

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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TRUE PASSIONS OF THE CHRIST

A Quranic Perspective

Mel Gibson's movie "**The Passion of the Christ**" has prompted many to ask questions about the life, death, and message of Jesus.

Jesus Christ was a messenger of God (4:171). His birth, his life, and his death were all miraculous. I have not seen the movie that's stirring up such controversy so I cannot comment on the movie itself. I have heard several people comment that a movie about Jesus should concentrate on his life and his message rather than his death, and I wholeheartedly agree. The message he delivered was to worship God ALONE, the same message delivered by all the messengers—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses,

Muhammad, and so many others. The disciples were well aware of the message. When Jesus asked them who supported him, they replied that they supported God.

O you who believe, be God's supporters, like the disciples of Jesus, son of Mary. When he said to them, "Who are my supporters towards God," they said, "We are God's supporters." Thus, a group from the Children of Israel believed, and another group disbelieved. We helped those who believed against their enemy, until they won. (61:14)

The Quran, God's final scripture to the world, is full of beautiful passages about the birth and life of Je-

sus. He was different from other messengers because his birth was a miracle. Mary was a righteous, virtuous woman and God gave her the news of her pregnancy.

She said, "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me; I have never been unchaste." He said, "Thus said your Lord, "It is easy for Me. We will render him a sign for the people, and mercy from us. This is a predestined matter.'" (19:20-1)

The story of Jesus' birth is told in several places in the Quran. The most detailed is in Sura 19, verses 22-35, which includes the fact that Jesus spoke as an infant—

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Passion of the Christ

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to reassure his mother and her family that he was a messenger. *(The infant spoke and) said, "I am a servant of God. He has given me the scripture, and has appointed me a prophet."* (19:30)

The section concludes with God's promise that this is the truth.

That was Jesus, the son of Mary, and this is the truth of this matter, about which they continue to doubt. It does not befit God that He begets a son, be He glorified. To have anything done, He simply says to it, "Be," and it is. (19:34-5)

The life and ministry of Jesus is also recounted throughout the Quran. In one place, God is telling us what He will say when Jesus comes before Him on the Day of Resurrection:

God will say, "O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My blessings upon you and your mother. I supported you with the Holy Spirit, to enable you to speak to the people from the crib, as well as an adult. I taught you the scripture, wisdom, the Torah, and the Gospel. Recall that you created from clay the shape of a bird by My leave, then blew into it, and it became a live bird by My leave. You healed the blind and the leprous by My leave, and revived the dead by My leave. Recall that I protected you from the Children of Israel who wanted to hurt you, despite the profound miracles you had shown them. The disbelievers among them said, 'This is obviously magic.' Recall that I inspired the disciples: 'You shall believe in Me and My messenger.' They said, 'We have believed, and bear witness that we are submitters.'" (5:110-1)

The Death of the Christ

What about his death—the crucifixion and the suffering? This also is covered well in the Quran. Does it make sense that a righteous, devoted, blessed servant of God would be allowed to suffer so cruelly prior to his death? Would God permit so much agony?

The entire process was part of God's grand plan, and everyone involved had a part to play for his own salvation or damnation. The men who inflicted such punishment are responsible for the pain they caused, and for each of them it was a test for his own soul. The people who watched and either stood by passively or cheered the suffering will have to account for their actions before God. But what of Jesus? Was he beaten, tortured and nailed to a cross to die slowly and horribly?

In fact his death was an illusion. God rescued Jesus' soul and saved him from feeling the physical pain that was inflicted on the body. This is God's mercy toward his righteous servants. They go directly to God to enjoy Paradise.

The Quran makes it clear that the people are mistaken in their version of Jesus' death and resurrection.

And for claiming that they killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of God. In fact, they never killed him, they never crucified him—they were made to think that they did. All factions who are disputing in this matter are full of doubt concerning this issue. They possess no knowledge; they only conjecture. For certain, they never killed him. Instead, God raised him to Him; God is Almighty, Most Wise. (4:157-8)

We understand from this verse that "Jesus, the real person, the soul, was raised in the same manner as

in the death of any righteous person. Subsequently, his enemies arrested, tortured, and crucified his living, but empty, body."

The Passion of the Christ

Passion has many meanings. Jesus had a passion for delivering the true message of God, to worship Him alone. He pursued his mission passionately. He was wise and faithful and devoted. This was his passion. He tried to preach to people who were either oblivious to his message or actively fighting against it because it would undermine their position of authority. He was ridiculed, persecuted and ultimately arrested simply for telling people to worship God alone.

When Jesus went with the proofs, he said, "I bring to you wisdom, and to clarify some of the matters in which you dispute. You shall reverence God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord, you shall worship Him alone. This is the right path." The opponents disputed among themselves. Woe to those who transgress from the retribution of a painful day. (43:63-5)

Did Jesus suffer on cross?

With regard to his "suffering," God makes it clear that it didn't happen the way people think. He says, *"For certain, they never killed him. Instead, God raised him to Him"* (as it is clearly stated in verses 4:157-158.)

