

From Where I Sit . . .

"MORE ON THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST"

In an article entitled "The Real Jesus," U. S. News and World Report, March 8, 2004, two co-authors who we are not interested in naming have begun on page 38 a total assassination of the Christ of the Scriptures, painting rather the picture of what they consider to be "The Real Jesus." Their underlying thesis is that Jesus was a Jewish reformer who wanted to make a break with his Jewish identity. They took exception to Mel Gibson's statement, "You know, critics who have a problem with me don't really have a problem with me and this film. They have a problem with the four Gospels." Their way of playing this down was to claim that "Christians, Jews, even the unchurched- have long had a problem with the way Jesus' life and teachings have been represented and interpreted...And little wonder, given that there are few other religions in which the claims of historical and theological truth are more confusingly mixed." (p. 40). They proceed to imply that the fact that Jesus was a Jew instead of a Christian undermines Christian faith. Their conclusion concerning the film is that "Gibson has helped to perpetuate some of the same misunderstandings that have plagued Christian-Jewish relations for nearly 2,000 years." (p. 46). Obviously they believe that the Gospel writers did too.

A true believer in the Christ of the Scriptures cannot sit quietly while a "respected" magazine purports to give us the corrective "curriculum." The authors claim to have discovered from "scholars" a "corrective curriculum," (p.42) which tries to put the politics of ancient Palestine at odds with the Biblical narrative. They have convinced themselves that since Pontius Pilate was such a mad-man he would not have sided with the "innocence" of Christ but rather would have seen him as a threat to Caesar and would have been the first to eradicate him as such a threat. Ah, but The Scripture affirms that Jesus was no threat to Caesar's throne, and Pilate was convinced of it. The "corrective curriculum" fails to take into account that four historians in the first century (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) wrote an account of these matters during the very time and space in which people were alive who could have discounted such a "fairy tale" if indeed it was a "fairy tale."

The real historians certified it was as it was written. It took centuries for this so-called "corrective curriculum" to be developed as an attempt to explain away the deity of Christ. Such advocates infer that a doctrine of blood atonement was developed more as a matter of convenience to spread a movement. They illustrate by telling us that the concept of the Crucifixion of Christ atoning for our sins which was written about in the 11th century by a bishop St. Anselm had political motivation. They claim that St. Anselm was a friend of Pope Urban II, who called for the First Crusade. Critics say "It was a time of plagues, of savage war, of millennial fever...The notion of Christ's sacrifice was a way of coping with a very violent and brutal world, and it's a way of making sense of it. Crusaders are promised a life in heaven if they die on the Crusades. Enroute to liberate the Holy Land, however, the soldiers stopped in Rhineland where they left up to a third of northern Europe's Jews dead." How interesting! The strategy: confuse Christians by telling them that subsequent generations fabricated a "theology" to justify actions such as the Crusades! Blame the so-called "distorted" view of the crucifixion of Christ for all the hate of the Jewish people in the world.

Well, such is the hate that the world has for the concept of blood atonement for the sins of mankind, and the contempt they hold for the Biblical narrative. It's intriguing that Jesus never claimed to come to destroy the Law of Moses but to fulfill it's very purpose of being. He was a devoted follower of the Law and claimed that not one jot or tittle of it was to pass away until all was fulfilled. (See Matthew 5:17-19). The First Century eyewitnesses to the teachings and crucifixion of Christ were willing to go to their deaths at the mouths of lions, and on Roman crosses, rather than to renounce their confidence in that "*which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life*" (I John 1:1). They certified that He died for the sins of the whole world, including His beloved Jewish ancestry, and "*as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*" (John 1: 12).

..... Terry Broome

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