



# אלהי מצודי **Maoz Israel**

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R E P O R T

## Why Jews are Afraid of Jesus

By Shira Sorko-Ram



Schaffman's voice was one of a multitude of Israelis and Jews across the world who wished so earnestly that the film had not been made. The average Christian would assume that this response simply comes from Jewish rejection of Jesus. But often that is *not* the case!

What, then, has caused our Jewish people to literally freak out over *The Passion*? Unfortunately, there is very good reason for such concern—and it is imperative for Christians to know the answer to this question.

Some of what I am about to write may be difficult, but hear me out because this information

Across the board, Christians of all types almost universally see no anti-Semitism in the movie, *The Passion*, but rather they see their beloved Yeshua who intentionally gave His life for their sins.

But Mel Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*, has brought to the surface an explosion of outcries and protest, exposing a deeply rooted anxiety and dread in the hearts of the Jewish people that is extremely difficult for Christians to comprehend.

Christians, especially in the Americas, are barely aware of the history of European Jewish-Christian relations over the last 2000 years, and therefore are astounded at comments such as those of Jerusalem Post journalist, Stuart Schaffman, who professes not to have any aversion to Christianity, but who wrote, "What shocked me more as I watched *The Passion*...was just how unambiguously anti-Semitic Gibson's film turned out to be." (Jerusalem Post, Mar. 22,04)

is critical to the returning of the Jewish people to the God of Israel and His Son, Yeshua.

Christians must comprehend this: Jews are *not* automatically against the story of Yeshua's death being told; they *are* terrified that the Christian world, and the entire world for that matter, will see the Jewish people as His killers.

### PART I. THE FOUNDATION IS LAID

The sad, but incontrovertible truth is that Christianity, in its infancy, laid the foundation for a doctrine of hatred towards the Jew as an individual and as a nation. Satan's well-thought-out plan to cleave and separate the link between the Messiah and the Jewish community forever was thus incubated and spawned.

The theology is nearly 2000 years old: The Jews, being forever rejected by God because they rejected and killed Christ, are now replaced by the Church. The early Church fathers gave themselves over to hatred of the Jewish people, and then imposed it on their Christian fold by making their

contempt into Church dogma. There are three main Scriptures in the New Testament on which this doctrine is based. Comparing these Scriptures with others is for another article, but it is important to know what anti-Semites have used as their Biblical basis:

1. "And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.'" Matthew 27:25
2. "'You are of your father the devil, and the desire of your father you want to do.'" John 8:44
3. "'Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you.'" Revelation: 3:9

Over the first 1000 years after the Messiah's death and resurrection, the Jewish people were gradually subjected to a demonization of their national character. The Church attributed to the Jews all of the evils of the world – the portrayal of Jews as the enemy of all that is good and the repository of all that is evil. The Jews were Esau, the Christians Jacob. The Jews were Cain and the Christians Abel.

The Jews were accused of poisoning the wells of Europe and causing the bubonic plague among the gentiles. The Church fathers such as Justin Martyr, Gregory of Nyssa and John Chrysostom laid the foundation for the phenomenon of extreme hatred towards a people unparalleled in the annals of nations. Hear St. John Chrysostom in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century: [The Jews are the] "most miserable of all men...lustful, rapacious, greedy, perfidious bandits....inveterate murders, destroyers, men possessed by the devil....The synagogue is not only a whorehouse and a theater; it is also a den of thieves and a haunt of wild animals."

St. Jerome, about the same time, stated of the synagogue, "If you call it a brothel, a den of vice, the Devil's refuge, Satan's fortress, a place to deprave the soul...you are still saying less than it deserves."

Theologically, for the Church to validate the premise that she was the "True Israel," or the "Israel according to the Spirit," heir to the divine promises, it was essential that the Church discredit the "Israel according to the flesh." In

order to substantiate the doctrine that God had transferred His love to the Christians, the clergy had to show proof that God had cast away His ancient people.

After Christianity became the official religion of the Roman state (321 A.D.), the emperors began to translate Church theology into more practical forms. Gradually, the

Christian nations took away the civil rights, human rights, and practical rights of the Jewish people. Jews became illegal aliens in the Christian lands, even though they had often lived there for generations.

Jews were not allowed to own land, to work in most professions, to attend universities or to hold public office. In some areas, they were not allowed to eat in the company of non-Jews. In many countries, they were reduced to abject poverty, cursed and despised by their Christian neighbors, and subjected to brutal decrees by the Christian rulers.

