivid contrast their example is with the confessing man who had been born blind but that Jesus had healed (John 9:19-23; 24-34).

Another good reason to confess Jesus is so that we may hear Him confess us before the Father's throne one day. But if we deny Him, then He will deny us (Matthew 10:33). What do you want to hear concerning yourself from Jesus' mouth on the day of judgment? Confession or denial? The choice is yours.

What Does the Lord Require?

(Micah 6:8)

By Carey Dillinger

"He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" (NKJV)

The Pharisees of the New Testament were obviously not the first Jews to believe that the letter of the law outweighs the spirit of the law. The Pharisees' form of "checklist godliness" was obviously being practiced by the hearers of Micah's prophecy.

Micah 6:8 reminds us of the conditions God set on His promises to Abraham, namely to do righteousness and justice (Gen. 18:19). Additionally, the directions for Israel from God (via Moses) come to mind: And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good? (Deut. 10:12,13)

Both Samuel and Hosea emphasize God's preference for obedience, knowledge, and mercy over sacrifice and burnt offerings. (1 Sam. 15:22; Hos. 6:6.)

With all of these Old Testament passages in view let's examine Micah's three imperatives if man wishes to fulfill the Lord's requirements and come to realize and live "what is good."

To Do Justly

Adam Clarke suggests that for man to do justly, he must render unto everyone that which is due to them. Of course Clarke does not mean "what is due them" in men's eyes, but "what is due them" according to God's will.

To give God His due. God is deserving of our heart, body, soul, and spirit; our wisdom, understanding, judgment. Jesus tells us (Mk. 12:28-30) that the first commandment is to "love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." Because He created us in His own image, God rightly and justly deserves all of our worship and adoration. "This is the first commandment."

To give your neighbor his due. Jesus continues (Mk 12:31) His discussion of the greatest commandments with the second, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Can we sin against someone we truly love? Perhaps we might momentarily sin against a loved one, but not continually. True love desires to bless and not to injure. Note however that we are not to give that which is due to God to any man - neighbor or self.

To give to yourself what you are due. According to Paul, we are not our own but instead our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). So what we have coming must be tempered by what we must avoid. Paul reminds us first of all to "flee sexual immorality." Elsewhere Paul gives us lists of characteristics to avoid and attain (Gal. 5:19-25)

To Love Mercy

God realized what man has come to know; justice, while necessary, can be cold and unfeeling. (Micah 7:18.) To do justly alone is not sufficient for a child of God; we must love mercy and do what it requires. Mercy comes from characteristics that include kindness, benevolence, and charity. Part of what mercy requires is to be willing to forgive the sins of others as God is willing to forgive our sins. It is this aspect of mercy through which our own salvation comes (Titus 3:5).

To Walk Humbly

But how are we to do this? We must first acknowledge our sins and then be willing to submit to God's mercy. It is only through a humbling of ourselves that we will be allowed to walk with God. "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (1 Pet. 5:5.) Paul points out that it is high-mindedness that leads to unbelief and lack of faith in the power of God (Rom. 11:20; 12:3). The humble attitude required by the Lord will make itself manifest in a life of prayer, contrition, and service.

What Then, Is Good?

Homer Hailey suggests that "the 'good' that [God] requires is the doing of His will." To accomplish that lofty (yet necessary) goal man must act toward God and man according to the divine standard of righteousness revealed in God's will; he must show every man a compassionate warm-heartedness; and walk humbly in recognition of the absolute holiness and righteousness of God by submitting to God through obedience to His desire and will. (Hailey, A Commentary on the Minor Prophets, p. 214.)

There is no "Christian To Do List." It is just not that simple. And yet we know that living Christ-like is not impossible (Mt. 11:29,30). But we must be mindful it is a "life" and not a series of accomplishments.

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Topic Page

"The Passion of the Christ:" A Review **(Ethan R. Longhenry)**

The Passion of the Christ, a movie recently released on the last twelve hours of the life of Jesus Christ as portrayed by director Mel Gibson, has been the discussion of many in the world and also in the Lord's Body itself. Many claims have been made about it, ranging from charges of anti-Semitism to the proclamation by some Evangelicals that the movie is the "greatest witnessing tool of the 21st century." I have seen this movie and will make

some comments on it for the benefit of those in the church and those in the world who may have questions about it.

