

The Passion of Mel Gibson
Joseph Herrin (2-20-2004)

James 3:11-12

Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

Luke 6:43-45

For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

I have had an unsettled feeling concerning Mel Gibson's widely discussed upcoming movie "The Passion of the Christ". I have been receiving e-mails for the past year from one individual after another who have been singing the praises of this "historically accurate" and "brutally realistic" re-enactment of the last twelve hours of the life of Christ that culminates in His crucifixion on a Roman cross. One report after another has spoken of the stunned audiences left weeping and emotionally stirred after having watched a preview of this movie.

I have also read of the ringing endorsements of Christian leaders such as James Dobson, and hundreds of other well known and lesser known pastors, teachers and religious leaders. A large part of the church is being mobilized to attend this movie upon its release on February 25, 2004, and they are viewing this movie as a triumph for Christianity and a wonderful evangelistic tool.

Despite all this religious fervor and excitement I have felt very subdued in my own spirit, and I began to pray that God would give me His mind regarding this production. I have sensed the Spirit of Christ drawing me back from all that comes out of Hollywood during the past couple years, and I have stopped looking for religious meaning and inspiration in the movies currently being produced. Movies have become so highly leavened with foul language, sexual immorality, unrighteous attitudes and messages, and deceptive doctrines that it is impossible to try to glean something pure from the midst of the overwhelming corruption.

A couple years ago when the first of "The Matrix" movies came out I was excited by the message inherent in the movie, yet when I later discovered the Gnostic leanings of the movie's creators I was repulsed and determined to have nothing more to do with the series. Just before the second movie was released I sent out an e-mail to

those on the Heart4God mailing list in which I stated the following:

As I read the review of the new movie that is available at www.screenit.com, an excellent site to check the content of movies before viewing them, it is apparent that the trend of the next releases of this series of movies is toward greater profanity and a greatly heightened sexual content. As I considered this the Spirit spoke to me and told me that I was not to go and see this new movie that I might not pollute my own soul, and I felt an urgency to share this with others who might be influenced to see this movie due to the writing I had posted that detailed some of the spiritual symbolism of "The Matrix". The following Scriptures came to mind:

Psalms 101:3

I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes...

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

II Corinthians 11:2-3

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

As I have contemplated the value of these movies one thought has kept coming back. These movies are not pure, but they are a mixture of that which is holy and that which is profane. The movies contain an extraordinary amount of Scriptural and Christian references. They are filled with Biblical types and shadows. Yet they also contain many profane elements such as symbols from Eastern religions, profanity and sexual content that a saint should not set before his/her eyes. All of the good elements from the movies can be gained from a study of Scripture, and the movies themselves are not a necessary tool to gain understanding of what it is to be an overcomer in Christ. Knowing this, and understanding that God detests the mixing of the holy with the profane, I sense strongly that the Spirit is urging me, and I trust He will urge others as well, to avoid viewing the further releases of this series of movies.

Ezekiel 22:26

"Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean..."

Yahweh wanted to so very much impress upon His chosen people that He hates mixture of that which is holy and profane that He would not allow them to mix even those things that we would consider common.

Deuteronomy 22:9-11

"You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, or all the produce of the seed which you have sown and the increase of the vineyard will become defiled. You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together."

If God showed concern even for these things, how much more is He concerned that we do not mix our spiritual truth with images of sexual immorality and profanity?

Even more recently my family and I were brought to a further straightening of our way in regard to movies. As a youth I had read the "Lord of the Rings" books by J.R.R. Tolkien, and I had been fascinated by the literary world he had created and its great struggle between good and evil. Many saints had been lauding this series of movies because it had neither profanity nor scenes of sexual immorality. Tracts had even been put out that spoke of seeing Christ in this series, and much was made of the faith of Tolkien and of his personal friendship with the Christian author C.S. Lewis.

Once more, however, that still small voice was urging me to take a further look at this series. In particular, the character of Gandalf, the benevolent, wise and powerful wizard was brought to my attention again and again. Both Tolkien and Lewis were citizens of England, and as such they were naturally influenced by the writings and legends of ancient England. Part of this legacy is the Arthurian legends that include the wizard Merlin as a central and important character. Even as Merlin is often portrayed in a benevolent way as a ward and counselor to King Arthur, so Gandalf is similarly related to Aragorn as he assists him in his ascent to the throne. C.S. Lewis even incorporated Merlin as a character in his space trilogy where we find him playing a central role in the book "That Hideous Strength".

