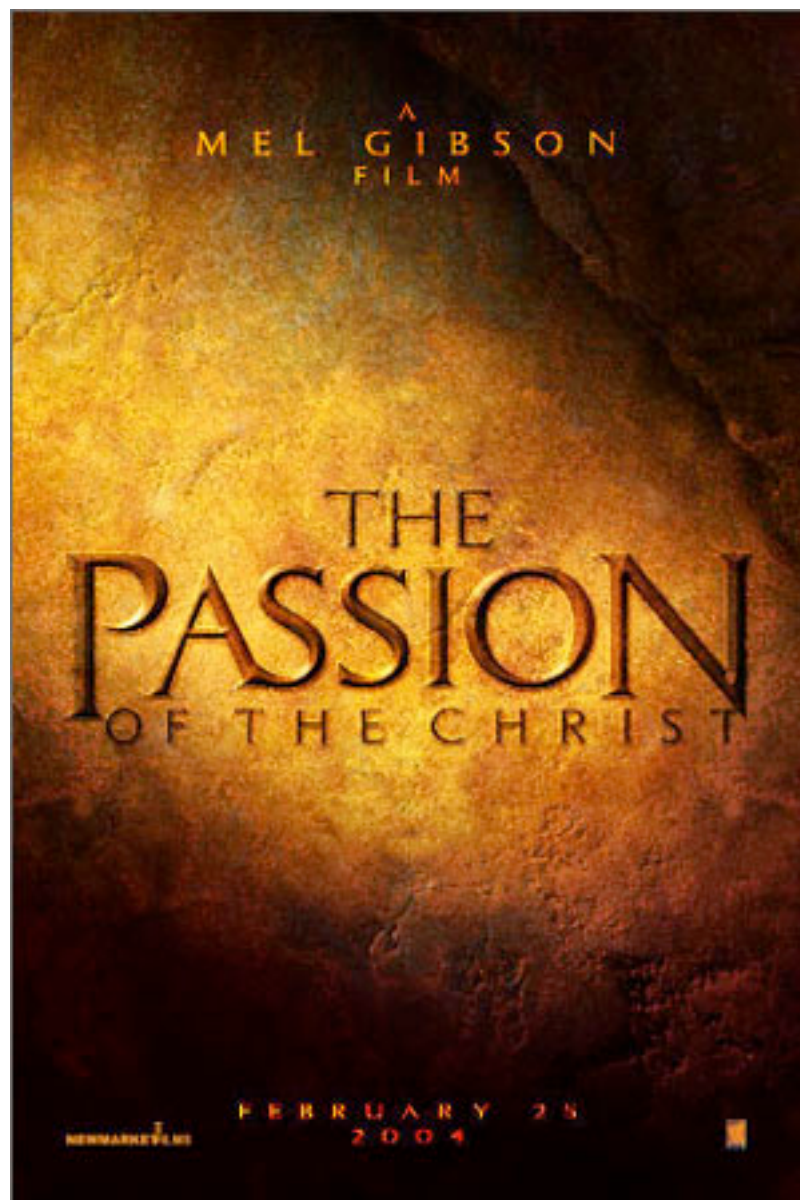


CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED

GROUP DISCUSSION



1. What scene made the biggest impact on you as you watched the film?

This question should help to get people talking.

2. Would you ever - willingly - go through that kind of suffering for someone else?

When people have answered, direct them to Romans 5:6-9 and read the verses aloud.

3. Do you remember the scene where Jesus crushed the snake's head? Did you understand what that was about?

Show your group Genesis 3:15 and read it aloud:

"And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel."

Explain that even here, very early on in the Bible, God promises that there will come a time when Satan's power will be destroyed by Christ ("he will crush your head").

4. When Jesus died, darkness fell even though it was daytime, and we saw that the curtain in the temple had been torn. Do you know why these things are significant?

*Explain that darkness falling during the day was understood as a sign of God's judgement on sin (see Amos 5:20, 8: or Exodus 10:21-23 for examples). Because Jesus had lived a sinless life, he was able to take God's punishment for sin **on our behalf**. On the cross, he was forsaken ("Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" = "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?") so that we need never be.*

The temple curtain was used to mark the separation that exists between God and man because of our sin and God's holiness. As Jesus died, the curtain was torn from top to bottom, showing that - thanks to Jesus - the way is now open for human beings to enter God's presence.

5. Do you remember the Bible verse that came up on the screen right at the beginning of the film?

Show your group Isaiah 53, verse 5, and read it aloud:

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah wrote those words about 700 years before Jesus was born. Do you understand what that has to do with what we've just seen?

*This question should help to show how much your guests have understood. If necessary, use the opportunity to explain again the fact that Jesus died as our substitute ("...**he** was pierced for **our** transgressions..." etc). He accepted the punishment that was rightfully ours on our behalf. As a result, we can enjoy freedom from condemnation and forgiveness by God; we can once again enjoy the all-satisfying relationship with the Creator, the relationship for which we were made; we can be sure of eternal life because the one who would be our judge has already died for us, and - as we saw at the very end of the film - has risen from death.*

6. If Jesus *did* rise from the dead, what are the implications for us?

Jesus is indeed "the Son of God"; God in human form (Romans 1:1-4)

He will one day return to judge the living and the dead (Acts 17:30-31)

According to Jesus, the right response to him is to "repent and believe" (Mark 1:15)

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR LEADERS

- It's important to see the film before inviting others. This will give you time to reflect on the content of the film, and anticipate any questions your guests may ask.
- Pray that God would guide you as you consider who to invite.
- When you invite people to see the film, let them know that there's also going to be a short discussion of the film afterwards.
- Pray for those you've invited, that they would come, and that God would open their eyes as they consider Jesus Christ.
- To follow up your viewing of the film, and in order to ask the discussion questions above, you will want to invite people back to your home - or similarly quiet, neutral venue - for coffee. Have some Bibles handy, preferably all the same translation. The quotations above are taken from the NIV version.
- If possible, give people a book or tract to take away with them. Copies of John's Gospel are readily available from most Christian bookstores. An inexpensive tract called *The Passion of Jesus Christ - Its Meaning For Today* is available from The Good Book Company (call 0845 225 0880 or visit www.thegoodbook.co.uk). John Piper has written an excellent book called *The Passion of Jesus Christ* giving fifty reasons why Jesus came to die (call 02871 342 907 or visit www.christisall.com/dgm). *Christianity Explored* by Rico Tice and Barry Cooper contains very readable chapters explaining Jesus' death and resurrection (call 0845 225 0880 or visit www.christianityexplored.com).
- At the end of your time together, as well as giving people a book, extend an invitation to find out more for those who want to do so. If you're planning to run a *Christianity Explored* course in the near future, let them know the start date, explain that it will be a relaxed and informal look at Mark's Gospel, and assure them that they will be very welcome! It's a good idea to actually give your guest an invitation with the start time / date / venue printed on it.