

Religion and Theology: Similarities between *Mere Christianity* and *The Passion of the Christ*

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It is interesting to compare religious and theological books and films, in analyzing how writers and directors decide to illustrate the meaning inherent in faith and spirituality. *Mere Christianity* by Lewis (2001) is a book which aims to describe the backbone of Christian beliefs, centering on the poignant themes of the Christian experience in being called to know and love the Trinitarian God. *The Passion of the Christ* written by Fitzgerald and Gibson and directed by Gibson (2004) is a film which aims to place focus on the actual life of Christ as he is experiencing his Passion here on Earth, also known as the Stations of the Cross or the Sorrowful Mysteries, before his crucifixion and resurrection. By comparing the *Mere Christianity* and *The Passion of the Christ*, one is able to identify the religious and theological similarities between the two works.

There are certain similarities between *Mere Christianity* and *The Passion of the Christ*, which are highlighted even more starkly by their differences. Both works center on the central meaning and importance of the Christian experience. While Lewis places focus on explaining the backbone of Christianity by way of a guidebook, such as noting that the “whole of Christianity... (is) putting on Christ” (195), Fitzgerald and Gibson highlight the significance of the Passion of Christ, his actual experiences and actions before his crucifixion and resurrection. Both works demand an acknowledgement and adherence to the will of God. Lewis calls the reader to understand the natural law as being governed by God himself, God being the omnipotent and loving universal force which is perfectly expressed through his Son Jesus Christ, even going so far as to say that “where Christianity differs from other religions, Christians are right, and they are wrong” (35), while Fitzgerald and Gibson aim to recreate the actual time and scene of Christ’s Passion, in an effort to highlight the supreme significance of the final moments of before

Christ's crucifixion and leading to his resurrection. In other words, while Lewis aims to plant the seed of knowledge of Christianity through explanation, Fitzgerald and Gibson focus on calling people to watch the seed being planted.

Mere Christianity and *The Passion of the Christ* are both concerned with helping the audience come to a deeper and more profound connection to Christ. Both works enthusiastically illustrate the importance of Christ and the meaning of his life in the world. On an even more significant level, both works are urging people to see the dignity and splendor of Christ and to implore people to become like him. There is certainly a noticeable passion involved in the creation of these works, and the writers and director are all centered on providing convincing evidence for acknowledging the truth and love of God through Christ.

Sisti S. (Producer) & Gibson, M. (Director). (2004). *The passion of the Christ* [Motion picture].

United States: 20th Century Fox.

Lewis, C. S. (2001). *Mere Christianity*. HarperCollins.