



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

This is the final issue of *The Messenger*. Thank you to all who subscribed, I hope it was helpful and enlightening.

Messenger Project will come to a close in 2010 when **Lionel De Leon** retires from **Verizon** and moves to New Mexico. We hope to record 1-2 more CDs after the current one we are working on and to finish our goal of having at least one song from each book of the Bible. In retirement, Lionel plans to pursue production of *The Word* (his rock opera about Jesus).

Why I Believe in the Gospel

My faith in Christ was established through a careful and diligent study of Scripture and history, derived from logic and reasoning. It is not a blind faith based on what others believe, but a living faith based on my own understanding of the truth.

There is a God. I find it difficult to believe that life is a cosmic accident. The earth that we live on is too finely tuned to be a random occurrence. All creatures exist in a symbiotic relationship with each other and could not survive without the existing food-chain. It is absurd to presume that man evolved from monkeys, since this "evolution" would have involved taking backward steps in strength and body protection (fur), among other innate animal traits that humans lack. The only source of life is life itself, it cannot be produced outside of procreation (or cell division). Even the simplest organism is a complex life-form. The formation of life has to be the work of a Creator.

The Bible is unique. There is no other holy book that dares to prophesy in order to prove its divine origin. The stories in the Bible are different from mythical stories because they expose man's failures (King David's adultery, Judah sleeping with his daughter-in-law disguised as a prostitute, etc.). Although the Bible is an assemblage of writings

that span centuries and involve people from all walks of life, there is cohesiveness and unity in the text. The wisdom contained in its teachings is universal and timeless. The Bible is the story of God's love for mankind through the sacrifice of his son, Jesus. It is the only holy book that guarantees eternal life, not from our own works but by the grace of God.

The Bible is reliable. Both as a historical and archeological reference, the Bible has proven to be accurate. It has also proven to be textually reliable with less than one percent discrepancy between various texts.

The Bible is supernatural. Within the Old Testament are many prophecies that came to pass, most notably Daniel's prophecy of the coming kingdoms and the 800 prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus. Also, the Torah (first five books of Moses) contains many mysterious equidistant lettering codes that weren't discovered until recent history (with the help of computers).

Israel reclaimed its promised land. It is utterly remarkable to me that Israel not only maintained her identity for centuries without a nation to call home, but was also able to renew nationhood in one day (as prophesied in the Bible). All of the other nations that existed in Old Testament times have disappeared (Canaan, Nod, etc.) or changed radically (Egypt). Yet Israelis remained true to their religion over a span of centuries and were able to return to their land despite every single neighboring nation declaring war against them and wanting Israel wiped from the face of the earth. The restoration of Israel is a miracle that proves God has not forgotten his promise to his chosen people.

Jesus' teachings are profound. The account of Jesus and his teachings are beyond human exercises in fiction. No writer could invent such a perfect human being with teachings that surpass all the wisdom of the ages. No Jew would invent the story of a god-man because it runs contrary to their religious beliefs. Although Jesus' miracles have been a stumbling block to many (including Thomas Jefferson), there is no reason why the disciples would invent these miracles and there is no way the miracles would

be accepted as historical facts since they were written within the timeframe of those who were witnesses of the events (and who would have easily disputed them, especially the resurrection). Also, there was no motive for inventing miraculous accounts for Jesus. If anything, the miracles make the story harder to believe. But if we are to believe in God, we must be willing to believe in his miraculous powers. A God who created the heavens and the earth can accomplish anything within his creation.

Paul's testimony is convincing. While Jesus' disciples naturally followed and believed in him, Paul's testimony is the strongest argument for the truth of the gospel. He was a man who was a staunch opponent of this new religion of Christianity and did his best to abolish it (as an act of devotion). He had no motive for suddenly becoming Christ's leading crusader and the author of most of the New Testament. But Paul was chosen by God (on his way to persecute Christians) to become the apostle for the gentiles (non-Jews). His epistles (letters) exude integrity, sincerity and passion. He gave up everything he believed in and embraced the persecution and pain that followed his decision. Why would any man forsake his life-long religious beliefs and accept a new religion along with its persecutions? Paul had to be telling the truth about his conversion on the road to Damascus and his meeting with the risen Lord.

There are many who refuse to believe in the gospel. Some will not accept miracles. Some cannot accept a God who sends his son to suffer and die for our sins. Some cannot accept a religion that excludes non-believers (no matter how good their human behavior is). Some are turned off by the hypocrisy they see in most believers (including many religious leaders). But Christianity is not a religion. It is a personal relationship with God. Our great and powerful creator wants a close personal relationship with each of us. Before I came to Christ, I didn't want to bother God with my problems. I figured there were plenty of people in worse condition than me who needed God more. But now I realize that God wants each of us to have a daily communion with him and he is interested in every aspect of our lives. Jesus said, "Seek, and you shall find." I sought and found, and I hope that you will too.