

**Articles and Sermons :: Who Really Killed Jesus? by Art Katz****Who Really Killed Jesus? by Art Katz - posted by HeartSong, on: 2010/4/2 12:33****Who Really Killed Jesus?***by Art Katz*

Some Comments to the Newsweek Article of February 16, 2004

So horrendous has been the cost to the Jewish community of the cry, 'Christ-killer,' that any references of the crucifixion of Jesus are shunned with horror. Now with the advent of Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*, Jewish fears are again being stirred coming as it is in a season of heightened anti-Semitism throughout the world.

The question remains, however, what if the charge of Christ-killer is true? The New Testament accounts seem to indicate that, indeed, the charge is true. In his first public messages to Jewish hearers, the Apostle Peter in Acts 2:23, 36 and 3:15 and 4:10 all unequivocally indict "all the people of Israel" in his death "*whom ye crucified*"; "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just...*and killed the Prince of life*"; "let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, *whom you have crucified both Lord and Christ*"; "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and knowledge of God *ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*."

How else shall we account for the thousands converted and baptized at the hearing of this message? Generations of even the most devoted missionary labors have not begun to yield such harvest as this. Could it be that the Holy Spirit waits to anoint unto conviction of the hearer, the hard and true words which we shrink to bring? So do we read, "Now when they heard **this**, *they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" (Acts 2:37; my emphasis throughout).

The author of the article, reflecting the conventional wisdom, and without showing how, assures the reader that "the Christian narratives have sometimes been contorted to lay the responsibility at the feet of the Jewish people, a *contortion* that has long fueled the fires of anti-Semitism" (p.46). Even *truth* can be employed to fuel fires. The fact that this truth has been so unhappily, tragically misused does not in one whit alter what may be the truth of it. That very 'mis-employment, might be the judgment or consequence of the hideous sin that has haunted us down through the ages, not as divine retribution, but the love that awaits the repentance that the acknowledgment of the hard truth alone can bring!

To seek to absolve Jews by contradicting what God in the scriptures makes unequivocally true is to do injustice to God; it is, in effect, to crucify Him afresh. It is to elevate the interests of man above God - the root of idolatry - for which sin the Son of Man was ironically given to expiate! Our very indignation at being thought sinners, is its own indictment! Indeed, if Jesus is God, the whole world is indicted!

God has deposited an indigestible lump into the craw of history. Rail as we will, and contrive as we will-this lump will not let us go. We are required to deny or affirm, blaspheme or worship. "This child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against...*that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*" (Luke 2:34,35)! Simeon, the aged saint who spoke those words prophetically, was told by the Holy Spirit "that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ." By *the Spirit*, he was able to make that identification over an otherwise undistinguishable child. Generations of Jews since, indeed most of every nation, having indubitably more evidence yet, fail to see. Perhaps Simeon was unwilling to be placated by any lesser thing because of his grief for a nation, or world, that is godless, frenzied and inexorably corrupt. In that posture, he was rewarded with a glimpse of the divine alternative!

On the other hand, it was eye-opening to have watched the TV news following the Diane Sawyer interview of Gibson-the hiring of \$25 million a year athletes; a man accused of almost beating a three month old infant to death; a survey conducted by Catholic officials with shocking statistics of sexual molestation; rampant heroin addiction among suburban, middle-class teenagers; advertisements for new gadgets on late model cars. It was a whole garish unreality described in every news report. How can you not be grieved by such an unbelieving, unregenerate and stupefied world-even the condition, evidently, of the naïve film maker himself?

The Cross is the epicenter of Reality. The thump heard around the world as it was lowered into its earthly socket bearing its holy but anguished freight, reverberates chillingly still! It is an ultimate cosmic event; who can avoid it? Jewish culpa

bility does not exhaust it, for we are *all* subsumed in their sin, not as Jews per se, but as mankind. Who can comprehend that, "*Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin*"? God Himself is the only acceptable sacrifice as a "one-and-for-all" whose righteous blood "shed for us" was prophesied seven centuries before by the Psalmist David, "*the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet*" (Ps. 22:16). And God, speaking through the prophet Zechariah, foretold the future event: "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced" (12:10)! The very magnitude of the sacrifice reveals the enormity of our sin. God forbid it should be trivialized and become the subject of small banter, puerile interviews, condescension and accommodation to men, by men, for men, secular, humanistic-even, especially, *religious* (sonorous, stately, pontifical, pious, solemn, unreal, **false**)! Jesus wept.

So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider (Isaiah 52:15).

So also do I suspect, that this controversial film is a last days' provision of God to enable men, especially us Jews, to see what had not been told us! May we consider what we had not been told. Even those believers, already saved, seeing the film as preview, were stunned, pierced to their depths by the enactment of their faith. The gospel, the apostle Paul reminds us, *is the power of God unto salvation*. Jesus said: "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32)

Despite all disputation, all conjecture of the social effect of the film, the very viewing, the making visible of what had not been told us, will perform its inexorable, indefinable work. We will be undone, skewered, left gasping-as if in one fell swoop the whole fabric, the curtain of unreality had been torn asunder to reveal the ineffable glory. Sentence has been passed on the God-rejecting world; *the arm of the Lord has been revealed; we have believed the report* (Isaiah 53:1) and are saved! All categories are eclipsed; all religious distinctions dissolved; **Reality** triumphs indisputably! We believe. *This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He has sent...Whom He has raised! He has risen from the dead, He is Lord. To him every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*