

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“You Can’t Handle The Truth”

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The above quote is a well known line from a movie. It also fits in describing the reactions of some to the Mel Gibson’s movie, “*The Passion Of The Christ*”, which will open in theaters this next Wednesday. The word “Passion” comes from the Latin word “passus” which means “to suffer”. The movie is dealing with the last twelve hours leading up to and including the actual crucifixion of Jesus, the Christ.

Some religious leaders fear the movie will escalate “anti-Semitism” because it portrays the Jews being responsible for Jesus’ crucifixion. I wonder do these same people have the same concern on behalf of those who promote God? It was also by His “*determinate counsel*” that Jesus was “*delivered up*” (Acts 2:23). Do these leaders think that revealing this truth will create feelings of “anti-Godism”? What about escalating “anti-Italianism”? Pilate, representing the Roman government, had Jesus “*scourged and delivered to be crucified*” (Matthew 27:26). While the Jews were not the only ones involved in sending Jesus to his cruel and painful crucifixion, they were involved. Af-

ter Jesus’ resurrection two Jews did not have a problem in noting that “*the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death and crucified Him*” Luke 24:20). Some want to suppress this truth because they just can’t handle the truth.

Mr. Gibson, seeking some kind of compromise, cut out a line in the movie showing in the States. The line is, “*And all the people answered and said, ‘His blood be on us, and on our children’*” (Matthew 27:25). What is interesting is that according to a newspaper article, Mel Gibson had Pilate saying these words. Was Gibson trying to avoid the “anti-Semitism” charge by having it come out of Pilate’s mouth instead of the people? If so, Mel Gibson can’t handle the truth.

Pilate was trying to relinquish his responsibilities in the matter of Jesus’ death by ceremoniously washing his hands (Matthew 27:24). It is clear that the Jewish people respond with the words manifesting their willingness to take on the full responsibilities of Jesus’ death, not even shielding such consequences from the generation of their own chil-

dren. The leaders had already aroused the people, and “*they all say, ‘let Him be crucified’*” (Matthew 27:22).

The Movie has a “R” rating, due to the graphic violence connected with Jesus’ suffering and death. Some religious leaders are encouraging people to not see the Movie for this reason. They plead, “Do we really have to “see” the crucifixion scene to “know” how horrible it is?

Mr. Gibson deliberately brings to the viewer’s eye the crucifixion to move him or her “over the edge”. Every Sunday I think of the pain and suffering Jesus went through on the cross as I partake of the Lord’s supper. “*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till he come*” (I Corinthians 11:26). I can fall into the habit of remembering that Jesus died for my sins, providing forgiveness under a new covenant, without fully grasping what that death entailed. Such will not be the case after seeing the Movie. It may be that I will not be able to “handle the truth”.