It is always best to begin such things by commenting on the strengths of the movie. The physical suffering of Jesus is well made in the movie; the agony of the whippings and scourgings, the pain of walking from Jerusalem to Golgotha, the pain of being nailed to the cross and lifted up-- the imagery is evocative and extremely grotesque. Blood is everywhere, and the flesh of the character playing Jesus is heavily marred and abused. The movie overall does well at staying with the message of the Scriptures, although it must be stated that Gibson has added many conversations, encounters, and events that are not specifically stated in the Gospel narratives.

In regards to the claims of anti-Semitism that have been famously spoken of for many months now (in fact, some of these comments prompted me to write an article in September of 2003, [What Makes a Church a "Responsible Church?"](#)), I will simply say that I believe that Gibson's portrayal of the Jews is accurate. In the first century CE, one hundred years after Pompey established Roman rule in Judea and only forty years before the political situation of Judea boiled over into open revolt against Rome, a man like Jesus would cause great consternation to both the Jewish and Roman authorities; John himself speaks of the concern of the former in John 11:48:

"If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

Now, a 21st century perspective of a Jew looking back after the events of the past two thousand years might find the portrayal anti-Semitic, but it must be remembered that the movie is portraying a different time with a completely different perspective: the Jews had not yet lost the Temple, their land, and a large portion of their numbers to persecution. The only fault that can be found in this regard is Gibson's sympathetic portrayal of Pontius Pilate; we know from history that this man was exceedingly brutal and was even condemned by Tiberius Caesar for his cruelty to the Jews; Gibson's Pilate is a man who is internally torn and extremely empathetic to Jesus.

Having said these positive things about the movie, we must now highlight many of the inaccuracies of the movie in regards to the message of the Scriptures. We do this not out of a desire to criticize but so that brethren will

know what to watch out for and for others to see the difference between some of Gibson's inaccurate portrayals and contradictions of the text.

Let us first discuss the contradictions and inaccuracies that stem from Mel Gibson's theological perspective. It must be said first that Gibson is an "old Catholic," one of a sect that adheres to the beliefs of Roman Catholicism but believes that the reforms made in Vatican II in the middle part of the twentieth century are false and that the majority of that church has apostasized from what they deem to be the "truth." As is not surprising, many of Gibson's specific biases regarding Catholicism come out in the movie:

1. **The use of Latin.** The Jewish characters in the movie speak in Aramaic; the Roman characters in the movie speak in Latin (generally; when Romans speak to Jews they tend to use Aramaic and the character playing Jesus speaks to Pilate in Latin). While Latin was certainly a language used at the time and we do see in John 19:20 that the inscription above Jesus' head was written in Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, the eastern Mediterranean world of the first century CE did not speak in Latin but in Greek. This is why the New Testament is written in Greek originally and not Latin; perhaps some of the Roman soldiers from western areas would have known Latin, but even in administration in the east the language was Greek. Not only was Latin not spoken much in the eastern Mediterranean world, it is evident in Gibson's movie that he has used the "church Latin," the Latin spoken in the western churches and in the Roman Catholic Church until only recently (this is obvious because the letter "c" is not pronounced as a "k," as it would have been in the first century CE, but as a "ch," which only is used in later times). The use of Latin over Greek -- and ecclesiastical Latin at that-- demonstrates Gibson's Catholic bias.
2. **The presence of Mary.** We do know that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was present at His crucifixion per John 19:25:

These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

We are not told about Mary's involvement in the time before this; Gibson, however, has given us a very liberal dose of her. While we read nothing of her in the Gospels save at the cross, she is the second

most present character in Gibson's movie behind Jesus Himself. While this alone perhaps could be chalked up to artistic license, the fact that the character portraying Jesus prays to the Father during the walk from Jerusalem to Golgotha and says that, "I am the Son of Your handmaid," and the fact that the character playing the disciple John calls Mary "mother" on many occasions before Jesus gives him this commission at His crucifixion demonstrates amply that Gibson has read his Roman Catholic beliefs about the perpetual Virgin Mary into the account of Jesus' death and has given Mary a role far greater than that given to her by the Gospel writers.

