

The Exchanger

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The Mission of
FBCWR:
**Connecting People
to God's Life-
Changing Power**

**We've Got
Connections!**

And one called out to
another and said,
"Holy, Holy, Holy,
is the LORD of hosts,
The whole earth is full
of His glory."

Isaiah 6:3

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Understanding the Passion

The Passion of the Christ movie is like one of those inkblot tests. What do *you* see? A costly sacrifice from the innocent Son of God, who died in your place, or a sadistic torture? Why do some not resonate at all with the Passion movie? I think the answer comes down to one awe-inspiring attribute of God.

Why the Angels Praise Him

In the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, God gives us a glimpse of what we can only imagine—the very courts of heaven. There, we are told, the angels of God hover around His throne and do not cease to praise Him crying out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty" (Revelation 4:8). God has many wonderful and amazing attributes but the one most exalted in heaven is His holiness. So what does that mean for us? The Bible teaches that because He is pure holiness, He cannot tolerate sin in His presence. Because His holiness contains a powerful sense of justice, He punishes sin and every person will someday stand in judgment before Him. Let this point sink in—we deserve nothing from God but punishment. We can rationalize our sin, compare it to other's more grievous sin or sweep it under the carpet but denials have no impact on reality. We have separated ourselves from Him and have chosen to become His enemy. We are all therefore "objects of God's wrath" as it says in Ephesians 2. Someone may say, I don't like the idea of a God like that and I am

not that bad. This is further evidence of the depth of our total lack of holiness. We must allow God to tell us who He is and conform to Him, not insist that He conform to our conceptions.

The Good News

We arrive now at the heart of the "gospel", which means "good news". It is good news because fortunately for us, God's holiness includes a huge portion of mercy. He longs to reconcile us to Himself and He does not delight in punishing sin. He longs to be merciful. So how to maintain holiness and justice but extend mercy? How about stepping in and taking the punishment for sin on Himself? He is like a just human judge who has justly convicted and sentenced his guilty son for a crime. Instead of excusing the son out of love and mercy, he personally pays the penalty for his son's crime. He then becomes what Paul says of God in the book of Romans, "both just and justifier".

Many Christians are drawn to the Passion film because we realize that the scourging was ours, the horrific death should have been mine—not Jesus'. But without embracing the starting point that God is totally pure holiness we will never understand Christ's sufferings. So receive the sacrifice He made for you and take Christ as your personal Savior. He is your ticket to forgiveness and eternal life in heaven forever.

-Joe Fornear

