

# 8B

# RELIGION

## ABC anchor took over prime-time for religious story

By David Bauder  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Bringing a reporter's eye to biblical stories is Peter Jennings' passion.

ABC took the extraordinary step of devoting all three hours of prime time Monday to Jennings' latest religious saga, "Jesus and Paul: The Word and the Witness."

Jennings said the special's timing and content was locked in before Mel Gibson's

film "The Passion of the Christ" became a huge success. Still, the movie can't help but affect how the ABC show is perceived, and may bring in more viewers.

"In the wake of 'The Passion,' which created such intensity, we bring some further education to the debate that people are having," he said.

Jennings saw Gibson's movie, but declines to give his opinion of it.

The ABC project is essentially the sequel to "In Search of Jesus," the 2000 special on Jesus Christ's life that finished third in the week's television rankings, an unusually potent performance for a documentary.

Jennings immediately asked to examine St. Paul, who did more than anyone to spread Jesus' message to a non-Jewish world.

"Paul is a wonderful story, just a wonderfully interesting

story, and a story very relevant to today," Jennings said. "So much of what we're debating in the country today — marriage, sex, religiosity, the role of women — was precisely what was going on in Paul's day."

During the documentary, set to a contemporary soundtrack with the likes of Joan Osborne, R.E.M. and Curtis Mayfield, Jennings tries to describe what life and politics were like in Jesus' time.

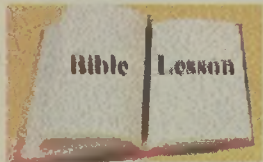
Jesus' message of compassion to the poor was even more radical then, and was likely to threaten a brutal Roman regime that didn't hesitate to snuff out threats. The documentary does not explicitly lay full blame for his death on either Roman or Jewish leaders.

Jennings walks in Jesus' footsteps in the present-day Middle East, even showing how it might have been possible for him to escape into the

desert when he saw authorities coming to capture him.

The special is careful to note the several areas where scholars disagree, particularly about Christ's resurrection. Many believe literally in everything written in the Bible, while others believe the Resurrection was metaphorical.

Something must have happened, otherwise it's hard to explain how Jesus' story Please see RELIGION/6B



### Jesus fulfills mission, the empty tomb

Matthew 28:1-15

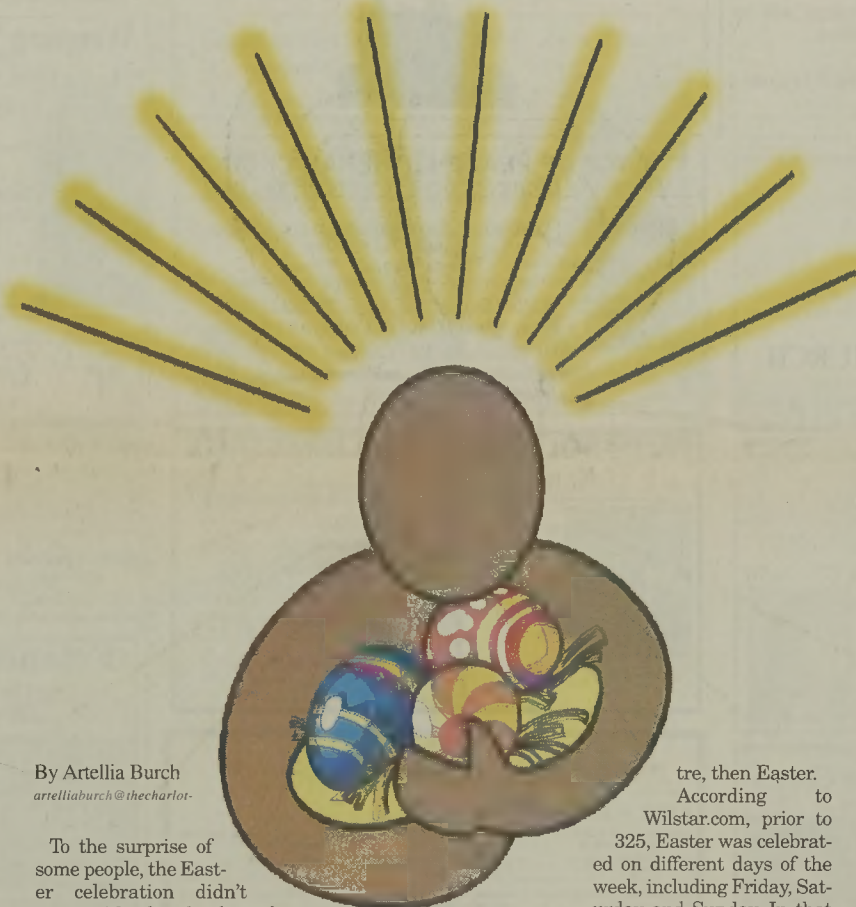
After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him; Now I have told you.'"