Yet, just because history makes a people inclined to accept and relate strongly to images of benevolent conjurers, it does not mean that God shares this affinity. As I considered this matter I was led to the following Scriptures:

Leviticus 20:26-27

And ye shall be holy unto me: for I Yahweh am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine. A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, *or that is a wizard*, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.

Deuteronomy 18:10-12

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, *or a wizard*, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto Yahweh: and because of these abominations Yahweh thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

God spoke through His servant Moses and said that “ALL that do these things are an abomination.” Is it right then for man to say that not ALL are abominations, but that some are actually good? Do we not hear an echo of Satan’s very own words to Eve, “Indeed has God said... ALL who do these things are an abomination?”

But what harm does it do to watch a movie where a wizard is portrayed as a noble and heroic character? Measure by measure the resistance of a people is worn away until all manner of evil is embraced. I found it to be significant that at the same time Tolkien’s books were being made into blockbuster movies that the Harry Potter series of books was also being hungrily devoured by children leading to their own movies that were also highly popular. Harry Potter is a young student at the Hogwarts School of Wizardry, and whereas Tolkien was very sparing in depicting the actual workings of wizardry in his books, the author of the Harry Potter series is very detailed.

Millions of young minds have now been indoctrinated with favorable images of wizards and are being led into a free acceptance of those things in the occult realm that God calls an abomination. Little by little, through subtle compromises, society has been conditioned to accept darkness, and many saints have heralded these books and films as positive influences in the lives of the saints.

It seems that everything coming out of Hollywood in these days is tainted, but that should not be so surprising since the leaven of sin and decadence has had free course now for so many years. Perhaps one of the most abominable results of Hollywood’s influence has been her ability over time to lead the church to compromise her obedience to Christ. There was a time when the saints would not sit and listen to vulgar speech, nor watch things that were sexually impure. It was more important to them that they be found pleasing to God who said:

II Timothy 2:22

Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Ephesians 5:3-5

But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Why am I disturbed that Mel Gibson is making a movie on the passion of Christ, and the entire church world seems to have jumped on his coattails? For one, the above Scripture states that “no immoral or impure person... has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” Mel Gibson is an immoral and impure person. In the year 2000 he starred in the movie “What Women Want” where he played a character named Nick whose goal in life was to bed all the women his lustful heart desired. In reading the review of this movie at the following link: http://www.screenit.com/movies/2000/what_women_want.html, it is very apparent that this is a highly immoral movie filled with so much sexual impurity that the details fill a very lengthy portion of the page. To say that this movie is debauched and raunchy is to be very sparing. It is filled with an incredible amount of filth and Mel Gibson is right at the heart of all of it. I had considered including a portion of the description of this movie’s contents from the above link, but after reading what is in the movie I thought better of it.

The Scripture above also states that “there must be no filthiness and silly talk, and coarse jesting, which are not fitting....” This is exactly the kind of talk that has filled nearly all of Mel Gibson’s movies, from his debut movie “Mad Max” that was released in 1979, to the Lethal Weapon series of movies, and many that are more recent. In 1999 Gibson starred in the movie “Payback”, and a reviewer of this movie had the following to say:

Payback (1999)

Although he's successfully played a wide range of characters throughout his career, actor Mel Gibson is probably best known for playing the tough hero character who pursues the villains, rights any number of purported wrongs and kills many of those responsible in the process.

Such characters have been cathartic favorites among moviegoers ever since light first made its way through that thin layer of celluloid and onto the silver screen. Whether he's taken care of aristocratic villains ("Braveheart"), any number of bad guys while in the guise of detective Riggs (the "Lethal Weapon" films), or fended off a bunch of

post-apocalyptic punks (the "Mad Max/Road Warrior" series), Gibson has perfectly personified the character who "takes out the trash" in an audience pleasing fashion.

In playing such characters, however, Gibson never personifies the perfect hero. Quite the contrary, his characters are occasionally flawed and nearly always have a dark and edgy quality about them, as if they're only a step -- or misstep as it were -- away from becoming a bad guy themselves. That's what makes them -- and Gibson's performances -- so much fun to watch.

Well, now he's purposefully stepped across that line in playing Porter, the "bad guy as the hero" character in his latest film, "Payback."

The content review on the www.screenit.com website goes on to detail the usage of vulgar language in this movie, a large part of which is spoken through the mouth of Mel Gibson himself. Please bear with me as I paste in this section, for the issue being discussed is very serious and the saints must be made to understand the abomination that is being committed as such a profane and immoral person as Mel Gibson is positioning himself as an advocate of Jesus Christ while enlisting the support of Christian leaders everywhere in promoting his latest venture.