Now I am aware that the readers of this article are quite sure that the vast majority of citizens living in these European Christian lands were no more true followers of Jesus, born-again by the Spirit of God, than are their descendants today. Nevertheless, during those many centuries, unlike today, Europeans definitely considered themselves Christians, and so did the Jews.

Because of the intensity of Christian degradation during the Dark Ages, there was a steady flow of Jews migrating to Islamic countries. True, Jews were looked upon in an unfavorable light by

Muslims. But that was to be preferred over living in Christian countries where Jews were vested with a satanic character, and even considered to be sub-human.

## **PART II. THE CRUSADES**

Then came the First Crusade in 1096. On the way to recapture the sepulcher of Jesus, the Crusaders attacked the Jewish quarters of German and French towns along the way. During subsequent crusades, masses of Jews were butchered, raped and locked up in their synagogues which were then burned to the ground. The tradition of Kiddush HaShem (sacrificing one's life for God) was expressed by many Jews committing collective suicide rather than being forced to convert to the Catholic Church.

## **The Church attributed to the Jews all of the evils of the world – the portrayal of Jews as the enemy of all that is good and the repository of all that is evil.**



**THE VIENNESE ANTI-SEMITIC PICTURE PAGE, KIKERIKI, DEPICTS THE JEW AS A WORLD-DEVOURING VAMPIRE.**

The accumulated hatreds and fears resulting from charges of deicide and usury exploded in the Crusades. In the eleventh century, Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem were persecuted by the ruling Muslims, who also defiled the most sacred of Christian churches, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, site of the Resurrection and tomb of Jesus. Spurred by the preaching of Pope Urban II and scores of Christian clergy, crusading nobles set out under the sign of the cross to free the Holy Land from the Muslim infidels. As encouragement, the pope promised salvation to those who would slay the offending Muslims.

But local priests reminded the faithful that the most terrible enemies of Christ were permitted to live and prosper in the very midst of Christian civilization. As one crusader's account recalled, "Behold we journey a long way to seek the idolatrous shrine and to take vengeance upon the Muslims. But here are the Jews dwelling among us, whose ancestors killed him and crucified him groundlessly. Let us take vengeance first upon them. Let us wipe them out as a nation." As a contemporary noted, the Crusaders "exterminated by many massacres the Jews of almost all Gaul, with the exception of those who accepted conversion." Religious passion, greed, and the vulnerability of Jews led to the rise of violent mobs that murdered thousands of Jews to the cry of "Convert or Death!" It seemed just and honorable that the wealth of blasphemers should fall to those who did the work of the Lord.

As the centuries passed, there was no letup of the most incredible persecution of Jews by Christian kings and rulers of Europe. For example, Christian theology considered lending money (usury) as endangering the eternal salvation of its flock, and opposed

the overt and authorized practice of usury. But since borrowing money was inevitable in contemporary economic conditions, and since the Jews were already considered infidels and deicides, and since they were allowed to work only in limited professions anyway, it seemed fitting for Christian rulers to allow the Jews to be their royal and official bankers. This profession was doomed to become a major source of even greater anti-Semitism as Jewish bankers were inevitably pitted against peasants and the poor who owed money. The Jews were soon regarded as greedy, closed-fisted money-mongers, the symbol of the hostile stranger *par excellence*.

### PART III. THE BLOOD LIBEL

But one rumor, known as the "blood libel," became the centerpiece of Christian anti-Semitism. It began with an unfounded rumor in eastern England: The Jews had kidnapped a Christian child, tied him to a cross, stabbed his head to simulate Jesus' crown of thorns, killed him, drained his body completely of blood, and mixed the blood into matzos (unleavened bread) at the time of Passover. The boy became known as St. William of Norwich. Many people made pilgrimages to his tomb and claimed that miracles had resulted from appeals to St. William.

The rumor arose from a former Jew, Theobald, who had become a Christian monk. (There have been a number of incidents where converted Jews became extremely hostile to the Jewish people. Thus converts are often looked upon with fear and suspicion.)

Theobald claimed that Jewish representatives gathered each year in Narbonne, France. There they decided in which city a Christian child would be sacrificed. The myth shows a complete lack of understanding of Judaism. Aside from the prohibition of killing an innocent person, the Torah abso-



A POSTER PASTED ON THE WALL OF THE REICHSTAG IN BERLIN IN 1920 TO WARN GERMANS OF THE JEWISH "THREAT" TO THEIR FATHERLAND.