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

# Easter's deep diverse history



By Artellia Burch  
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To the surprise of some people, the Easter celebration didn't start with the death and resurrection of Christ.

In fact the celebration is so old, it's hard to date its origin.

For Christians, Easter is based around the death of Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Messiah in the Old Testament who was killed during the Jewish Passover.

Some historical experts see Easter as a combination of Pagan, Hebrew and Christianity. The Passover is celebrated during this time to commemorate when Christ was crucified under the order of Governor Pontius Pilate in 30 A.D. Early Christians, who were former Jews, observed Passover in memory of Jesus. In the 4th century, Good Friday was observed.

Although the resurrection of Christ is one of the holiest holidays in the Christian religion, its observance eventually became intermingled with a pagan celebration. The ancient Anglo-Saxons celebrated the return of spring honoring their goddess of off-spring and springtime, Eastre. The collaboration began as in the 2nd century after Christian missionaries encountered tribes with pagan celebrations. So the mixture was used as a tactic to covert Saxons to Christianity.

Since the pagan festival of Eastre occurred at the same time of year as the Christian observance of the resurrection of Christ, the holiday was eventually named East-

re, then Easter. According to Wilstar.com, prior to 325, Easter was celebrated on different days of the week, including Friday, Saturday and Sunday. In that year at the Council of Nicaea, Emperor Constantine installed the rule that Easter will be celebrated on the first Sunday that occurs after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox. Therefore, Easter must be celebrated on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25.

The Easter bunny originated from the pagan festival of Eastre. Anglo-Saxons worshiped the goddess, Eastre through the symbol of the rabbit.

The exchange of Easter eggs took place before the resurrection of Christ. The eggs were a symbol of rebirth in certain cultures, so eggs were often wrapped in gold leaves and bright colors.

ILLUSTRATION/TRINA MONTGOMERY-ARDREY

## Poll: More believe Jews killed Jesus



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The percentage of Americans who believe Jews were responsible for killing Jesus has grown in recent years, although it remains a view held by a minority of people, according to a poll released Friday.

The survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press found 26 percent of respondents believe Jews were to blame for the Crucifixion, up from 19 percent in ABC News poll in 1997.

The greatest increase was among young people and blacks.

Thirty-four percent of those under age 30 now believe Jews were responsible, compared to 10 percent in 1997, the Pew Center said. And 42 percent of blacks hold that view, compared to 21 percent seven years ago.

The poll was conducted amid controversy over Mel Gibson's epic "The Passion of the Christ." Some say the film unfairly portrays the role of Jews in Jesus' death, while Gibson and others insisted the movie is not anti-Semitic and is faithful to Gospel accounts.

The film, funded by Gibson, has been a big hit, earning more than \$300 million.

The Pew survey did not ask whether respondents believe Jews today should be blamed for the Crucifixion. But they noted that an ABC poll this year found an overwhelming majority of people rejected that view.

The Pew survey of 1,703 adults was conducted March 17-21 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

On the Net:  
Pew Research Center:  
<http://people-press.org/>

## CHURCH NEWS

Christian Women of Elegance is sponsoring a 100-word essay contest on "Why Your Mother Should Be Considered The Greatest Mom of Charlotte."

The writers' age categories are ages 5-9, 10-17 and 18 and older. All essays should be mailed or faxed to Christ-

ian Women of Elegance, Water Oak, Pineville 281344 or fax to (704) 889-1209.

Winners will present the awards to their mothers at the Gospel Day In The Park "A Day To Celebrate Women" to be held May 1 at Independence Park located at 300 Hawthorne Lane. For more

information call (704) 493-2536.

**April 7-9**  
Shepherd's Fold Church will hold Holy Week Worship Celebration at 7:30 p.m. at 5101 Nations Ford road.

**April 8**  
St. Phillip Missionary Baptist Church will hold its

Maundy Thursday Service at 7 p.m. Communion to commemorate the Last Supper and the Night of Jesus' Betrayal.

**April 9-11**  
The Spiritual Leaps Gospel Singers will celebrate its 45th anniversary at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and 2:30 on Sunday.

For more information call (704) 376-5257.

**April 10**  
Pineville Church of the Nazarene at 8614 Pineville-Matthews Road will hold its Car Wash, Rummage sale and Bake Sale at 9 am.

• Friendship Missionary Baptist Church will hold its

Easter Musical Worship Experience: Part The First at 6 p.m.

**April 11**  
Calvary Church of the Nazarene, at 4000 N. Sharon Amity Road will hold its annual Easter Cantata at 10:45 a.m.

Please see PLEASANT/7B