There is no suffering with God, only eternal bliss. We don't need to feel sorry for Jesus and his "passion." We can rejoice in his salvation. And if we follow his message—his true message to worship God ALONE—we can join him with God in Paradise.

Lydia

Religion and Politics

There is a long debated question whether religion should be separated from politics, or not. Can politics be divorced from moral principles, the great questions of good and evil? Life consists of both good and evil. We cannot have amoral politics. Either we have good politics or evil politics. Evidently, it is evil politics, dominating the last century that brought about predator capitalism, colonialism and imperialism and the two destructive world wars. Heaven forbid that we have a third coming soon!

Islam (Submission) as a way of life consists of both philosophical principles and forms of worship. The philosophical principles of justice, peace, unity, the struggle against oppression, brotherhood, friendship and cooperation and the like are universal and common to the teachings of all the great religions. These principles must guide our politics, indeed our life. The forms of worship, being historical and particular, are therefore plural. That is why religious tolerance is clearly preached in the Quran. We have to separate religion from politics in the sense of its being a belief and rites of worship. But religion in the sense of good, moral, universal philosophical principles must rule our politics and our lives.

The second matter is the so-called Islam's plural approach to politics. What is meant by this pluralism is not clear. Is it the legal system? Is it the political and economic system? One can see that there are many laws as there are states, but the legal principles of justice and mercy are universally applied by all humane societies. So in politics

and economics. There can be many systems, but the principle of good politics and economics must be one. They must be based on the moral imperative of promoting the welfare of mankind.

Islam (Submission), according to the Quran, is the religion chosen by God for mankind from time immemorial. Its teachings are progressively recorded in His scriptures that include the Torah and the Gospel, but completed and perfected in His final scripture, the Quran. As opposed to this, there is the teaching of the devil. Man must strive to uphold and practice the Lord's teachings and fight and defeat the devil's teachings.

It should be clear there has existed for a long time two versions of Islam, one based on the teachings of the Quran, and the other based on the teachings of the theologians. This is of course to put the matter briefly and in a simplified way, but essentially it is true. Our duty—Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and others—is to find our way back to the Lord of the Universe. Only in that path of truth can we find peace and happiness that so much elude our present generation the world over.

Dr. Kassim A.

There shall be no compulsion in religion: the right way is now distinct from the wrong way. Anyone who denounces the devil and believes in GOD has grasped the strongest bond; one that never breaks. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient. (2:256)

Let the world know

God willing, we are continuing our library project called "Let the world know." It is our goal to place an English translation of the Quran by Dr. Khalifa in every library possible.

We would like to have more volunteers from various communities to get in touch with the libraries for placing the Qurans. We thank our current volunteers. They've done an excellent job. May God bless them for their efforts. However, having more volunteers will make the project go faster.

We set up a web link to communicate the progress of the volunteers and for exchanging ideas for this project. If you have any comments, and suggestions, let us know.

The link for the project is

www.masjiduntucson.org/let_the_world_know/

How can volunteers help?

The volunteers' main function is to provide the contact with the librarians and then let us know of the receptive ones. Below are a few easy steps to get started:

- 1) Go to the site below (or a similar site) <http://www.publiclibraries.com/> that have links to libraries all across the country, organized by state. Find the libraries you want to contact.
- 2) Look for the phone number for Administration, Main branch, or local branches (donations, requisitions or acquisitions departments).
- 3) Call and explain the project. If you need some suggestions on what to say, please refer to the project link.
- 4) Send the request to Masjid Tucson with a list of libraries. God willing we will send the Qurans directly from Masjid Tucson with a cover letter.

God willing let us first make sure that all local libraries in our areas have copies of the Qurans. God bless.

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Second International Quranic Essay Contest

Submission.org announces its second International Quranic Essay contest for the youth group ages 12-19. The youth will be divided into two groups. The first group is for ages 12-15 and the second group 16-19.

Prizes:

\$900 (US dollars) will be given away in prizes for the top winners. Three winners will be picked from each age group and the winners will be rewarded as follows:

Ages 16-19:

1st place winner - \$200
2nd place winner - \$150
3rd place winner - \$100

Ages 12-15:

1st place winner - \$200
2nd place winner - \$150
3rd place winner - \$100

The essay must be written in English, and must consist of 500-800 words for the age group 12-15 and 800-1000 words for the age group 16-19. The verses of the Quran will not be counted in the word count, so you can use as many verses as you like. To check more on the rules of the contest, and for the official entry form, see the web page www.submission.org/quran/contest.html

Send the essay to info@submission.org using a Word document or Rich Text format by July 31, 2004. God bless.

BIBLE VERSES

*As a face is reflected in water,
so the heart reflects the person.*
Proverbs 27:19

*Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed,
for the Lord your God is with you
wherever you go.*
Joshua 1:9

*He who conceals his sins does
not prosper, but whoever confesses
and renounces them finds mercy.*
Proverbs 28:13

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.*
Proverbs 3:5-6

*To everything there is a season,
a time for every purpose under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck
what is planted.*
Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2

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