At least 38 "f" words (4 used with "mother" and 2 used sexually), 16 "s" words, 1 slang term using male genitals ("omitted"), 12 hells, 4 damns, 3 S.O.B.'s, 3 asses, 1 crap, and 8 uses of "Jesus," 4 of "G-damn," and 1 use each of "Christ," "Jesus Christ," "For God's sakes" and "Oh my God" as exclamations.

Lest you should think this is an aberration from Gibson's usual fare, you only need check out the reviews of the "Lethal Weapon" series of movies, of which he has made four. I looked up just one of them and found that there were an identical number of uses of the "f" word, as this most vulgar of words that was once taboo was uttered 38 times in the space of a two hour movie. Also, lest you should think that Gibson has had a recent religious experience and has changed his ways, you should consider that in an interview concerning the movie "The Passion of the Christ" he stated that he has dreamed of making this movie for twelve years. This means that he was thinking of making the movie about Christ while he was filming his sexually debauched film "What Women Want," and also while he was filling his mouth with profanity in the making of a dozen other movies during this time.

Certain actors and actresses and other celebrity figures are often known for a particular genre of film, or a particular vice, and Satan has chosen certain ones to push the envelope of what is acceptable. Thus we see Madonna and Britney Spears pushing the limits of sexual propriety, as has Janet Jackson during the recent SuperBowl half-time show. Satan has his 'anointed' ones who are seeking to spread the darkness of his kingdom to greater depths. In this regard Mel Gibson has been

a promoter of violence and vigilantism like no other actor.

Mel Gibson first burst on the scene with the “Mad Max” movies which were apocalyptic in nature and where violence and self-protection were the theme. He further pushed this theme with movies such as “Braveheart”, and even in “We Were Soldiers”. In the four movies of the “Lethal Weapon” series he played a rogue cop who excels in his violence. In the movie “Ransom” Gibson plays a wealthy father whose son is kidnapped, and when the police are unable to rescue his son in a timely manner he takes matters into his own hands. And of course there was “Payback”, which along with “The Patriot” are all about revenge. There is nothing of godly character seen in these movies. There is no turning the other cheek, or giving place to wrath. The wrath and cruelty of Satan is displayed with great consistency by this veteran actor and director.

In a society that has gone mad with violence, the influence of Hollywood bears much of the blame. By glorifying violence, and violent means to gain vengeance or to take back what one has lost, Mel Gibson has been a leading evangelist of the kingdom of darkness to promote the spread of violence. How do any of these things qualify this man to make a film about the Christ? Christ was a Lamb that was silent before His accusers. He was meekly led to the slaughter when He could have called more than twelve legions of angels to deliver Him and to punish His persecutors?

The legacy of Mel Gibson has been sexual immorality, profanity, coarse jesting, extreme violence and vigilantism. All of these things have been brought into the homes of America and the nations of the world and have borne their foul fruit. These are not the works of the redeemed of the Lord. These are the works of Satan. The wise saint should then be extremely wary when a chief agent of Satan suddenly is seeking to cast himself as an evangelist of the kingdom of Light. Consider again the Scriptures that were found at the opening of this writing.

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Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

Luke 6:43-45

For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out

of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

What then is the agenda of Satan in releasing this film? I believe, and I think the Spirit bears witness, that the goal is to desensitize the masses to extreme, graphic violence. Mel Gibson has been a forerunner in the promotion of violence his entire career. Consider the description of the contents of the movie "Payback" which he made only four years ago. As with all things in Hollywood, the extremity of that depicted must reach greater heights (or depths) in order to shock a progressively desensitized people. The reviewer of this movie stated that Gibson crossed a line in this movie, and this was necessary in order to include more graphic scenes of violence. As you read the partial description of this violence, consider what Gibson could possibly do to top this. In the movie "The Passion of the Christ" Gibson has found a way to do exactly this, and in a way that will insure that a large portion of Christians will watch the movie and applaud him at the same time.

In the movie "Payback" Gibson played a character named Porter. This character was horribly beaten up and physically assaulted. Again, compare this to the depiction of Christ in the passion movie.

