



The Bell Messenger

Robert Cornuke , Alton Gansky

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A suspenseful yet touching story of a Civil war Bible that pops up again and again over a century and shapes the very history of the nation.

This rich and involving historical and archeological thriller begins as a Union soldier, Tate, shoots a Confederate preacher known as the Bell Messenger and is bequeathed a worn Bible by the dying man. Tate's historical narrative parallels the contemporary story of John Brandon, who has just graduated college in 2000 and received the very same Bible, unearthed in a Saudi Arabian cave, as a gift.

The potent history of this book is revealed as Brandon searches for its previous owners, along the way uncovering the existence of a mysterious cache of gold hidden during Old Testament times -- which brings shadowy figures hot on Brandon's heels, hungry for the gold and desperate to learn the new clues he possesses.

As the past and present intertwine, the reader learns that this Bible has passed through many hands over the years. From the Civil War to the building of the Central Pacific Railroad, to the gang wars and the holding of Chinese slaves in nineteenth-century California, to the trenches of World War I, Brandon learns of the lives this Bible has saved, the deaths it has caused, and the history it has changed forever.

The Bell Messenger Details

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Author : Robert Cornuke , Alton Gansky

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Patrick S. says

I found this to be a fairly moving book. There was a lot of well written emotion with realistic dialog. The flow from one set of characters to another (P.O.V. moves through about five different characters over 100 years) can be a little abrupt in changing at times. However, it doesn't through one out of the story. The dialog is well written and doesn't fall into the cheesy side that some contemporary Christian fiction stories fall into. The individual stories are exciting and enjoyable and the depths of each character is done well without being dragged out. My biggest complaint is that of the ending. The ending doesn't have that much fulfillment. It's not a story that needs an ending where the characters walk into the sunset, as the story is about a journey that never ends. However, the way it settles appears that the author didn't really know how to end it satisfyingly. Overall, a good, compelling story with interesting stories and characters with depth. A few moments of almost tears even. Final Grade - B

Eleanor Clayton says

I met the author at a convention, he spoke about the importance of archeology and the Bible, and I thought I'd give his book a try. It certainly wasn't the best book in the world, but it wasn't the worst either. The story is somewhat convoluted, and at times can be downright dull (or utterly weird and unbelievable) but it wasn't terrible. It wasn't so good that I'd pick up the sequel (I hate sequels, generally) but it was an alright read.

Sue says

Amazing story, well written by Robert Cornuke and excellently read by Henry Strozier.

Candy says

I absolutely loved this book. It didn't turn out to be what I expected going in, but infinitely more than what I expected. I loved the story of the Bible being passed down from hand to hand and the lives of those it touched. I loved how the authors took you back from the present day to two hundred years in history telling each persons story and how they came to possess the Bible. Not everyone accepted its message but all were given the chance. This is a book you must read to understand, but it made me wonder about the things my grandma had in her possession upon her death--Bibles, letters, pictures--and what stories they might tell.

Lisa Johnson says

Title: The Bell Messenger

Author: Robert Cornuke with Alton Gansky

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The story begins during the Civil War. Confederate soldiers are hunting a deer to quell their starvation. What they don't realize is that Union soldiers have also spotted the deer and the Confederates. The Confederates unknowingly walk into an open field and seal their fate. Soon the Union soldiers are scavenging anything of value off the dead Confederates. The Union leader, Jeremiah Tate, realizes he has shot a young teenage boy and is racked with guilt. Before dying, the boy presses the Union leader to take his Bible. Thereafter, Jeremiah Tate's life will change, but in what manner?

Flash to the future and see Gary Brandon receive a box with what appears to be some very old, valuable objects as a college graduation gift from his drunken uncle. Gary wonders where his uncle got this stuff and if he got it legally. He finds an old Bible in the box, opens it and reads the letters inside. He immediately senses the Bible is not his to keep and begins searching for family of the last known owner. His search uncovers some very interesting characters and history, but can he find the Bible's true home?

This is a very interesting, entertaining and unique story that will hold the reader's interest throughout. The use of flashback to follow the path of the Bible's journey is used effectively. At first, some holders of the Bible believe it to have magic or mystical power, but eventually realize it is not the book itself that has power, but the words inside. The words have the power to change lives, saving lives and giving lives to those who become messengers and share what is inside the Bible. The journey starts with a 14-year-old boy, Elijah Bell, and his willingness to go to war to fight, but his war was fought in the spiritual realm, fighting for the souls of men. To read about the many lives transformed by this one messenger who was willing to obey the call of the Lord was fascinating. How many lives can you change if you're willing to answer the Lord's call? My rating is 4 stars.