A NAZI CARTOON. THE CAPTION READS: "OTTO MAYER, THE NUREMBERG JEW, USED TO CRUCIFY HIS VICTIM. HE BOUND HER, STARK NAKED, TO A SPECIALLY PREPARED WOODEN CROSS, AND RAPED HER AS SOON AS THE BLOOD BEGAN TO FLOW FROM HER WOUNDS."

lutely forbids the drinking or eating of any form of blood in any quantity. However, reality never has had much of an impact on blood libel myths. This rumor lasted for many centuries; even today it has not completely disappeared.

Pope Innocent IV ordered a study in 1247 A.D. His investigators found that the myth was a Christian invention used to justify persecution of the Jews. At least four other popes subsequently vindicated the Jews. However, the accusations, trials and executions continued.

Holy shrines were erected to honor innocent Christian victims, and well into the twentieth century, churches throughout Europe displayed knives and other instruments that Jews purportedly used for these rituals. Caricatures of hunchbacked Jews with horns and fangs were depicted in works of art and carved into stone decorating bridges. Proclaimed by parish priests to be the gospel truth, each recurrence of the blood libel charge added to its credence, thus prompting yet more accusations. This vicious cycle continued to spiral.

The absurdity of these spurious accusations can only be appreciated when we think of the condition of the Jews living during that time. They existed at the mercy of their Christian rulers, constantly terrified of being accused of anything that would bring them imprisonment, torture or death. Yet the wild rumors of the Jews and their demonic rituals took hold and spread throughout Christendom – generating fear and horror among the Christian populations.

In 1181, three Christian boys disappeared after playing on a frozen river in Vienna, Austria. Several “witnesses” swore that Jews had slaughtered the boys. Three hundred Jews were burned at the stake. After the spring thaw, the bodies of the boys were recovered. They had drowned, and were otherwise unharmed.

Sadly, the blood libel finally spread into Muslim countries in 1840. An elderly Italian monk-priest, Padre Tommaso, disappeared in Damascus, Syria, after having visited the Jewish quarter in the city. Twelve Jewish leaders were arrested and tortured. Sixty of their children were

held hostage to pressure the parents into confessing. Four adults died from the torture, and most of the rest confessed to the ritual murder. As a result of widespread protests, the lives of the survivors were spared, but the event introduced

the blood libel myth to the Arab world, where it remains alive and well to this very day.

In all, there are at least 150 recorded cases of the charge of ritual murder, and many led to massacres of the Jews. ([religioustolerance.org/jud-blib2.htm](http://religioustolerance.org/jud-blib2.htm))

The Black Plague in the middle of the fourteenth century killed approximately one-third of the population of Europe. At the time, it was not known how the illness spread, but stories and rumors circulated that Jews had poisoned the wells and many Christians believed the myth.

This accusation led to severe consequences for Jews. More than sixty Jewish communities were burned to the ground with all their occupants killed. In cities in Switzerland and Germany—Basel, Cologne, Strasbourg, and Mainz—Jews were tortured and, in some cases, burned to death in bonfires. Christian writers rationalized the attacks on Jews, claiming that Jews deserved death for killing Jesus Christ and for taking unfair economic advantage of Christians.

The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 decreed that Jews would from then on wear a distinguishing mark throughout the Christian world. In some countries it was a badge; in others a hat. The mark of difference helped to propagate

fables which supported the myth that Jews are physically different from other people. Other features ascribed to Jews were a tail and horns – attributes of the devil – and even a foul smell.

#### **PART IV. EXPULSIONS**

When the demonization of the Jewish people had reached an unbearable apex, the king of England expelled all the Jews of Great Britain in 1290. He flushed the land of every single Jew, and for more than 300 years England was ethnically cleansed of Jewry. France followed suit with its first expulsion a few years later. Expulsions and massacres continued into the German territory. These expul-

## **Pope Innocent IV ordered a study in 1247A.D. and found that the Blood Libel was a Christian invention used to persecute Jews. However, the accusations, trials and executions continued.**



**CARTOON FROM A POLISH BROCHURE OF THE THIRTIES, IN THE GRIP OF COMMUNISM. THE JEW LEADS DEATH TO HIS HARVEST IN POLAND, WHOSE FATE, ACCORDING TO THE CAPTION, WILL BE WORSE THAN THAT OF RUSSIA AND SPAIN.**

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sions only helped to perpetuate the image of Jewish homelessness—a cursed, condemned race with no future.

