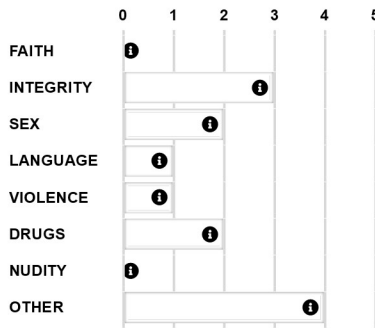


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Giving Membership

## Heaven's Messenger



[Content Rating Descriptions](#)



### Synopsis

A doctor tries to solve the mystery of a man with no name, multiple personalities and burns on his hands. Who is he and what happened to him?

### Dove Review

*Heaven's Messenger* is unlike any movie I have seen before. The protagonist of the story, Charles, is taken under the authority of a psychiatrist for badly needed treatment. Charles is known as P.J. in the beginning, and his psychiatrist, Dr. Allen Shearson, painstakingly tries to put together the pieces of P.J.'s reality while under bottom-line pressures from his hospital.

Amid P.J.'s mental instability, we learn that he can correctly predict the winner of a horse race before the horse wins. He can predict when a woman will have twins. He's got powers that aren't explained, but he says, "God enters, by a private door, into every individual." The door through which God has entered P.J. is inaccessible—and indeed, inexplicable—to all.

We get glimpses into Dr. Shearson's life as well, and it is obvious he has experienced his own pain and suffering, due to the loss of a loved one. P.J. is very strange with his ramblings at the beginning, and the movie takes its time getting to the point, so people with short attention spans might want to strap in to get the movie's message. It's eventually learned that P.J. has three personalities: that of a religious person, a little girl, and a guy that is not religious. In one exchange, Dr. Shearson can't get P.J. to eat. P.J. says, "The Lord fed me," to which the doctor replies, "The Lord didn't feed you enough." The plot unfolds as the viewer begins to gain little pieces of insight into P.J.'s background. For example, his hands are burned and wrapped in bandages and we eventually learn why. He also cries out "Shelly" in his sleep and the viewer will learn who Shelly is.

P.J. also learns some things about Dr. Shearson, including the fact he was once married, but isn't now, and that he had a little girl. But where is the little girl? The film sets up some mysteries which eventually are solved. One attendant is not always pleasant, making comments like, "Back to the cuckoo's nest," but he also tries to use P.J. because he bets on horse races. Dr. Shearson battles discouragement, even pouring a bit of alcohol into his styrofoam cup while he's at work. P.J. continues to be a mystery wrapped in a riddle.

A note left in P.J.'s pocket has a phone number on it and the hospital makes repeated attempts to get the woman on the other end of the line to fill in the blanks. She is how Dr. Shearson learns P.J.'s name is Charles. In fact, "P.J." actually refers to somebody else entirely. Eventually, she opens up and is able to finally shed light on Charles and some of what happened to him. Dr. Shearson also eventually has a bit of a breakthrough to help find peace with his past pain. The movie definitely tackles the pain of losing a loved one, the crushing hurt of a marriage gone bad—and the need for God in our lives.

There is a scene in the movie in which Charles declares that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are dogmas "created by other men." And then he says, "These aren't God's teachings!" Just don't turn away before the explanation because what he says must be understood in the context of the movie. What the character is trying to convey is the same thing that Jesus said in Mark 7:9 — that, like the Pharisees, we can block people's paths into the Kingdom of God by constructing artificial rules of men, which saps God's commands of their intended power. Taking that out of context is the same thing

as dismissing the entire book of Job, simply because Job's wife declares, "Why don't you curse God and die?" (Job 2:9) Just as Job is not about cursing God and dying, *Heaven's Messenger* is not about declaring Christianity a false doctrine. In fact, Dr. Shearson declares only minutes later, "This has taught me to have a little more faith."

So, with that potential objection and misunderstanding out of the way, we award *Heaven's Messenger* the Dove-approved Seal for Ages 12+. Some of the mental illness scenes might be too nuanced for younger audiences.

#### The Dove Take:

God sometimes takes the long route to our healing, a path with mysterious curves and detours, but like one character asserts, "Some things aren't meant to be seen on the surface." *Heaven's Messenger* makes you dig for them, but it's worthwhile.

## Content Description

**Faith:** Charles prays heavenward to rescue a person from a car accident, then finds supernatural strength to rip the door off. There's another surprise that seems almost lifted out of the pages of the Bible. Charles declares that man has corrupted God's teachings along the way, which Jesus Himself declared.

**Integrity:** A doctor and a few health officials truly want to help an insane man regain his sanity.

**Sex:** It's stated a couple had lived together and had never gotten married; a kissing scene between a couple.

**Language:** A man occasionally tells others to, "Go pick your nose." A man is going to take a patient to his room, and says, "Back to the cuckoo's nest."

**Violence:** A girl is seen in a crashed car with smoke in and around the vehicle.

**Drugs:** A man pours and drinks alcohol in a cup while at work; a man says he remembers drinking his dad's beer as a child and he wants a beer now; scene of drinking; cigarette smoking in a few scenes.

**Nudity:** None

**Other:** ; a man suffers grief from the death of a loved one; betting on the horses and gambling.

## Info

**Company:** Cinema Epoch Inc.

**Writer:** [Emilio Iasiello](#), [Mark McQuown](#)

**Director:** [Russ Emanuel](#)

**Producer:** [Howard Nash](#)

**Genre:** Drama

**Runtime:** 91 min.

**Starring:** [John Heard](#), [Howard Nash](#), [Vincent Pastore](#)

**Reviewer:** [dove.org](#)