Note: I received a complimentary copy for an honest review of this book. The opinions shared in this review are solely my responsibility. Other reviews can be read at <http://seekingwithallyurheart.blogspot.com> . Also follow me on Twitter @lcjohnson1988, FaceBook at <https://www.facebook.com/lisa.johnson...>

Elise Blomberg says

This book was a change from what I usually read, so I really enjoyed it. The plot was unique and the various characters were easy to keep track of. The author did such a good job of describing the people and their experiences.

Tami says

A great read following the travels of a certain Holy Bible that had "magical" or rather, spiritual powers. A soldier shoots a boy during the Civil war, who then gives his killer the bible with a warning to do good, if not, a "dry rain will fall upon you." The book is passed on through several hands, each experiencing life-saving moments, believed to be because of the possession of this bible.

While I liked the story idea, I think the author got it wrong about the power of the book. He focused too much of the possession of the book saving a life, versus reading and following the words of the book is what saves a soul. Yes, it was touched on, but I felt too much focus was put on the material and physical benefits of the book. For example, because the book happened to be in their backpack, or hands, or somewhere in view, it saved their mortal life. Not only that, there was a monetary value to it at the end of the book.

Although the monetary value went towards charity, it was monetary, nonetheless.

I believe the words inside the Bible, then following them, will save your eternal soul/life. The author missed the point. The words and exaltation that follows are the treasure, not the physical book itself.

Gwen says

My reading genre of choice is historical fiction, and this little book was a very pleasant surprise. Following a Bible from the life of a Confederate soldier through numerous lives and hands up to 1980. It was an easy to read book with a well crafted story line. Included history, mystery, geography, scenic descriptions, characters that I cared about, and a bit of intrigue. Written with Christian influence, but not preachy. I thoroughly enjoyed and highly recommend The Bell Messenger. Taking it to my 80 year old mother tomorrow as I think she will enjoy reading it, as well.

Judy says

This book was wonderful, I have never written a book review. So if I screw up, don't be mad at me. This a good feeling book, and how this book (which is a Bible) has crossed many hands have changed many lives. I don't want to give anything away. I wouldn't call it religious. I would love to read more by the author. I WILL READ IT AGAIN.

Mark Young says

The Bell Messenger begins on the civil war battlefield when a Union officer severely wounds a young Confederate soldier. The dying soldier hands a worn Bible to the Union officer, saying "Be God's messengers as I have been." This begins a journey through time, winding up at the doorstep of protagonist Gary Brandon, who receives this same mysterious gift as a graduation gift in 1980. His alcoholic uncle—who claims to have discovered the Bible as he dug for valuable artifacts in a Saudi Arabian cave—wants Brandon to have it and other items, including a bit of gold found at the same site. Skeptical, Brandon begins to search the history of this mysterious gift, only to learn of the fascinating connection others have had to this book over the last one-hundred and fifteen years.

Sharon says

Interesting novel about a Bible that passes through a variety of hands through history. Each new owner is challenged to "Be God's messenger as I have been" from the current owner as it is passed on.

Sheila says

really like the book but not the ending so much

Nancy says

It's the last days of the Civil War and a short skirmish ends with a young boy dying and as the man that shot him leans over him to see what he can scavenge from the body the boy presses a bible into his hands claiming that it will give life. Thus begins a journey not only across time but also a journey of faith. The man that shot the boy on the battlefield attempts to give the bible back to his mother only to discover that the boy has anticipated his own death. As the bible passes from hand to hand over time it is interesting to see how reading the word effects each person. In the end it ends up in the hands of a young man who tries to trace its history and tries to do the right thing. Interesting journey through history and generations. It warms the heart.

Susan says

Very good book. Recommended by John B. This was a bit spiritual, but mostly because it was about the travels of a Bible during and after the Civil War. It started in the hands of a young boy, went to a northern soldier, who killed him, then to a Chinese man that had been saved by the Army soldier, and on and on. Good mystery involved. Loved it.

Leigh Ann says

This is one of the more unique books I've read, and I really enjoyed it. We are doing it for our book club this month. This is the story of the Bible that starts out in the hands of Elijah Bell in 1865 and ends up in the hands of Gary in 1980 and the story behind all the hands it had been in in between. It tells the story of the Bible, and switches back and forth with the research Gary is doing in 1980 to add to the story. I enjoyed that this was different but also enjoyed the concept of the book.