The greatest expulsion took place in 1492 in Spain. Masses of Jews had been forcibly converted to Catholicism. However, a new phenomenon arose: Some converts continued to secretly celebrate Passover and other Jewish traditions from the Bible. Called Moranos or New Christians, many thousands were found out and burned at the stake by the Inquisition. The Spanish government that sent Columbus to discover lands beyond the sea, expelled all Spanish Jews, estimated to be between 250,000 to 800,000 souls -- from their kingdom the very same year. As late as the middle 1900's, there were hardly any Jews living in Spain.

The Reformation and emergence of Protestantism brought little relief to the Jewish people. Although Calvinists were quite genial to Jews, Lutheranism became increasingly anti-Semitic. At first Martin Luther was favorable towards the Jews, believing that because Christian theology had been amended and rectified, the Jews would now accept Jesus as Messiah. When the Jewish people declined the Lutheran faith, all of the anti-Semitic DNA passed down through the Church for 1500 years, blazed forth out of Luther (See box) and cascaded into Lutheran-dominated Germany, with disastrous results.

#### **PART V. PASSION PLAYS**

The fortunes of the Jews rose and fell as Jews resettled in Europe wherever they could. Then, once again, in 1633, the bubonic plague swept across Europe. One small town gathered together to beseech God for a miracle. They prayed that if the Lord would spare little Oberammergau, they would promise to thank Him by performing a Play every 10 years to commemorate Jesus' crucifixion. After this vow, not one Oberammergau villager died of the plague, and the Play was first performed in 1634. So far so good, but not for long. As Passion Plays spread

across Europe, Christians portrayed the Jews as they perceived them. While Yeshua and his followers looked like Europeans, the Jews who opposed Him looked sinister, with hooked noses and disfigured faces, and they wore degrading horned-hats made mandatory by Christian rulers. And guess what happened? Times without number, Christian audiences, after seeing the play, rose up as a man, rioting through Jewish neighborhoods, raping, killing the Jews and seizing their possessions. Jews dreaded Passion Plays.

#### **PART VI. ADOLPH HITLER**

To bring this down to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Adolph Hitler went to see the Oberammergau Passion Play in 1932 when he was chancellor of Germany. In 1942 he recalled in his journal, "It is vital that the Passion Play be continued at Oberammergau; for never has the menace of Jewry been so convincingly portrayed as in this presentation....One sees in

Pontius Pilate a Roman racially and intellectually so superior, that he stands out like a firm, clean rock in the middle of the whole muck and mire of Jewry..." Hitler called the Play a "precious tool" in the war against the Jews. The message was inescapable: Evil Jews killed Jesus.

Hitler explained that his vision to totally destroy the Jewish race to the last person had a spiritual basis. "I believe today that my conduct is in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator. (Mein Kampf, p.46)

And so, understandably, there has been an automatic alarm that sounded in the souls of many Jews when they heard Mel Gibson was creating a Passion Play on film. Jewish journalists were all the more distressed with the report that Hutton Gibson, Mel Gibson's father, disclosed prejudices that were undeniably birthed out of Christian anti-Semitism. He said among many things, "Jews are out to create a "one world religion and one world government." Among his numerous accusations, he argued that many "victims" of the Holocaust were

#### **Martin Luther...excerpt from: CONCERNING THE JEWS AND THEIR LIES**

... Let me give you my honest advice.

