



# Messenger Project Newsletter

## The Messenger

messengerproject.com  
714.537.8362

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A NONPROFIT CORPORATION PROMOTING THE BIBLE THROUGH THE ARTS

**Messenger Project Members**  
Lionel De Leon, President-Founder,  
Editor-Publisher of *The Messenger*  
Raymond Genovese, Treasurer  
Joie De Leon, Secretary

### Messenger Notes

This month marks **Lionel De Leon's** tenth anniversary of writing verbatim songs from the Bible. His first biblical song was *Immanuel* (Luke 1:1 & 2:8), completed on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1996.

Messenger Project will be producing a limited edition of our self titled 6<sup>th</sup> CD (mostly for promotional purposes). All of the songs on the upcoming CD are currently available free at our website (in mp3 format) and will eventually be available free in sheet-music. A few CDs will be offered for sale at our website.

Lionel and **Joie De Leon's** scheduled performance of *If You Are the Son of God* with the worship team at Huntington Beach **Community Bible Church** was delayed and should be performed on March 12<sup>th</sup>. *Follow Me* is scheduled to be performed on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

### Problematic Bible Verses

Here is a partial list of puzzling Bible verses, along with possible solutions:

**Age of Ahaziah.** 2 Kings 8:26 says Ahaziah was 22 when he reigned but 2 Chronicles 22:2 says he was 42. *Some Septuagint and Syriac manuscripts have his age at twenty-two in both verses. Jewish sages explain 2 Chronicles 22:2 to mean that it was 42 years since Jehoshaphat had married Omri's daughter, alluding to the decree that Omri's line would be annihilated.*

**Children of Michal.** 2 Samuel 6:23 says Michal had no children, but 2 Samuel 21:8 says she had 5 sons and a daughter. *Some Septuagint and Syriac manuscripts list Merab (not Michal) in 2 Samuel 21:8. Jews interpret 2 Samuel 6:23 as meaning that Michal stopped having children as punishment for her haughtiness, but bore six children prior to this curse. Sages interpret "no child until the day of her death" to mean that she died in childbirth.*

**David's horsemen.** 2 Samuel 8:3 says David took 700 horsemen from Hadadezer (king of Zobah) but 1 Chronicles 18:3 says he took 7,000. *The Septuagint lists 7,000 horsemen in both verses. Masoretic text lists 1,700 horsemen in 2 Samuel 8:3. The Jewish Tanach says that David took 1,700 horsemen from Hadadezer in 2 Samuel 8:3 and took 7,000 horsemen from Hadadezer in 1 Chronicles 18:3, two separate kings of Zobah.*

**Solomon's stalls.** 1 Kings 4:26 says Solomon had 40,000 stalls but 2 Chronicles 9:25 says he had 4,000 stalls. *Some Septuagint manuscripts list 4,000 stalls in both verses. The Jewish Tanach mentions 40,000 stables at 1 Kings 5:6 and 4,000 in 2 Chronicles 9:25, without an explanation.*

**Who killed Saul?** 1 Samuel 31:4 says Saul committed suicide but 2 Samuel 21:12 says he was slain by the Philistines. *The Philistines critically wounded Saul, but Saul fell on his sword to end his life rather than face abuse by the Philistines. 2 Samuel 21:12 says the Philistines "struck Saul down," which could refer to Saul being wounded rather than killed. The Tanach says that the Philistines "defeated Saul" (which doesn't contradict Saul taking his life).*

**Dimensions of a circle.** 1 Kings 7:23 mentions a circular sea of cast metal whose dimensions are ten cubits from rim to rim and 30 cubits around (an actual circle would be  $\pm 31.4$  cubits around). *The Tanach (Stone Edition) says that either the numbers given were approximations or the diameter was measured from outer lip to outer lip while the circumference was measured from inner lip to inner lip. Another possible explanation is that the shape was not a perfect circle. It may have had a circular shape that was minutely oblong.*

**Hares chewing cud.** Leviticus 11:6 says that the hare chews cud. *Cows regurgitate undigested food and re-chew it prior to a second digestion. Rabbits re-ingest "night feces" (cecotrophs) from the rectum for re-digestion. Cows and hares both re-chew half-digested vegetation for easier re-digestion, the only difference is in the process.*

**Mustard seed parable.** In Matthew 13:31, Jesus calls the mustard seed the smallest of all seeds and says it grows into a tree where birds roost. *Though there are smaller seeds (the orchid seed, for example), the mustard seed is the smallest seed planted in a garden (1/20<sup>th</sup> inch diameter). Its height of over ten feet makes it among the largest grown plants in a garden. The plant stem is woody (like a tree), but the overall size and shape is closer to a shrub than a tree. Sparrows rest on mustard branches to feed on its seed. Jesus was speaking figuratively and was not giving a lesson in botany.*

**Universe timeline.** The Bible's age of the universe is less than 6,000 years old while scientists estimate that the earth is over 4 billion years old (and the universe is much older). *Some stretch God's six days of creations into eons. Carbon dating could prove to be unreliable. God could have created a 4-billion year-old earth (like he created Adam and Eve as adults, rather than infants).*

**Miracles.** How does an iron ax-head float (2 Kings 6:6)? How does the sun stand still (Joshua 10:13)? *God created everything, including the laws of nature. Anything is possible with God.*

Because ancient manuscripts have minor differences between them, we know that human error exists in the Bible. But since the errors are so few, we also know that there was a high degree of reverence for God's word and a desire to preserve it precisely for history.

The Bible has miracles that seem impossible. It has amazing prophecies fulfilled (including the revived nation of Israel). It has testimonies of the apostles (who died for their faith). It has instructions for godly living. It changes lives for the better. Make it your roadmap to eternal life!

Defending problematic Bible verses is well and good, but there is only one thing we need to know: Jesus died for sin so that sinners could repent and be saved. Small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Belief isn't enough, because Satan also believes in God. Strive to live a godly life for God's glory with continual thanks to Jesus and you will be blessed in this life and rewarded in the next. He who has an ear, let him hear.