



Q&A with Bruce Marchiano, Creative Force Behind *Jesus...No Greater Love*

Q: There are already several “Jesus movies” available, including *The Gospel According to Matthew*, in which you portrayed Jesus. Why make another one?

A: Several great Jesus films have been produced over the years, and God has used them for his glory. Our vision is to make this new Jesus movie for the next generation, one that will use all the new production techniques and cutting edge technology. This movie will feature breathtaking cinematography and CGI effects that will engage the next generation of audiences. But it’s not just about creating a big budget version of the standard Jesus biopic. We long to reveal the Jesus of Scripture that has rarely, if ever been portrayed on film—passionate, joyful, full of purpose and Kingdom authority, the embodiment of manhood, Almighty God in human flesh. This is the Jesus that the world needs to know. We also want people from all nations and cultures, particularly Jews, to see themselves reflected in this film. *Jesus...No Greater Love* will be the most authentic film portrayal of Christ’s Jewish nature and the culture of the time. It’s about capturing the heart of Jesus and sharing it with the world through the most engaging and moving means possible—and always, always communicating the Scriptures with integrity. This movie will be as equally intriguing to American teenagers watching it on their iPods as to Indian orphans experiencing the story of Jesus for the first time.

Q: How will *Jesus...No Greater Love* be different from other movies about the life of Christ?

A: There have been several good Jesus films, including *The Gospel According to Matthew*, produced by Christian moviemakers, businesses or mission organizations. The plot and dialogue for many of those films have been pieced together from a collection of snapshots from the different gospels and edited or embellished by a screenwriter. The Jesus of some Hollywood versions speaks words that are not in the Bible. *Jesus...No Greater Love* will follow the Gospel of John word for word. This is a particular cornerstone of the project because we know that the real power that brings people to salvation is in the word of God, not the clever film-making. *Jesus...No Greater Love* is not the first word-for-word adaptation of a gospel. But it will be the first to show the human life of Jesus in context with the whole of Scripture. Most Jesus films cover the three year period of ministry. *The Passion of the Christ* focused on the crucifixion. *Jesus...No Greater Love* starts at the beginning of time and finds its symbolic end in the last verses of Revelation. This is truly Jesus yesterday, today, and forever. More than that, we will actually be showing the action from Christ’s kingdom perspective based on God’s plan and character as revealed in Scripture. In essence, this is the gospel through the eyes of Jesus.

Q: For a Christian actor, “playing Jesus” is so much more than just an acting gig. How do you prepare for such a complex task?

A: “Playing Jesus” is something that requires preparation on so many levels—spiritual, physical, emotional, etc. Each morning when I wake up, I go to a quiet place and spend two to three hours in prayer. This time is like a drug to me, really. This focused time with the Lord determines everything—the

writing (and rewriting...and more rewriting) of the script, the way I will capture Christ's essence on screen, everything. In the late afternoons, I head to the park for what my friends jokingly refer to as, "the Spartan workout." I prefer the park over a gym because of the quiet (if the crowd is going left, I will usually be heading to the right) and because it's free. But I also chose this routine because I want to develop the kind of toughness that Jesus would have had 2,000 years ago. It's not just a matter of appearing physically fit; it's a matter of being tough. It's the difference between a guy who is fit because he runs every day on a treadmill in an air-conditioned room (with the workout playlist blaring on his iPod) and the guy who is tough because he's worked in construction for twenty years. Jesus was a man who worked with his hands, who traveled everywhere on foot. There was no shielding from the elements. I need to make sure I have the weathered look of Jesus. But it's not just a physical thing. It's something that happens on the inside. I need to toughen up as a person, and that toughness reads on screen.

Q: Why did you choose the gospel of John?

A: John is unique among the gospels in several ways. While the other gospels start with genealogies, the birth of Christ or the ministry of John the Baptist (all very important things), John's gospel literally begins "in the beginning." John communicates a multi-level prophetic dynamic that goes beyond a man healing people and speaking in the temple courts and dying on a cross. There are layers of what John is conveying, and that has yet to be seen on film. We've seen a man preaching, healing people, dying on a cross and rising from the dead. What we haven't seen is the dimension of authority, the prophetic significance of what Jesus says and does or the many ways Jesus demonstrates He is I AM.

