



The Messenger

Messenger Project Newsletter

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Messenger Notes

Lionel De Leon recently completed his script for **The Word**, a rock opera about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Vocals will be performed by an ensemble of musicians. Lionel will be the solo musician on the accompanying CD and will give the songs simple arrangements to make them easy to perform at any talent level. Once the music is recorded, Lionel will transcribe it to sheet music. The mechanics of the musical will next need to be developed (scene design and construction, costume design and creation, etc). The complete package will be available free at **Messenger Project's** website, **messengerproject.com**, with the exception of the CD. Messenger Project is hoping to eventually have the music available online in mp3 format. We are currently looking to upgrade our internet availability with a permanent i.p. address where we can store files for downloading.

Lionel is scheduled to perform at a youth correctional facility in Calabasas on April 4th, 2004. **Joie De Leon** will join him for this performance. There are more dates scheduled at other facilities and Lionel is hoping to develop a prison ministry associated with Messenger Project. Music is a powerful medium. Combined with God's word, there's no limit to its potential for evangelism.

Lionel recently joined **Community Bible Church** in Huntington Beach, California, and hopes to involve **Messenger** with a summer outreach at the church.

The artwork for the new CD will be our corporate logo. The title will be called **Messenger Project**. We will start mixing songs early next month and are hoping to be wrapped up with production some time this summer, God willing.

New Testament Writings

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch in Syria, is believed to have been martyred at 110 AD in Rome. He quoted from the New Testament writings before they were officially canonized in 397 AD at the Council of Carthage. Ignatius didn't refer to Christian writings by name, but his letters quote Matthew, Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians and 1 Thessalonians.

Irenaeus (120 AD- 200 AD) listed the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) as scripture in the first century. Athanasius was the first to list the 27 New Testament books together, in his Paschal letter of 367 AD.

It's speculated that the earliest New Testament book is probably Paul's letter to the Galatians, written in the late 40s or early 50s AD. The first gospel, most likely Mark, is dated in the 50s or early 60s AD (though some place it just before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD). The last book of the Bible, Revelation, was most likely written around 95 AD.

It's hard for me to believe that the early church would establish itself without the gospels. It doesn't make sense that nobody would think about writing down the most important event in the history of mankind until twenty years after the fact.

Because the church was established quickly and spread over a large area, it was very likely that the gospel accounts were written and spread throughout the region simultaneously. Because letters were written on papyrus, there are very few extant manuscripts from the authors of the New Testament (few papyri from outside Egypt survive, only the climate of Egypt and certain parts of Mesopotamia favors the preservation of papyri). The persecution against the early

church would have included the destruction of church letters, making it nearly impossible to find documents that date from the apostolic age. So we are left only to speculate on when the gospels were actually written.

Because we live by faith, it doesn't really matter when the gospels were written, only that they are available for us to read. But it's good to know Christian history so that we may gain confidence in our faith and have the knowledge to stand against adversaries who want to shake our beliefs.

Sacrifice

How do we atone for our sins? The Jews continuously offered sacrifices to the Lord as atonement for their sins. But God created the perfect sacrifice in his Son and made it the final sacrifice. It's interesting to note that since the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, the Jews have not resumed sacrifices. It's not because the Jews managed to obey all of Moses' laws and don't need atonement for their sins anymore. In my opinion, God put an end to Jewish sacrifice because the final sacrifice was made at the cross when Jesus was crucified. But just as God waited forty years before he allowed the Jews to enter the Promised Land, he also waited forty years after the crucifixion before he destroyed the Temple and uprooted Jews from the land of Israel, effectively putting an end to sacrifice.

Jesus paid the price of our sins with an agonizing death on the cross. Salvation was a gift from God. But in order to accept it, we must also follow the Lord with gratitude and flee from our sinful nature. Character is the mark of a true believer. Many confess belief in Christ, but few accept his simple commandment to love one another. Let us all sacrifice our sins to the Lord and strive for purity.