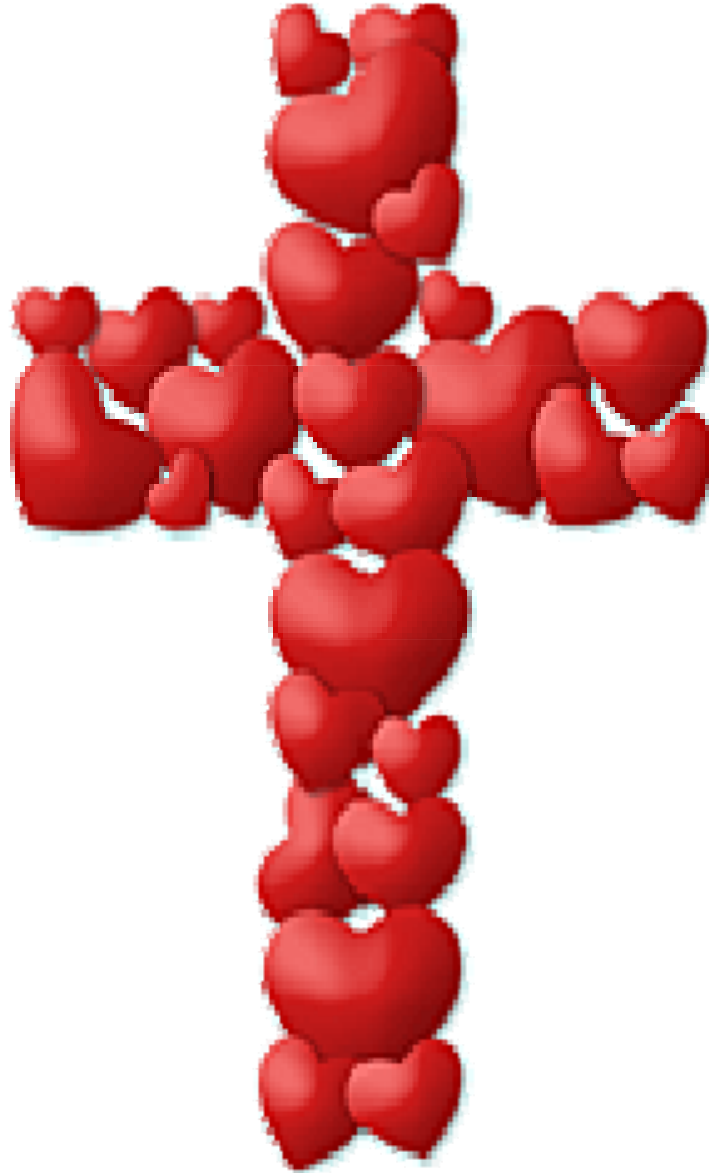


**THE SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS MONTHLY JOURNAL  
FOR APRIL 2004**



**John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that  
Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”**

**THE SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS SPECIAL COMMEMORATION  
OF THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST.**

## **THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST**

by Dennis A. Palma

Let me start by saying alleluia, lets all give thanks and praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for what He did for all sinful mankind. Also it's about time that we finally as Christians have a movie that can be used as a vehicle for something that is completely non-secular for a change. We as Christians have been bombarded with a continuous wave of secular movies. These movies are nothing more than secular garbage aimed to promote violence, racial and social hatred, murder, moral decay, lying, stealing, cheating, etc.

There is nothing to say positive about Hollywood's track record, with the type of movies they are trying to shove down every ones throat. I can't remember in my entire life anything more discriminated when it comes movies, than real Christian based movies.

Hollywood treats real Christian based movies as if they had the plague. Mel Gibson right now has been taking a lot of heat and criticism for his depiction of The Passion Of The Christ from all areas of Hollywood. The reason he is taking so much heat is that this movie undermines Hollywood's main objective, and that is to continue to promote secularism.

I thank God for using people like Mel Gibson, to promote something good and decent for a change, giving people from around the world an opportunity to see what our Savior really did for us.

This movie is a great depiction of the suffering that Christ did , for the sins of the world.

I believe that the brutality of this movie was only a mild depiction of the suffering, compared to the actual suffering from the real crucifixion. Crucifixion was a barbaric method of execution developed in the East but adopted by the Romans to punish crimes such as rebellion, piracy, murder, and violent robbery.

By the first century the Romans had perfected this form of punishment. As an official known as the carnifex serarum supervised, the victim was beaten with a leather whip containing shreds of metal or bone that tore the flesh. Weakened by the pain and the loss of blood, the victim was then forced to carry the crossbar to the place of execution.

The crossbar was fixed to the top of the imbedded pole, and the victim was either tied or nailed with his arms stretched along it.