Let us now look at some other inaccuracies and criticisms of the movie:

1. **Mary Magdalene.** Mary Magdalene is present (along with the disciple John) with Mary the mother of Jesus throughout the movie. Her characterization is fairly accurate until we reach a scene with many disputable events. As she and Mary the mother of Jesus get down on their knees and wipe up the blood of Jesus after His scourging (a scene for which we have no evidence anyway), she has a flashback to a previous scene. We see the character of Jesus sitting on the ground writing in the sand and then Jewish men and elders in front of Him throwing down stones and walking away. As this occurs we see the same woman who is having the flashback-- Mary Magdalene--crawl over to the character of Jesus and kiss His feet. The connection cannot be denied; Mel Gibson has cast Mary Magdalene as the woman caught in the act of adultery as described in John 8:1-11. There is absolutely no evidence from the Scriptures about Mary Magdalene as being this adulterous woman (or, for that matter, as a prostitute, which is how she is generally portrayed) or any such thing.

2. **The role of Pilate's wife.** In Matthew 27:19 we read the following:

And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

Here we see Pilate's wife speaking to Pilate regarding Jesus and her advice to have nothing to do with Him. Gibson takes this one episode and for whatever reason greatly increases her role. We see Pilate's

wife standing in the peristyle while the Jews ask for Jesus' condemnation; we even see Pilate's wife coming down to where Jesus was scourged and giving cloths to Mary the mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene who use them to wipe up the blood (see above). This is entirely fanciful and is one example out of many where Gibson has taken significant liberties with the Gospel accounts.

3. **Satan.** We read the following regarding Satan after his temptation of Jesus in Luke 4:13:

And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season.

We do not hear of any specific times when Satan returns to tempt Jesus, and we certainly will not deny the strong possibility that Satan in some way did tempt Jesus during His last hours on earth. Regardless, the ever-presence of Satan in a physical form throughout the movie is excessive. We see him in the garden of Gethsemane attempting to get Jesus to deny His mission; Satan even sends out a serpent from his person toward the character of Jesus; the character portraying Jesus stands, looks at Satan, and crushes the head of the serpent. Gibson has literalized the metaphor of Genesis 3:15:

and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Satan re-emerges at every major scene: the scourging, during the walk from Jerusalem to Golgotha, and in the crowd at the crucifixion. While we certainly will not deny the possibility of Satan having done such things to Jesus during those final hours, we want to make certain that everyone understands that the Scriptures never speak of Satan doing these things.

4. **Accessibility of the movie.** This is a criticism less of Gibson and his intentions with the movie and more of the Evangelical community who is touting this movie as a great evangelistic tool. This movie presupposes a familiarity with the Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus; there are many quick flashbacks of various episodes in Jesus' ministry-- the Sermon on the Mount, the adulterous woman, washing of the disciples' feet; the institution of the Lord's Supper, and many

more-- and there are no references or such things to be of assistance. The flashback of the adulterous woman, as has been noted above, does not even contain the dialogue that leads up to the conclusion; the statement of Jesus, "let he who is sinless cast the first stone," is not even said (John 8:7)! It would be very difficult for someone who is unacquainted with the Gospel accounts to understand the flashbacks and many of the events that transpire in the movie.

5. **Purpose of the movie.** This again is less of a criticism of Gibson than those who heavily tout the movie for its evangelical potential. It is evident from the movie that Gibson's purpose is to show in great detail the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. The physical and mental pain is evident; the psychological suffering is seen throughout. The movie does not speak of the redemptive nature of His death save the quotation of Isaiah 53:5 at the beginning of the film:

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

The movie is full of the physical suffering but the hope of the redemption to come is not explicitly stated; the glory and power of the resurrection and its fruit for mankind is not stated; the resurrection, in fact, lasts but 12 seconds, and all we see is the naked character of Jesus come out of the tomb. If a viewer of this movie is not already a Christian, this movie will not necessarily make him want to be one in and of itself; it shows only the violence and suffering and leaves out the glory and the redemption. All of that said, the movie would be good for a Christian to see to recognize the pain and suffering our Lord went through on our behalf; for the unbelievers, however, there is merely violence and abuse, and no message of redemption.

