

## *Letter for you*

“Yeah, right! Just one more recruitment flyer,” is your first thought. And it’s good if you’re a cautious person. Prudent, able to judge things. Finally, you can read this and just throw it away.

But we can agree that life like this requires us to think about everything more seriously. Life is hard. And short. We all want security and love, contentment, material shelter... We see that everyone else is seeking for the same. We understand that the world has its own rules and value system, but we also feel deep down that something must be wrong. It seems that our goals are constantly being displaced and disturbed, and we are unsuccessfully trying to reach them and put them in an order. Love seems to be at our fingertips, but it keeps slipping away. No way to capture lasting happiness. It is as if we are in a constant search for the elusive. Our time passes as if someone had turned on a stopwatch, and we would like to achieve a lot, being all the way torn between desires and possibilities, integrity and compromise, worries and conflicting feelings.

Are you satisfied with the explanations of life offered by the modern education system and science? Maybe churches and organized religious bodies offer the real deal? How do we even know what is true? Is the truth actually relative so that everyone may determine for himself what suits him/her?

The world also has religion, actually several basic religious directions. What to think about all this?

Did God create man or man created god?

How did life originate? Does science confirm evolution or creation?

If there is a God, why is there evil in the world and why do the innocent suffer?

Where do humanity’s key existential problems come from? Why sickness, decay, aging, death?

Why is the spiritual world so mysterious and hidden?

What prevents direct communication between God and man?

If God is one, why the multitude of churches and religious teachings? How and why is religion manipulated?

What is the real truth? How to make sure that the truth reveals the meaning of life? Is there a reliable source of information, and what are the facts about all these issues?

Are all religions equal? Since their teachings are mutually opposing, how do we know which one is authoritative and objective?

Is the Bible a collection of myths of ancient peoples or its message is authentic and important for us today? What distinguishes the Bible from other religious books and revelations? Does it correspond to facts, human experience, history, logic, science, common sense and conscience? If we find that this is indeed the case, then why are its messages not universally accepted? Why is society, the educational system, the state not promoting them?

You would admit that these questions are valid and require clear answers. Don’t we never get them because this world is run in a manipulative way?

Let’s pause here for a moment. You can say: Why would I be interested in the search for some “truth” out there? What do I get out of it? Isn’t it better to get into the rut of life and take the line of least resistance, enjoying as much as I can the pleasures on offer?

Yes. That’s what we’re already doing, right? But if we really want to know the purpose and meaning of our life, we should have such information from the Creator. It is here that we face a basic dilemma: (1) are we the product of a series of coincidences and evolved over millions of years to the state we are in today, or (2) do we have an intelligent Creator. If the former is true, then we have no platform or standards for truth – everything is relative and nothing really matters. What do you think, does everything that surrounds us tell us that this is so? Of course it doesn’t! The existence of information and laws in the world and the universe, in everything living and inanimate, points us to

the intelligence behind it all!

If there is a God, then that changes everything. We cannot be by ourselves the standard for judging truth and error. There must be an objective truth. If we are reasonable, we should make the most serious effort about it. Because it directly concerns our life. Our future. Understandings of our past.

Where do we start? It would be logical from what the Creator (God) revealed about Himself and us. Does humanity possess such a source of information? Yes! That compiled revelation is found in the book we know as the Holy Scriptures or the Bible. The most important evidence that the Bible is God's Word, in addition to the accuracy of the Bible (manuscript evidence) and history (archaeological findings), is evidence of inspiration. The ultimate proof that the Bible is absolute, inspired truth is its supernatural evidence, including prophecy.

All biblical writers claimed that the messages they conveyed came from God, as His inspired word (see 2 Samuel 23:2; 24:11, 12; 2 Kings 20:4-6; 2 Chronicles 24:20; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Jeremiah 1:9; 26:1, 2; Acts 1:16; Exodus 4:14-16; Numbers 22:35,38; John 12:49). The Bible is not an approved or authorized work, nor the property of any man or organization in the world, but a collection of books that has God's authority behind it.

