

John Dominic Crossan
Questions for Lecture Three:
Worship and Violence:

What is the Purpose of Your Prayer?

Chapter 1: Avoiding the real issue

1. Crossan claims that looking at the crucifixion as either a disagreement among Jews *or* as substitutionary atonement misses the point. What is the real issue we're avoiding?

Chapter 2: Oberammergau background

1. Why is Crossan struck with the notion that "This is a lousy story!"?
2. What is the difference between "narrativity" and "historicity"?

Chapter 3: Gibson and Emmerich's *Passion*

1. Who is Anne Catherine Emmerich and what does she have to do with Gibson's *Passion*?
2. What does Crossan mean by "transcendental testosterone"?
3. Describe Mel Gibson's theology of atonement. What is the sin of Mel Gibson?

Chapter 4: Did Gibson get the story straight?

1. How do the Gospels report the size of "the crowds" in the story?
2. How do you decide how many is a crowd? Why is it an ethical decision?
3. How does what we know about Passover in Jerusalem help us determine the likely size of "the crowd"?

Chapter 5:

1. How does what we know about Pilate's character help us determine the likely size of "the crowd"?

Chapter 6:

1. What is the crowd "coming up for"?
2. How does Crossan describe the misrepresentation of the character Barabbas (the "*lehstehs*")?
3. Why does Crossan conclude that, in this case, nine (9) is a good estimate for the number of people in the crowd scene?
4. What other kind of ethical decisions does one have to make in producing a drama that is not necessary when simply reading?

Chapter 7:

1. What are the two ways most often employed in making the crucifixion almost irrelevant?

2. Why is the slogan, "The purpose of his life was his death" significant in understanding Gibson's particular view of the atonement?
3. Describe the "loop" of sacrifice in the ancient world.
4. Why would the concepts of sacrificial suffering and substitution be unfamiliar to ancient people?
5. What is wrong with the theology behind the statement, "God wanted somebody dead and if couldn't be the child, the firefighter would do just fine..."?

Chapter 8:

1. What is the difference between a sacrificial death and the ideas of suffering and substitution?
2. In Anselm's thinking, informed by Feudal society, God cannot forgive; somebody's got to pay. What factors contribute to this conclusion?
3. How is substitutionary atonement a crime against divinity?
4. Why was Jesus' ideological program dangerous to Roman authority?

WRAP-UP QUESTIONS:

1. What do you find most helpful so far from the material? Least helpful?
2. What implications does this material have for the wider Church? For your local fellowship? For you personally?