The bottom line is that this is just what the Lord has led me to do. Shortly after I felt this clear leading, two other "Jesus movies" came out back to back—*The Passion of the Christ* and another version of the gospel of John. I was bewildered. I asked God, "Why should I do this when others are already doing it?" He led me to a moment toward the end of John where Jesus has just prophesied to Peter about Peter's own death. Peter points out another disciple (probably John) and says to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" Jesus says to Peter, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow Me!" I decided not to worry about what others were doing or had done. God has demonstrated to me that this is the purpose for my life right now. Above all, I want to be obedient to His call.

Q: How will you make connections to prophecies—both those fulfilled in Christ and those still awaiting fulfillment—without adding dialogue or text to John's gospel.

A: That's a good question. Much of this will be done through the cinematography. Our film starts with Jesus in creation, in glory, actually creating the world. It will be a fascinating, awe-inspiring image. There will be times when we cut to images from the Old Testament. For example, when Jesus says, "I am the light of the world," we will cut to an image of the pillar of fire leading the children of Israel through the desert. There will also be moments when we cut to images of the future, like during the wedding at Cana. There's a moment when Jesus looks at the wedding couple and tears fill his eyes, and we see, from his perspective, a glimpse of him saving his bride, the church. When he's talking with Nicodemus about Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, we cut to an image of Jesus being lifted up on the cross. This is how we will show the gospel through the eyes of Jesus. This is the millennium crossing reality of Messiah.

Q: When I become a producer of *Jesus...No Greater Love*, how will my financial contribution be used?

A: It's always been important to me that when people give a dollar to a ministry effort (i.e. to Bruce Marchiano ministries), the lion's share of that dollar goes into the field. If there's one thing I'm really proud of, it's that I can stand before my donors and tell them I didn't spend their money on fancy office buildings. It goes to the field. The money raised to bring *Jesus...No Greater Love* to the screen will go to hire the best crew possible to bring the gospel to film. My hope is to shoot in Israel and use Israeli actors for extras and supporting roles and "no-name" American actors for key roles. Once the funds come in, the lions share will go toward securing an A-list cinematographer and a CGI team.

Q: Forty-five million dollars is a lot of money compared to the budgets of other Christian films. Why is *Jesus...No Greater Love* such an expensive endeavor?

A: That's a good question. First, it's important to point out that the average cost of a Hollywood quality production is around \$100 million, so *Jesus...No Greater Love* would not be considered a big-budget movie by Hollywood standards. The most expensive aspects of production, the cinematography and the CGI team, are vital to the quality of the film. Part of our vision for *Jesus...No Greater Love* is to produce a film version of the gospel that will still be relevant to audiences twenty or thirty years from now. This can only happen when the cinematography and effects are awe-inspiring. Another point to remember: though we will not be casting well-known actors in the movie (and paying them A-list salaries), we will still be bringing in industry professionals to negotiate contracts for everyone involved in the production according to industry standards. This is a must when working with professional actors. Shooting on location in Israel is another factor that adds expense to the production. We must feed and house 200 people every day of shooting. But the payoff there will be an atmosphere and authenticity that could never truly be recreated on a soundstage or another location.

Q: Raising forty-five million dollars is no easy task. Why have you chosen to make *Jesus...No Greater Love* a non-profit project instead of an investor-supported, profit-driven enterprise?

A: In my years of experience walking in the Christian business world, I have constantly seen the tug-of-war between generating profit and saving souls. It breaks my heart, but 90 percent of the time, the choices I've seen were made based on profitability. Freedom from the for-profit system sets up a firewall to protect the integrity of the gospel and the purpose of the gospel from any decisions or choices made to fatten the bottom line. Investors want financial return. As we make *Jesus...No Greater Love*, our goal is to see a return of souls. There will be a commercial distribution of the film, but the focus is the nations.

For more information, visit www.NewJesusMovie.com.