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The Passion: Beyond the Movie

The Passion of the Christ was a movie phenomenon, grossing 26.5 million on its first day alone and more than \$370 million total in 2004. Now the press is calling 2005 the year of the Hollywood slump, in part because the gross receipts of this year cannot compare with the huge success of the Mel Gibson film. People flocked to the movie because they were caught up in the story of Christ's sacrifice for us. But what about the other biblical characters who were closely involved in Christ's ministry and deeply affected by His death?

In his newly released novel, entitled *Beyond the Passion*, Brian Buriff takes a "what if" look at the disciples and fictionally fleshes out the bare bones story of what happened to them after the crucifixion. In its pages the reader steps inside the sandals of those who had walked close to Jesus before His death to a place where one can feel their pain and yes, even their anger, and still find hope.

Buriff explains, "This novel is about the painful, but necessary, expressions of shock and sorrow, blaming and bargaining, and the illusions and disillusionment that are part of the grief process. Like a butterfly emerging from its cocoon, the people that Jesus loved found themselves contending with the wrappings of doubt and fear which enveloped them. To deny their pain and struggle is to ignore an integral process that was necessary for their wings to find strength and take flight in the wake of the coming resurrection."

Although each character did their best under the circumstances, it was probably not the prettiest of scenes. The disciples were scattered and afraid. Their long-term plans ran amok; disappointment and disillusionment abounded. No doubt each got on the others' nerves from time to time.

The portrayal in *Beyond the Passion* uses facts that we already know to be historically, geographically, and culturally true. However, biblical historical fiction should never be interpreted as strict gospel representations, but rather as integrated portrayals to challenge and inspire. *Beyond the Passion* is no exception to that rule.

In the final analysis, this book is all about grace. The New Testament characters were not saints at the time. They were real people with real emotions dealing with a real series of tragic events. As such, they give us encouragement to walk daily with Christ *Beyond the Passion*.

Beyond the Passion, by Brian Buriff, published by Evergreen Press (July 2005)
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