In the Bible, God revealed himself to humanity; it records the authentic history of the world, from the creation that was happened some over 6,000 years ago, to what will happen in the future, as well as the key events during that period. The Bible contains answers to the most important questions of life, first of all, how man was created, what is the meaning of life, why does man die, is there a solution to the problem of death, according to which laws man can and should function, what is the future of humanity...

Although the Bible does not prove the existence of God but takes it as a fact, dealing with this topic requires a somewhat different approach because modern generations are under great pressure from atheistic ideology and indoctrination in all areas of life.

When asked why we prefer the Bible among all the so-called holy scriptures, the answer could be summed up in a few lines:

- i) The Bible corresponds to logic, science, experience, known history, conscience and common sense. It is accurate and reliable in several different respects: a great deal of scientific evidence confirms the Bible; prophecy (predictions) confirms the Bible; it is textually authentic and demonstrable as confirmed by the oldest discovered manuscripts; it is historically attested not only by Jews and people who lived at the time of Jesus Christ, but also by relevant historians.
- ii) The Bible reveals a transparent Creator and Savior, who makes Himself known in a specific way.
- iii) God Himself leaves a testimony that it is His Word, which the Son of God Jesus Christ himself confirmed.
- iv) Morally and ethically, the Bible is superior to other literature.
- v) Biblical truth is practical. It is the perfect and applicable answer to man's spiritual needs. It tells our mind how to use our will properly and to protect ourselves from evil in times of temptation. It provides logical answers, not to unimportant, but to the essential needs of our being. In its essence, the truth is good because it reveals God's love for us (but not for our sins and self-righteous ideas). By thinking about the purposefulness (meaningfulness) of its teachings, we also recognize the readiness of truth to withstand any criticism and questioning. We accept the truth because we have understood it, not because we have received some sign that it is so. Based on the meaning of what is said, we judge the correctness of the speaking authority.
- vi) The Bible has the power to radically affect our lives; hence it follows that it is the living

Word of God.

- vii) Although the Bible is a compilation created by collecting the works of about 40 different writers, its unity is fascinating.
- viii) The Bible has been almost perfectly preserved through time.
- ix) Biblical writers were generally persecuted or deprecated figures for what they revealed.
- x) The Bible is not a book that was created as a product of human imagination, simply because it does not correspond to the psychological needs of man.
- xi) The Bible does not pander to human vanity or embellish things, but shows people and events as they are.

What is particularly important for you and me, for all people without distinction?

God reveals Himself as a God of relationship with His creatures. He wants us to live and be happy. In order for that to be achievable, isn't it completely logical to you that God established the order of life? Of course it is! We perceive that the entire universe obeys certain laws. All these laws without a doubt point to the Creator. Since God, as a self-existent living entity, created the universe for the sake of life in it, spiritual laws have primacy over material ones. This means that the supreme Law in the universe must be an expression of God's will and God's character. Such a Law must exist for the sustainability of the life of beings created in God's image, just as natural laws are necessary for the sustainability of the universe with all its components and functions. The law is also necessary to provide mechanisms for the protection of the system through the qualitative conditionality of life for created free moral beings in the event that one of them reaches for an alternative in rebellion against God and the order of life.

The Bible informs us that the rebellion did happen. It identifies the first rebel in the form of an angel of the highest order named Lucifer (Light Bearer) who, because of the rebellion, became Satan – the Adversary, the enemy of God and man, whom he later dragged into the rebellion. And man lost the quality of his Creator, he became deprived of God's glory, irretrievably morally and spiritually corrupted, and subject to decay and death. Therefore, man lost his right to life.

