

MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN RETURNS

In December and January, the British movie, the *Life of Brian* was aired five times on the network, Comedy Central. The film, originally released in 1979, is a classic example of anti-Catholicism. For those who have not seen the movie, a description of its contents will prove enlightening.

The *Life of Brian* chronicles Jesus' life in the form of a parody. All of the characters who play the Jewish people speak with a British accent. The movie opens with heavenly singing and the Star of Bethlehem. The Three Wise Men are shown offering gifts to the baby, Brian. The Virgin Mary is played by a man with a high-pitched voice. Mary does not know that her baby is to be the Messiah. She greedily accepts the gifts and then complains about them. The 3 wise men then take back the gifts and push Mary to the floor.

In the next scene, the words "Saturday Afternoon – About Tea Time" appear on the screen. Throngs of people are heading up a mountain and a man is preaching and reciting the Beatitudes. The crowd starts to make fun of the Beatitudes by changing the words. For example, "Blessed are the cheesemakers" parodies "Blessed are the peacemakers" and "Blessed are the Greeks" is substituted for "Blessed are the meek."

Brian's mother begins to complain that she wants to go to the stoning. At the stoning, the accused man states that he is to be stoned because he told his wife that the "piece of halibut is good enough for Jehovah." A rabbi tells them that they can only start to throw stones when he blows the whistle. The Jews are portrayed as people that attend stonings as a sporting event and the crowd is so eager to throw stones that they end up stoning the rabbi, too.

We next see a group of people gathered together for a secret meeting. They are called the "People's Front of Judea." One of the group's male members states that he wants to be called "Loretta" from now on and would like to have a baby. Brian meets with the group and tells them that he is willing to join and that his name is "Brian Cohen."

The group responds that he must first paint in red the words "Romans Go Home" on a public building, which he does to their applause.

The organization, including Brian, plots in a humorous style to break into Pilate's castle, kidnap him and give the Romans two days to leave their land. The group does so and kills everyone except Brian. Brian is depicted as a religious rebel fighting for freedom and is held in a dungeon where he talks to other prisoners. One of the prisoners states that they will all get crucified. The prisoner tells Brian that it's probably the best thing that the Romans have done for us and that this country would be a mess if we didn't have crucifixion. Pilate tells the guards that he wants Brian fighting a rabid animal in one week.

Brian escapes from Pilate's castle and jumps off a high ledge. A spaceship filled with aliens swoops down out of nowhere and carries him to safety. The Roman soldiers begin chasing Brian, who again jumps off a ledge, and onto the head of a prophet whom he kills. In order to escape the guards, Brian pretends that he is the prophet and manages to utter the line, "Don't pass judgment on other people or you might get judged." After he speaks these words, Brian looks surprised that he was even able to come up with such an idea.

Hundreds of people are so struck by that one line that they start to follow Brian wherever he goes. Brian is scared of them and can't understand why they are following him. He runs from them and in doing so he loses a sandal. The crowd picks it up and everyone voices a different interpretation of the

significance of Brian dropping his sandal. Some say that now we too should only wear one sandal.

The next scene shows Brian in bed with Judith, a member of the Jewish rebel group. He is shown naked from the back. He opens his window and there are thousands of people lined up to see him. Mary is furious with him for attracting such crowds until the crowd starts worshipping her as Brian's mother. Mary is so flattered by the crowd's worshipping that she allows Brian to speak for the crowd. Brian hesitantly tells the crowd to "think for yourself" and "work it out for yourself." The crowd cheers and acts like Brian just gave them incredible advice.

The Romans eventually find Brian and imprison him again. His sentence is crucifixion. When asked by Pilate whom he should release, people respond that they want Brian to be released. Brian, however, already left to carry the cross to his crucifixion. While hanging on the cross, Brian speaks to another man hanging next to him. The man says that he is entitled to be crucified in the Jewish area and not the Roman area.

Judith arrives as Brian is hanging on the cross. She tells him it's great that you are doing this and then walks away. Mary arrives and caustically asks him how he could do this after everything she has done for him. She also walks away and leaves him to die. The movie ends with a song whose refrain is "the last laugh is on you" and "always look on the bright side of life."

When the *Life of Brian* first appeared in 1979, it was greeted with a chorus of condemnation from Catholic, Protestant and Jewish groups. Warner Bros. is again responsible for this bigotry.

The Catholic League has protested the showing of this movie (especially as it was shown just before and after Christmas) and would encourage league members to do likewise. Please

write to: Doug Herzog, President, Comedy Central, 1775
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