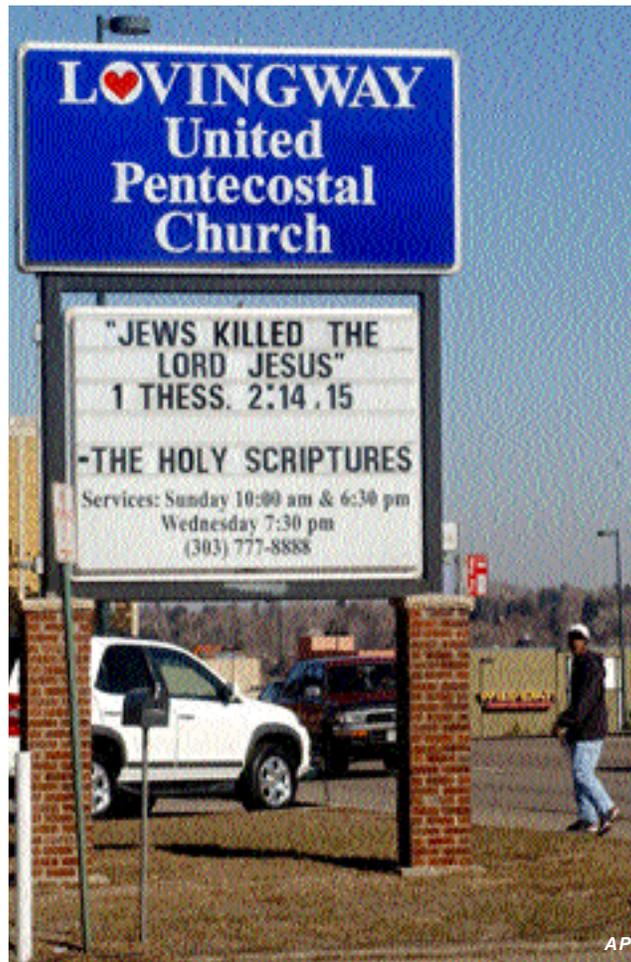
First, their synagogues or churches should be set on fire, and whatever does not burn up should be covered or spread over with dirt so that no one may ever be able to see a cinder or stone of it. And this ought to be done for the honor of God and of Christianity in order that God may see that we are Christians, and that we have not wittingly tolerated or approved of such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of His Son and His Christians...Secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed. For they perpetrate the same things there that they do in their synagogues. For this reason they ought to be put under one roof or in a stable, like gypsies, in order that they may realize that they are not masters in our land, as they boast, but miserable captives, as they complain of us incessantly before God with bitter wailing. Thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayerbooks and Talmuds in which such idolatry, lies cursing and blasphemy are taught. Fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under threat of death to teach any more...Fifthly, passport and traveling privileges should be absolutely forbidden to the Jews. For they have no business in the rural districts since they are not nobles, nor officials, nor merchants, nor the like. Let them stay at home. Sixthly, they ought to be stopped from usury. All their cash and valuables of silver and gold ought to be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping. For this reason, as said before, everything that they possess they stole and robbed from us through their usury, for they have no other means of support. This money should be used in the case (and in no other) where a Jew has honestly become a Christian, so that he may get for the time being one or two or three hundred florins, as the person may require. This, in order that he may start a business to support his poor wife and children and the old and feeble. Such evilly acquired money is cursed, unless, with God's blessing, it is put to some good and necessary use...Seventhly, let the young and strong Jews and Jewesses be given the flail, the ax, the hoe, the spade, the distaff, and spindle, and let them earn their bread by the sweat of their noses as is enjoined upon Adam's children. For it is not proper that they should want us cursed *Goyyim* to work in the sweat of our brow and that they, pious crew, idle away their days at the fireside in laziness, feasting, and display. And in addition to this, they boast impiously that they have become masters of the Christians at our expense. We ought to drive the rascally lazy bones out of our system. If, however, we are afraid that they might harm us personally, or our wives, children, servants, cattle, etc., when they serve us or work for us -- since it is surely to be presumed that such noble lords of the world and poisonous bitter worms are not accustomed to any work and would very unwillingly humble themselves to such a degree among the cursed *Goyyim* -- then let us apply the same cleverness [expulsion] as the other nations, such as France, Spain, Bohemia, etc., and settle with them for that which they have extorted usuriously from us, and after having divided it up fairly let us drive them out of the country for all time. For, as has been said, God's rage is so great against them that they only become worse and worse through mild mercy, and not much better through severe mercy. Therefore away with them...To sum up, dear princes and nobles who have Jews in your domains, if this advice of mine does not suit you, then find a better one so that you and we may all be free of this insufferable devilish burden -- the Jews.

not murdered by the Nazis. They simply fled to countries like Australia and the U.S. Obviously, Mel Gibson is not responsible for his father or his father's views. But the Jewish people were hoping he would publicly reject his father's statements. Out of deference to his father, he did not.

Beginning with Pope John XXXIII, the Catholic Church has made significant strides towards reaching out to their Jewish brethren by annulling much of the anti-Semitic dogma of the Catholic Church. That is why Jewish writers constantly refer to the *Nostra Aetate*, issued in October 1965 by Pope Paul IV, and subsequent documents. The Jewish people know a lot more about these documents than most Protestants, or even Catholics, for that matter. Jews have been relieved and gladdened by the thaw in the Catholic Church's acceptance of the Jewish people as equal human beings worthy of esteem and respect. The Second Vatican Council has deplored "the hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source." The Church also stated that liturgical passages referring to Jews would be interpreted to avoid prejudice. In 1993 the Lutheran Church issued a similar statement. While such documents cannot with the stroke of a pen erase Church anti-Semitism, they indicate an effort to counter the centuries of anti-Semitic thought and action.

