

"My Questions about 'The Passion of the Christ'"

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I had sworn to myself that my newsletter would be the only one in the world not to include mention of "The Passion of the Christ." But then I saw the movie. And now I have some questions.

1. Is Mel Gibson now the most influential theologian in the Northern Hemisphere?
2. Has the film erased the line between pop culture and academic theology, or, has it made that line indelible?
3. What is the responsibility to the text for those who work with visual imagery?
4. Would our response to the film be different if it were set in modern times and entitled, "The Lethal Injection of the Christ?"
5. How would the film have been different if the story were told from Judas' perspective?
6. How will the "Passion" affect Easter Sunday church attendance in the US?
7. Am I the only one who thinks the "Satan" character resembles Sinead O'Conner?
8. After this film, can anyone do an Easter cantata and feel good about it?
9. Why is there no Happy Meal associated with this movie? Has Mel Gibson created a new religious category of the "neo-sacred," territory defined by our holy refusal to make money from it?
10. Are celebrities our high priests, mediating the spiritual to the masses?
11. Is the Jesus of the film the one I heard preached in the last church service I attended?
12. How could a good God allow this film to be in the same theater with "Starsky and Hutch"?
13. Is "The Passion" the largest Rorschach test ever administered in history?
14. Should people buy popcorn for a film like this?
15. Is Aramaic the Esperanto of the 21st century, or is its translation for use in as subtitles in 38 nations a cinematic echo of the Day of Pentecost, a sort of linguistic sign that times that are post-Christian are never post-Christ?
16. Why didn't this film move me—even a little bit? Perhaps this is what happens when one is assigned, as I was, to see a film for purposes of presenting a review. The work assignment changes the experience.