**In Jesus case, nails were probably driven through the palms near the fleshly part of the thumb, the only part of the hand that could bear the body's weight.**

**Archaeologists have discovered remains of a young man crucified in Jerusalem in the first century; these show that the victim's feet were probably nailed to the sides of the fixed post by spikes driven through the heel. Suspended in this awkward position, the victim died slowly, from extreme shock or from gradual weakening of the two sets of muscles used for breathing.**

**When it was desirable to hasten death, the Romans increased the strain on the body by breaking the leg bones of the victim.**

**When they wanted to prolong the agony, they nailed a wooden block called a sedile to the front of the pole, on which the buttocks might rest. This, the agonizing death of a criminal, the ultimate in shame and humiliation was what Jesus endured for our sake.**

**The cross of The Christ. Apostle Paul speaks of “ the message of the cross” 1 Corinthians 1:18 I know very well how foolish it sounds to those who are lost, when they hear that Jesus died to save them. But we who are saved recognize this message as the very power of God.**

**And proclaims the wonderful news that Jesus has reconciled both Jew and Gentile to God through the cross. Ephesians 2:16 And in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility Those who were “enemies of the cross of Christ” Philippians 3:18 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.**

**Many rejected the Christian message and refused to submit to Christ as Lord. In all these cases, the cross stands for something more: the astonishing fact that God's Son died a humiliating death in order to bring humankind back to God. Crucifixion was not only gruesome, it was a shameful death, reserved for slaves and the worst criminals. Thus the cross would be a stark image—a total absurdity to those who did not understand but a powerful expression to the faithful of the extent of God's love.**

**Jesus claimed that anyone who sought to be His disciple must deny himself and take up His cross daily and follow me” Luke 9 :23**

**Also see Matthew 16:24 and Mark 8:34 He said this after announcing that He would go to Jerusalem and die there. Jesus had made it plain that this was God's will for Him. In context, Christ was not asking His disciples to die , or even to suffer physically. Jesus simply said that a person who seeks to be a disciple must share Christ's total submission to**

the will of God. A disciple will set aside his own desires and choose to do the will of his Father. Figuratively, the believers daily cross represents the personal will of God for each individual, whatever that may be. Let us pray: Father we thank you for the gift of Your Son Jesus, for sending Him to redeem our sins. For without His death on the cross, there would be no hope for darkness and for eternal salvation. Also Father thank You for your overwhelming love that you have for all Your children. I thank You always in Your Son Jesus Christ, Amen.

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### **THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS**

The historic act in which God raised Jesus' body from the dead three days after Christ's death on the cross.

From the very beginning, belief in Jesus' bodily resurrection has been the keystone of the Christian faith. It is an essential element in apostolic teaching Acts 2:24-36; 3:15-26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:34-37; 17:18-32. It is so important that Paul writes, **"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins"** 1 Cor. 15:17.

In order to discredit the resurrection of Jesus, the enemies of Christ planted a rumor that the disciples of Jesus had stolen His body. Matthew 28:11-15, but still the conviction spread through Jerusalem and then the world that Jesus had in fact been raised from the dead. The conviction was due to several reasons first the disciple powerful preaching and the fact that they had claimed to have seen the risen Jesus and the fact that they had performed several healing miracles had authenticated there ministry.

Second, there were many witnesses to authenticate the claim of resurrection. These persons were so convinced they had seen Jesus, that they willingly suffered the loss of there positions and even there lives to follow the risen Savior.

A final and compelling line of evidence is noted by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:4 **That He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to Scripture.**

No event in ancient history is as thoroughly documented as the resurrection of Christ. And few events have had such widespread impact on the shaping of an entire society as the Gospel message proclaiming a resurrected Christ was carried throughout the Roman world.

**APRIL EDITION OF HOPE FOR LIVING**

**The Greatest Message**

**Matthew 28:5 I know you seek Jesus who was crucified**

**On the third day after Christ's death the Bible say's, " And behold there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and His clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of Him, and became like dead men" (Matthew 28:2-4)**

**As Mary looked into the tomb she saw "two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain (John 20:12). Then one of the angels who was sitting outside the tomb proclaimed the greatest message the world has ever heard: "He is not here; He has risen" ( Matthew 28:6). Those few words changed the history of the universe. Darkness and despair died; hope and anticipation were born in the hearts of men, With those few words joy and new life now dawn in the hearts of all who believe. Don't leave Jesus in the manger..... or the cross.....or in the tomb. He is alive, and even now He wants to walk beside you every day..... Billy Graham**

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**GOD'S DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE FOR APRIL**

**Philippians 2:3 Don't be selfish..... Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself.**

**The two most important words: "Thank you". The most important word "We". The least important word: " I "**

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*May Our Lord and Savior Bless You and Your Entire Family This Easter*

**HAPPY EASTER 2004**

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