One of the fascinating outcomes of the search for ways to fight any modern anti-Semitism resulting from today's Passion Plays is that some Jewish public figures are demanding that Jesus look more Jewish! The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith has suggested changes in the Oberammergau Passion Play (many of which were accepted) such as "Yeshua and his followers should clearly appear to be Jews, as much so as his opponents, and conversely that his opponents not simultaneously be made to look evil and more "Jewish" than Yeshua." (<http://ecumene.org/SOAH/oberammer.htm>)

In America, there has been little anti-Semitism, relatively speaking, and Christians, immersed in democracy and tolerance, have little knowledge of Jewish-Christian history. But Jews everywhere do know it. Therefore the Jewish



MODERN IN-YOUR-FACE CHRISTIAN ANTI-SEMITISM DISPLAYED ON THE SIGN OF A CHURCH IN DENVER, COLORADO, COINCIDING WITH THE RELEASE OF MEL GIBSON'S MOVIE.

people have been inherently afraid of "devout Christians." Jews have traditionally supported political parties to the left, believing "it would be better for the Jews." But what has astonished the Jewish people today is how fast almost all the world – including post-Christian Europe, the Muslim countries and atheistic and leftist regimes – has emphatically turned against the Jews and Israel in the last few years, while Evangelical Christians in America, Europe and other places have embraced the Jewish people with an intensity and force never before witnessed. Jews do not want to lose their newfound friends and allies.

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach declared, "I pray the intimate bond and deep respect forged between the Christian and Jewish communities over the past few decades will not be impaired by this film. But notwithstanding how much I love my Christian brethren, I

will still not allow the lie that the Jews killed Jesus to go unchallenged....I'm not a murderer." (Jerusalem Post, Feb. 19, 2003)

#### **PART VII. NO CHRISTIAN CAN BE NEUTRAL**

The greatest love Christians can show to the Jewish people is to fight anti-Semitism every way possible. The Simon Wiesenthal Center has made an open appeal to Christians of goodwill to do for Jews what they cannot do for themselves – i.e., to work to ensure that *The Passion* does not become a vehicle for arousing anti-Semitic furies. The Jewish people must some day see that the Passion of our Messiah is the only hope for the Jewish nation and for all humanity. What the devil meant to do through the death of Yeshua (to cause Christians to hate and destroy the Jewish people), God has ordained for salvation! In fact, the only salvation there is! Christians and Messianic Jews must fight with all the strength that is within them against the terrible, demonic scourge of anti-Semitism that has separated the Jewish people from Christians, and from the truths of Yeshua, the Prince of Peace. Those who truly love God will truly love the Jewish people. God will then reveal His risen King of the Jews to the children of Israel.

(Numerous facts taken from Encyclopedia Judaica under the topic, "Anti-Semitism")

## An Orthodox Rabbi's Opinion of "The Passion of the Christ": Why Mel Owes One to the Jews

By Rabbi Daniel Lapin (written in February, 2004)

Two weeks before Mel Gibson's *Passion* flashes onto two thousand screens, online ticket merchants are reporting that up to half their total sales are for advance purchases for *Passion*. One Dallas multiplex has reserved all twenty of its screens for *The Passion*. I am neither a prophet nor a movie critic. I am merely an Orthodox rabbi using ancient Jewish wisdom to make three predictions about *The Passion*.

One, Mel Gibson and Icon Productions will make a great deal of money. Those distributors who surrendered to pressure from Jewish organizations, and passed on *Passion* will be kicking themselves, while Newmarket Films will laugh all the way to the bank. Theater owners are going to love this film.