But God in his love offered a way out for man – Plan of Salvation that make possible every human being to return to God's family. Returning to your purpose and true happiness. Back to life. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

God's only begotten Son is Jesus Christ. Is what He said and did true? More than three hundred prophecies from the Old Testament announced, in their various aspects and details, the coming of the Messiah and His mission for the benefit of humanity, as part of God's great plan of salvation. He was "the desire of all nations" (Haggai 2:7). According to a probability calculation made by the mathematician Peter Stoner, the chance of any man living on earth fulfilling only eight of all the Messianic prophecies is 1:100,000,000,000,000,000, and the chance of one man fulfilling the 48 prophecies relating to Christ would be 1 : 10<sup>157</sup>!

God the Father Himself confirmed Christ's identity. "And a voice from heaven said: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" (Matthew 3:17). "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Matthew 17:5).

Jesus claimed to be the Son of God: "And the high priest responded and said to Him, 'I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Jesus said to Him, 'You have said it...'" (Matthew 26:63-64).

Therefore, Jesus is the only qualified mediator between God and men: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus..." (1 Timothy 2:5)

These are things that cannot be refuted. But they can be ignored. We can pretend to be insane and stubbornly go our own way. But God warns us that it is by no means the way to life. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

Yes, sin is behind all the problems we have. In such a state of our being, we are incapable of making rational decisions, of truly evaluating what is for our real good. We are (self)destructive and immoral and gravitate towards death. That is why we need Christ's gospel, we need reconciliation with God!

“And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free... Verily, verily, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin... Therefore, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:31, 32, 34, 36)

The encounter with the precious Savior leads us to awareness of our true state, to repentance and surrender to God. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first.” (1 Timothy 1:15)

Read for yourself the prophetic announcement about the character and work of the Messiah recorded in the Book of Prophet Isaiah, chapter 53, and think about such a Person. Would His goodness lead you to repentance and arouse the desire to be reconciled with God? Do you want to personally taste the experience of the people about whom the following biblical text speaks? “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32) Do you want to become the finder of the greatest treasure compared to which everything else becomes worthless (Matthew 13:44)?

Maybe you already understand: religion – the real, original, biblical one – is not a set of prohibitions that make you think what will I lose if I become religious? God has an offer of life! And that offer certainly includes your consent, cooperation, relationship... Always remember that God is the one who defines the truth, gives the right guidelines. Not man, neither the church, even if it is your favorite one, nor unwarranted individual and limited opinions. By establishing yourself in objective truths, you can save yourself from pseudo religiosity, different sects and wandering. The field of spirituality is dangerous terrain and requires vigilance and prudence, modesty, humility and willingness to learn. And above all, an honest approach.

And this letter for you has exactly such a motivation. It is not designed for recruitment, to make you to become a member of a church, denomination, sect... or something similar, neither to cause you to pay a membership fee, bring you to someone to make use of you materially or in another way. We are human, and if we are on God's side, we should help each other. Love for God and love for neighbor are two basic principles, two main guidelines. On the one hand, it is not good to be left to our own unsustainable ideas, while, on the other hand, we must beware of abuse in religion. Because to become religious in a wrong way that God cannot approve, would turn into the greatest damnation, a state worse than when we were disinterested or even atheist.

It is good to keep company with people who are truly religious in a way that is pleasing to God, who, in addition, are reasonable, considerate, careful, kind, ready to help, but also reprimanded, call things by their right name... But it is also good to be careful until a healthy platform is established. Today, we live in a time when technology allows us easy access to information. This also applies to the field of religion. You can learn, evaluate things for yourself. You have at your disposal a real treasure of knowledge that you can find on the website of the *Institute for the Study of Religion* (religija.me). Of course, we do not claim that it is the only source of true knowledge. Therefore, it is good to make comparisons, whereby God's Word and sound logic will be our yardstick for evaluation. So now you know the sender of the letter, i.e. that the person who made this for you shares the same beliefs. At last, you have full freedom to decide on its content. The choice is yours and may God help you make the right decision.