



# Messenger Project Newsletter

## The Messenger

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A NONPROFIT CORPORATION PROMOTING THE BIBLE THROUGH THE ARTS

### Messenger Project Members

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## Messenger Notes

**Messenger** mp3 files are readily available again at messengerproject.com to listen to and/or download for free.

**Lionel De Leon** has begun mixing songs for the upcoming Messenger CD (as yet untitled) and is on schedule for a Spring 2008 release date.

Next month's issue of *The Messenger* will be the final edition and 5-year anniversary issue.

## Questions for Christians (pt. 2)

### Why does God allow evil and suffering?

It is impossible to have free will without the consequences of evil. Even so, suffering strengthens us and lead us to faith. Eastern religions ignore evil, Darwinism and Communism rely on it, Islam has a superficial view of it. Judeo-Christianity states that we live in an abnormal world which God will restore someday.

### Is Christ the only way to God?

Christ proclaimed himself as the only way to God. He pleaded with his Father to provide another way (before his crucifixion). Why would God allow Jesus to suffer if there was another way to salvation? Of eleven major religions of the world, ten of them teach salvation through human effort. But Christianity recognizes the futility of man's own efforts and understands that salvation rests solely on the grace of God through the atoning sacrifice of his Son.

### How Can A Loving God Order People Killed?

In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites coming out of Egypt to take over the land of Canaan and kill all of the inhabitants. The Canaanite society deserved its fate because it was following evil practices, including child sacrifice. God used the Israelites to administer justice against sinful nations, just as he used other nations to administer justice against the Israelites.

But God is merciful, so we can be confident that if there were innocent people who were killed under God's command, he would provide mercy for them in heaven. It is a reasonable assumption that God took innocent children to a better place than the evil society in which they lived.

### Is Jesus God?

Jesus claimed equality with God in his person, works, power, sovereignty, judgment and honor. If Jesus is a liar, He has deceived more people than any other human. His character is evidence of a person of absolute virtue and integrity. His instruction was pure and profound. When reading the words of Jesus, we are struck by his intelligence and authority. Jesus lived a sinless, perfect life. His closest companions confirmed this and his enemies acknowledged it.

### Were Jesus' miracles real?

There's a limit to scientific knowledge and scientists can't explain many phenomena. If the resurrection is a fact, the other miracles are not hard to believe. The New Testament has six independent testimonies to the resurrection from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, and Paul. Included in their testimonies are various eyewitness accounts as well as reports of other interviewed witnesses of the risen Jesus, including one of over 500 people at one time. These witnesses were competent and honest. They had no impure motives for their testimony, such as fear, money, or ambition. They had the opportunity to know the truth, were mentally capable, were not gullible, and the documents of their testimony are reliable. There was more than an adequate number of witnesses to verify the truth and there was no contrary evidence. While the various Gospel accounts don't contradict, there are enough differences in the reports that it is clear that the writers didn't compare notes. The most powerful evidence is the conviction of the disciples. For 40 years after the resurrection, these men traveled throughout the land sharing the gospel. All of them were persecuted and all but one eventually put to death for their faith. People will not martyr themselves for what they believe to be a lie. Many of the religious and political leaders of the day had every reason to quell the Christian movement by refuting the resurrection testimony but were unable to disprove it.

The early Christian leaders were not a superstitious people, unable to determine truth from reality. They lived in a civilized world of sophisticated Greek and Roman culture. These men were fishermen, carpenters, a physician, etc., and certainly understood the laws of nature. They attested to the miracles. Science depends upon observation and replication. Miracles are by their very nature unprecedented events. No one can replicate miracles in a laboratory, but this doesn't mean that miracles are impossible.

### Can I be a Christian without attending church regularly?

Technically, yes. Salvation is not dependent on actions. God judges one's heart. But the Bible says that we are to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. If we are a Christian yet do not attend church regularly, how can we say that we really love God sufficiently? Jesus emphasized the importance of his church. The Bible states that regular worship, Bible study, fellowship with believers and service to one another are important. The church is God's household and Christians are members of God's family. In Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. The gratitude and enthusiasm of an authentic saving faith leads us to want to thank and worship Him, to hunger for knowledge of truth, to desire a fellowship with other believers. Further, active church involvement provides an antidote to our wicked culture. We share our experiences, our homes, and our problems with one another. Church is where faith is nurtured, sustained, and is a basis for us sharing our faith with others outside the church. In the early church, all believers met together constantly, sharing everything with each other, learning from one another, and giving aid spiritually and in other ways as well. The local church is a devoted loving family with each member having a role to play.

The Bible says "in the last days there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." The stage is being set by subtle and blatant attacks against religion (specifically Christianity). There will be a last person to accept Christ before the "time of the gentiles" is complete. At the rate the world is changing, it looks like that day could arrive in our lifetime.