We see that someone has shot Porter in the back. Porter kicks open a door that then slams his wife into a wall. Porter and Val purposefully crash their car into one driven by some Asian men who are carrying a briefcase full of money. Those men are injured and/or killed and Val takes one of the wounded and repeatedly smashes his head onto the dashboard and then kicks him in the head. Porter's wife holds a gun on him and then shoots him several times. Val then walks up and kicks Porter in the head and the two leave him for dead. Porter grabs an Outfit delivery guy and throws him across the room. He then repeatedly punches this man when he won't talk, tears the man's nose-ring from his nostril, and then holds his gun to the man's forehead. Although we don't see the actual act, Porter wounds a henchman as we see the man whose head, neck and the top of his shirt are bloody. Reporting for some S&M (sadomasochism) with Val, Pearl, dressed in leather lingerie that shows some cleavage, smacks and punches Val who returns the same to her (which she erotically enjoys). Porter slams a flip-down counter top onto a bartender's hand to get him to comply with Porter's demands. Rosie states that Val can't see any of the Outfit's hookers because he's gotten violent with them in the past. Porter holds a gun on Val and then prepares to strike him, but Pearl stops him stating that she'll do it (for her erotic pleasure). We then see her hit, punch and kick Val several times (he hits her back but Porter stops him) as well as her twisting her foot quite hard onto his crotch. Porter finishes him off by kicking him in the face and we then hear Pearl whipping

him. Some men purposefully run their car into Porter, knocking him down onto the street. The occupants then grab Porter, put him on the hood and threaten to use a switchblade on his crotch, but stop when the police arrive. Detective Hick's partner slaps Porter on the back of his head and Hicks then punches Porter several times. Val holds a gun on Rosie and then grabs her by the hair as he leads her through her place. Her dog then attacks Val, he shoots the dog (but we later see that it was only injured), she attacks him and he then strikes her and then picks her up from the floor with a firm grip around her neck. He then hits her with his handgun. Porter shoots a man in the shoulder, and then again in the knee as that man reaches for his other gun. He then steps down on the man's shoulder with a great deal of pressure to make him talk. Finally, he puts a pillow on the man's head and then shoots him through it, killing the man. A car explosion kills three people. Porter punches Carter's henchman, and kicks one in his head, rendering both unconscious. Porter shoots another man dead. We see another dead or unconscious person that Porter has killed/injured. Porter then holds his gun on other men and fires a shot through a suitcase one man is holding. A man holds a gun on Porter who then takes the gun from him and repeatedly slams his head against the glass divider in a cab. The driver then holds a shotgun on Porter. A van pulls up next to a car and the people inside open fire with machine guns, riddling two of the three people inside the car. Porter manages to get out and fires his handguns into the van, killing many of those inside. The driver, however, backs the van into Porter and drives him backwards into a bunch of boxes. Porter then shoots and kills several more people. A person knocks Porter unconscious and then slugs Pearl. Some men punch Porter and then use a mallet to smash several of his toes, one by one, trying to get him to talk (we only hear the impact, but do see his pained reaction). A large explosion damages a building, kills at least three people inside it, and wounds or kills

<http://www.screenit.com/movies/1999/payback.html#p>

Even as Satan has certain celebrities that are pushing public sexuality to new limits, he also has those who are pushing violence to greater extremes. Mel Gibson has from the beginning of his career starred and directed in violent movies. The Mad Max movies pushed the limits back in the late seventies and early eighties. The Lethal Weapon series continued to promote senseless violence, and they led eventually to the 1999 movie "Payback". Yet extremely violent movies, like those that are sexually graphic, can only corrupt and desensitize those who go to watch them. In the movie "The Passion of the Christ" Mel Gibson has found a way to do a movie that is non-stop violence and brutality from beginning to end, a violence so severe that many who have watched it have come away nauseated and emotionally disturbed for days. And he has also found a way to insure that many of those whom Satan wants to corrupt the most will watch it.

What is the effect of watching two hours of the most graphically violent and cruel behavior that men can inflict on a human being? At first there is emotional shock,

and later there is emotional dullness. Like a man that has eaten so much salt that his taste buds can no longer detect small amounts of the spice, so those who sit through a viewing of such graphic violence will at first be moved to great emotional extremes, but later an insensitivity will set in and it will take even greater things to shock them next time.

I know there are those who will argue that a depiction of the passion of Christ will have positive merits, but do not be deceived, Mel Gibson has been a tool of Satan for one purpose, and that is to spread Satan's own violent nature and make men, women and children everywhere less sensitive to acts of cruelty and physical violence. The leopard has not changed its spots.

I will not be taking my family to watch this brutally graphic movie directed by a master of violence. I will not subject them, or myself, to Mel Gibson's vision of ultimate cruelty. We have the Scriptures, and we have the Spirit of God, which is something that Mel Gibson does not have (One of the fruits of the Spirit is gentleness, and the Spirit of God is peaceable and pure. These are qualities lacking in all of Gibson's movies.) We shall know them by their fruit.

Luke 6:43-45

For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

Selah! Pause and consider!