

# **COMMENTARIES ON 'THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST' by Dennis R. Wiles: Who killed Jesus?\_22304**

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## **COMMENTARIES ON 'THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST': Who killed Jesus?**

**By Dennis R. Wiles**

Jesus made the cover of Newsweek again. The February 16 edition has a picture of James Caviezel portraying Jesus in the upcoming movie The Passion of the Christ donning its cover. The cover story bears the headline, "Who Really Killed Jesus?"

I read this article by award-winning author Jon Meacham. It is such a biased article that plays loose with the facts that I have to respond to it. This article (and several others) is representative of the anti-Christian perspective that often characterizes the mainstream media. I like Newsweek and have subscribed to it for years—but Meacham's words have to be countered in this instance.

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**The Gospel is not  
anti-Semitic. It is  
the antidote to  
sin! While a  
Jewish court  
convicted Jesus  
and a Roman one  
condemned Him,  
my sin kept him  
on the cross. He  
died for us and  
because of us.**

**— Dennis R.  
Wiles**

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He sets the stage for his critique of Gibson's movie about Jesus by stating

that The Passion is based on a literal interpretation of the biblical material in the four Gospels that describe the death of Jesus. Then he writes, “But the Bible can be a problematic source. Though countless believers take it as the immutable word of God, Scripture is not always a faithful record of historical events; the Bible is the product of human authors who were writing in particular times and places with particular points to make and visions to advance.”

He makes such a bold claim as this and doesn’t offer any proof to substantiate it. What “record of historical events” would he choose to use concerning the trial and death of Jesus Christ? Does he have access to some secret source that has just been discovered? The Gospels offer the historical account of the life of Jesus. We have multiple thousands of copies of the ancient Greek texts that have been historically preserved that record history’s greatest event.

He further claims that Gibson’s movie will elicit anti-Semitic sentiments because the Gospel writers were opposed to the “temple elite” and thus wrote biased accounts of the final hours of Christ’s life. He revises history at this point in his discussion with this erroneous, preposterous paragraph: “Most of the early Christians were Jewish and saw themselves as such. Only later, beginning roughly at the end of the first century, did some Christians start to view and present themselves as a people entirely separate from other Jewish groups. And for centuries still—even after Constantine’s conversion in the fourth century—some Jewish people considered themselves Christians. It was as the church’s theology took shape, culminating in the Council of Nicea in 325, that Jesus became the doctrinal Christ.”

Are you kidding me? Jesus is presented in the New Testament text itself as the Son of God. It did not take the church 300 years to conclude that! The distinction between Judaism and Christianity arose in the first generation church. Read Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

This is just a sampling of the kind of inaccuracies and judgmental bias that is reflected in the cover story of one of America's most well known periodicals. Meacham chastises Gibson (and the Gospel writers) for putting too much blame on the Jews for the death of Jesus. He questions the historicity of the Bible in its claims that the Jews had such influence on the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate.

I would say to Mr. Meacham and all other media-types who will weigh in on this movie,

WE ALL KILLED JESUS!

The Gospel is not anti-Semitic. It is the antidote to sin! While a Jewish court convicted Jesus and a Roman one condemned Him, my sin kept him on the cross. He died for us and because of us.

The cross was controversial in its day—and it remains controversial in ours.

Jesus, keep me near the cross.

*Dennis R. Wiles is pastor of First Baptist Church in Arlington.*

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.