What, then, shall we say regarding The Passion of the Christ? As long as Christians enter in to the movie realizing its weaknesses and the theological perspective of its director, I believe that the movie does very well at portraying the suffering of our Lord on our behalf. The Gospel writers move over the scourging and crucifixion of our Lord in one verse each; the pain and suffering that scourging and crucifixion entailed was well-known to the

first century audience. We, however, live in a time where anything more than a shot in the arm or a trip to the electric chair is considered a "cruel and unusual punishment;" we only see blood and gore if we see the backroom of a grocery store's meat department or whatever we see in the movies. The cross has become a cute accessory for our clothing; it has ceased to be a tool of pain and suffering and humiliation. We have become very separated from the suffering of our Lord, and this movie can help us to bridge that gap. This movie is not in and of itself a good witnessing tool since it focuses only on the pain and suffering of Jesus and not the glory and the redemption that resulted; there is no bridge made in the movie for the unbeliever to be able to recognize, as the Jews did on the day of Pentecost, that Jesus suffered and died in this way for the redemption of our sins and that God the Father has made this Jesus Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). The movie has many, many inaccuracies and contradictions, and these should certainly be noted; if, however, in your walk with Christ you have ever felt it difficult to understand the pain and suffering of our Lord, The Passion of the Christ may certainly give you a better understanding of what our salvation required.

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The Plan of Salvation ***By Jon W. Quinn***

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Plan #1

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (ACTS 2:38)

Plan #2

On the back page of a tract, sinner were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

The Sinner's Prayer:

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

Final Page 11.3

King Jehoiakim's Bible
By Jon W. Quinn

Prior to the Babylonian captivity, the nation of Judah had become exceedingly wicked. They were immoral, dishonest in their dealings with one another, and idolaters. God sent many prophets to turn His people back to Him. They would call upon the people to revere God again as their ancestors had done, at least during their better moments. They were told that God would continue to bless them if they would turn to God.

Like some of the others, Jeremiah prophesied that doom and destruction were coming to Jerusalem and Judah through the Babylonian Empire. The only way the destruction could be averted was by repentance. History records that the people of Judah did not repent, and their attitude, as a whole, can be summed up by the attitude of the king, Jehoiakim.

We'll consider the king more in a moment, but first consider this: Why would the people not repent? It seemed the logical thing to do. They could not come out ahead by rebelling against God. Perhaps for the same reasons that many people today do not turn to God. There might be a lack of respect, or love, or trust. Or there may be pride or other self interests. But with regard to King Jehoiakim and the people of Judah, consider Jeremiah chapter 36.

Jeremiah is commanded by the Lord to write the prophecies of doom against Judah (Jeremiah 36:1-2). God's purpose for the writing was not to

anger them, but to save them (see vs. 3). Though the words of the prophecy might be deemed rather harsh, understand that God is not happy in speaking to them in terms of warning. He would much prefer faith on the part of the people. He always wants us to do well.

Baruch, a servant of Jeremiah, is enlisted to write the words down as Jeremiah dictates them by the Spirit. (Jeremiah 36:4,18). Archeologists have discovered in diggings around Jerusalem some of Baruch's signet rings which he would use to seal the documents which he wrote, identifying them as genuine. He and Jeremiah are real historical figures. After Baruch wrote the words, he was commanded by Jeremiah to go and read the prophecy in the temple. (Jeremiah. 36:5-6). The message found its way to king Jehoiakim as Jeremiah and Baruch are forced into hiding. The king, after hearing a small part of the message, took a knife and cut up the scroll, finally casting it into the fire (Jeremiah 36:22-23). Not everyone who rejects God's word has such a flair for drama, but the end result is still the same. A few men tried to persuade the king to stop, but most were silent (Jeremiah 36:24-25).

The king then turned his attention to Baruch and Jeremiah, seeking to arrest them, but the Lord protected them. God instructed Jeremiah to write another roll with all the former words and with additional words of personal destruction to king Jehoiakim. Jeremiah did as he was instructed by the Lord (Jeremiah 36:28-31).

The New Testament also has messages of doom, and the purpose is the same - to turn people from their sins. (Acts 17:30,31; Hebrews 10:30,31) God is patient with us, but eventually His patience will end and destruction will come. (Romans 2:4,5; 2 Peter 3:9,10).

Sadly, the spirit of Jehoiakim is still alive and well today. When people reject plain Bible teaching, for all practical purposes, they are cutting and burning the Word of God. One might not go through the literal act of cutting and burning, but the rejection of God is just the same. Why would anyone think that they can alter the truth of God's word by ignoring it. One might as well take a knife to it. But in the old days of Judah, judgment came just as the word of God had said it would, and Jehoiakim's knife did nothing but cut paper. It did not and could not alter the truth. You and I cannot either.

Jehoiakim and his court had no fear of God as they read His word to them. That was too bad. It cost them dearly as individuals, and Judah as a nation. May we as individuals, and our nation as a whole, resolve to do better, and by the grace of God, be successful.