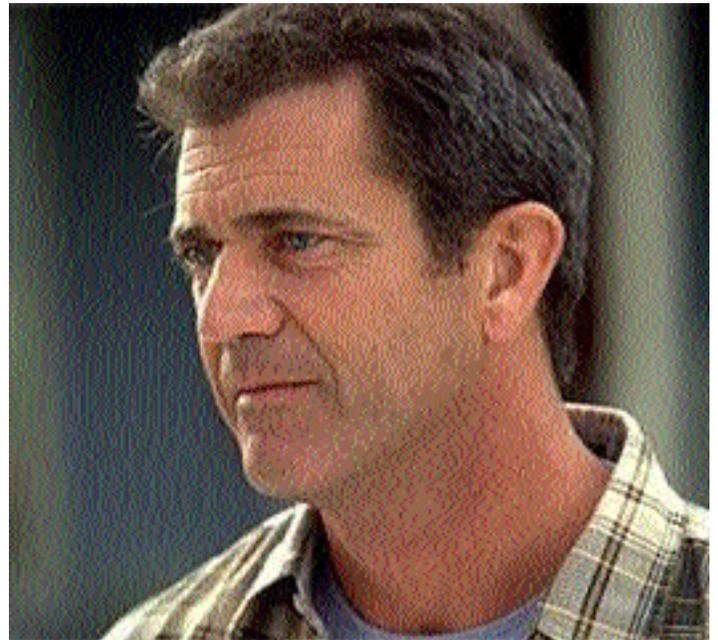
Two, *Passion* will become famous as the most serious and substantive Biblical movie ever made. It will be one of the most talked-about entertainment events in history, it is currently on the cover of *Newsweek* and *Vanity Fair*.

My third prediction is that the faith of millions of Christians will become more fervent as *Passion* uplifts and inspires them. *Passion* will propel vast numbers of unreligious Americans to embrace Christianity. The movie will one day be seen as a harbinger of America's third great religious reawakening.

Those Jewish organizations that have squandered both time and money futilely protesting *Passion*, ostensibly in order to prevent pogroms in Pittsburgh, can hardly be proud of their performance. They failed at everything they attempted. They were hoping to ruin Gibson rather than enrich him. They were hoping to suppress *Passion* rather than promote it. Finally, they were hoping to help Jews rather than harm them.

Here I digress slightly to exercise the Jewish value of "giving the benefit of the doubt" by discounting cynical suggestions growing in popularity, that the very public nature of their attack on Gibson exposed their real purpose—fundraising. Apparently, frightening wealthy widows in Florida about anti-Semitic thugs prowling the streets of America causes them to open their pocketbooks and refill the coffers of groups with little other *raison d'être*. But let's assume they were hoping to help Jews.

However, instead of helping the Jewish community, they have inflicted lasting harm. By selectively unleashing their fury only on wholesome entertainment that depicts



Christianity, in a positive light, they have triggered anger, hurt, and resentment. Hosting the *Toward Tradition* Radio Show and speaking before many audiences nationwide, I enjoy extensive communication with Christian America and what I hear is troubling. Fearful of attracting the ire of Jewish groups that are so quick to hurl the "anti-Semite" epithet, some Christians are reluctant to speak out. Although one can bludgeon resentful people into silence, behind closed doors emotions continue to simmer.

I consider it crucially important for Christians to know that not all Jews are in agreement with their self-appointed spokesmen. Most American Jews, experiencing warm and gracious interactions each day with their Christian fellow-citizens, would feel awkward trying to explain why so many Jewish organizations seem focused on an agenda hostile to Judeo-Christian values. Many individual Jews have shared with me their embarrassment that groups, ostensibly representing them, attack *Passion* but are silent about depraved entertainment that encourages killing cops and brutalizing women. Citing artistic freedom, Jewish groups helped protect sacrilegious exhibits such as the anti-Christian feces extravaganza presented by the Brooklyn Museum four years ago. One can hardly blame Christians for assuming that Jews feel artistic freedom is important only when exercised

by those hostile toward Christianity. However, this is not how all Jews feel.

From audiences around America, I am encountering bitterness at Jewish organizations insisting that belief in the New Testament is de facto evidence of anti-Semitism. Christians heard Jewish leaders denouncing Gibson for making a movie that follows Gospel accounts of the Crucifixion long before any of them had even seen the movie. Furthermore, Christians are hurt that Jewish groups are presuming to teach them what Christian Scripture “really means.”



Listen to a rabbi whom I debated on the Fox television show hosted by Bill O'Reilly last September. This is what he said, “We have a responsibility as Jews, as thinking Jews, as people of theology, to respond to our Christian brothers and to engage them, be it Protestants, be it Catholics, and say, look, this is not your history, this is not your theology, this does not represent what you believe in.”

He happens to be a respected rabbi and a good one, but he too has bought into the preposterous proposition that Jews will reeducate Christians about Christian theology and history. Is it any wonder that this breathtaking arrogance spurs bitterness?

Many Christians who, with good reason, have considered themselves to be Jews' best (and perhaps, only) friends also feel bitter at Jews believing that *Passion* is revealing startling new information about the Crucifixion. They are incredulous at Jews thinking that exposure to the Gospels in visual form will instantly transform the most philo-Semitic gentiles of history into snarling, Jew-hating predators.

Christians are baffled by Jews who don't understand that President George Washington, who knew and revered every word of the Gospels, was still able to write that oft-quoted beautiful letter to the Touro Synagogue in Newport, offering friendship and full participation in America to the Jewish community.

One of the directors of the AJC recently warned that *Passion* “could undermine the sense of community between Christians and Jews that's going on in this country. We're not allowing the film to do that.” No sir, it isn't the film that threatens the sense of community; it is the arrogant and intemperate response of Jewish organizations that does so.

Jewish organizations, hoping to help but failing so spectacularly, refutes all myths of Jewish intelligence. How could their plans have been so misguided and the execution so inept?

Ancient Jewish wisdom teaches that nothing confuses

one's thinking more than being in the grip of the two powerful emotions, love and hate. The actions of these Jewish organizations sadly suggest that they are in the grip of a hatred for Christianity that is only harming Jews.

Today, peril threatens all Americans, both Jews and Christians. Many of the men and women in the front lines find great support in their Christian faith. It is strange that Jewish organizations, purporting to protect Jews, think that insulting allies is the preferred way to carry out that mandate.

A ferocious Rottweiler dog in your suburban home will quickly estrange your family from the neighborhood.

For those of us in the Jewish community who cherish friendship with our neighbors, some Jewish organizations have become our Rottweilers. God help us.

*Radio talk show host, Rabbi Daniel Lapin, is president of Toward Tradition, a bridge-building organization providing a voice for all Americans who defend the Judeo-Christian values vital for our nation's survival. For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact: Jennifer Brunson (206) 236-3046 www.towardtradition.org*

**Do you pray regularly for Israel?**  
**If yes, our weekly prayer letter (by email) will give you inside information on how to pray specifically for the nation of Israel, for Congregation Tiferet Yeshua and its members, for Maoz Israel Ministries and for us personally. You may receive the prayer letter by emailing us in Israel at [intercessors@maozisrael.org](mailto:intercessors@maozisrael.org).**

**Ari and Shira Soroko-Ram**



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**Ari & Shira Sorko-Ram**

Passover, April 2004

It is Passover time. This is the time when Christians - as never before - can make a difference by rising up and standing with Israel and the Jewish people.

Today, the withering spiritual war against Israel and her people's existence is still being waged. But these are days when God is turning back to our people - to save them, to build them up and to give them back their land. To make them a light to the nations! All this He has promised and He will do it.

Here is a practical way you can bless the seed of Abraham. Our Israeli congregation, Tiferet Yeshua, in downtown Tel Aviv is growing and growing. We now have a group of our members who are developing their leadership gifts and roles - pastors, evangelists, teachers, musicians, administrators, children's ministers and business men and women.

Our leaders-in-the-making need all the training and coaching they can receive because the harvest is already great and Israelis are searching for those who will love them and teach them the way of the Lord.

With our growing department of 70 children and 20 teens, our team is stretched to the limits. With every service seeing new unbelievers and searchers attending, our nets are stretched beyond our capacity.

So we have planned a leadership training trip (see reverse side) that will greatly enlarge the horizons of our young leaders and place in their hands skills and expertise needed to serve Him and His people in Spirit and in excellence.

We offer you the opportunity to team up with us this Passover season and help us purchase the airline tickets to send these Israeli men and women for training to become better ministers of the Gospel. They, themselves, are doing all in their power to save up the funds they will need for their room and board inside the U.S.

The tickets and other costs will be approximately \$40,000. With the gifts of Maoz partners, we are already half way there!

All Israel shall be saved! The Lord has promised!

Thank you so much,

Ari & Shira Sorko-Ram

P.S. You can help send an Israeli for the two-week vision-building and equipping opportunity. Your gift today for \$1,000, \$500, \$100, or even \$50 will make this vital trip a reality!



**THE JEWISH  
PEOPLE  
NEEDS YOU!**

What can we do to bless His brothers and sisters in the flesh?

## **SEND OUR LEADERS TO USA FOR A TWO-WEEK INTENSE TRAINING TRIP!**

We are planning a trip to the U.S. in June with 25 of our finest leaders and committed believers for training in small group evangelism, including ministry to children. Our team will be participating in a small group growth conference and receiving hands-on, personalized instruction for our Tel Aviv Messianic congregation, Tiferet Yeshua (The Glory of Yeshua)!

**YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL  
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!**

