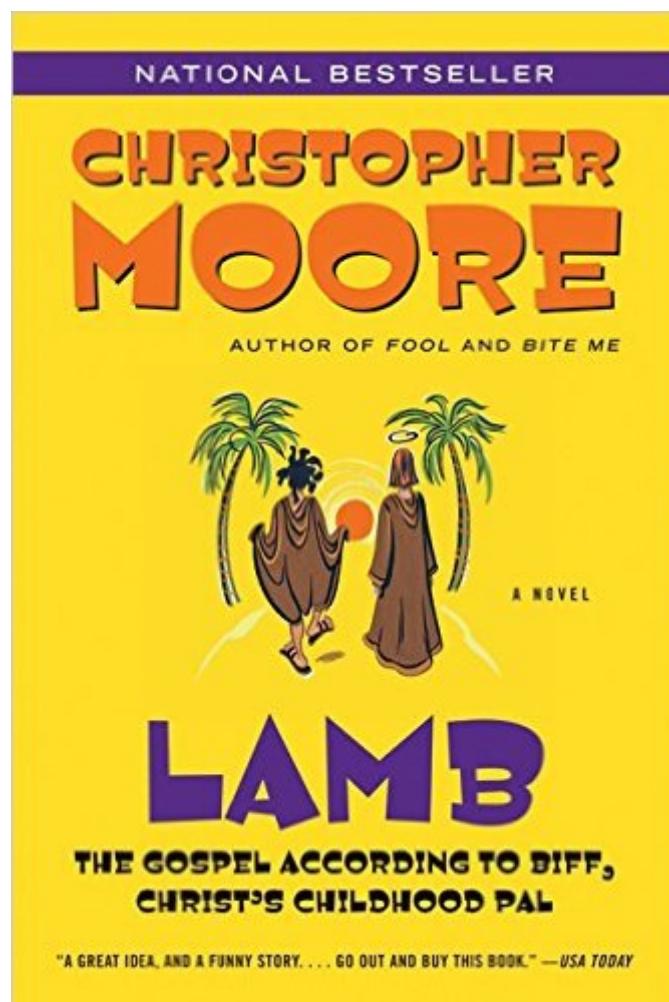


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Lamb: The Gospel According To Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal



Synopsis

The birth of Jesus has been well chronicled, as have his glorious teachings, acts, and divine sacrifice after his thirtieth birthday. But no one knows about the early life of the Son of God, the missing years -- except Biff, the Messiah's best bud, who has been resurrected to tell the story in the divinely hilarious yet heartfelt work "reminiscent of Vonnegut and Douglas Adams" (Philadelphia Inquirer). Verily, the story Biff has to tell is a miraculous one, filled with remarkable journeys, magic, healings, kung fu, corpse reanimations, demons, and hot babes. Even the considerable wiles and devotion of the Savior's pal may not be enough to divert Joshua from his tragic destiny. But there's no one who loves Josh more -- except maybe "Maggie," Mary of Magdala -- and Biff isn't about to let his extraordinary pal suffer and ascend without a fight.

Book Information

Paperback: 444 pages

Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks; Later Printing edition (May 25, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0380813815

ISBN-13: 978-0380813810

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (1,971 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #7,717 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Religious & Inspirational > Historical #79 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > United States > Humor #110 inÂ Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Satire

Customer Reviews

Okay, I'm old (over 50) and have been an avid reader all my life, so the number of books I own or which have passed beneath my gaze is way beyond counting. And if one played the old game of "You're on a sinking ship and can grab a handful of books to take with you to that desert island over there where you'll be stuck for who knows how long... what would you take?" then Lamb would definitely be in the handful (others, in case you're interested: Virginia Woolf's "The Waves", Dostoevsky's "Brothers Karamazov", Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" and an anthology of poetry, heavy on the romantics). I should issue a warning, however, which is that this book is dangerous. If you're someone who doesn't like embarrassing yourself by laughing out loud in public places like subway trains or at boring baseball games, then this isn't the book for you. It's one of those rarities,

the book that makes you guffaw whether you want to or not. I've read most of Moore's work (and have met him a couple of times - he's a very funny guy in person too), and this is easily his best novel. It is hysterically funny at many points, and yet manages to always protect the central character of Joshua (Jesus). Moore treats Joshua with respect throughout. He's never the butt of the many jokes directly; his best friend Biff is always the comic and the fall guy - but oh my, how gloriously he plays that role. Offhand, and despite my extensive reading experience, I can't think of a funnier book than this one. True, you have to have a somewhat sick sense of humor to fully appreciate it, but those of that persuasion will love it and will find it one of the best reading rides of their lives. Buy it and treat yourself.

What does the H in Jesus H. Christ stand for? I'll give you a hint--it's a family name. Beyond that, you'll have to read the book and discover it for yourself. I interviewed Chris Moore for my writing ezine. At the time, he was in the throes of writing Lamb, and had been instructed by his publisher to keep the project hush-hush, lest a bad B movie rendition torpedo the whole thing. I remember him saying that this book would certainly "piss off more people" than any of his previous works--and from the looks of the reviews cropping up here, the process has already begun. I've read every one of Christopher Moore's books--I'm a devoted fan. Every time I read Chris Moore in bed, I find myself laughing so hard that my husband refers to me as "the human equivalent of Magic Fingers." I have to believe that someone whose writing can evoke such a reaction has a true gift. Christopher Moore's writing is both funny and deeply humane--he pokes fun at the world with tenderness and benevolence. That style shines through in Lamb, a story retold by Jesus' life-long friend, the irrepressible Levi, who is called Biff. At first glance, it might seem Biff is an archetype--the guy whose exterior reflects "a--hole," (to quote the angel, Raziel), but who actually possesses a heart of gold. But on further examination, Biff's more than that. He's intelligent (incidentally, the first to theorize that the world was round, and the first to speculate on the existence of gravity), kind and selfless. Sure, he has his faults, but that brilliant combination of jerk/gentleman is what makes him so intriguing. Those who scoff at this book for religious reasons (and there will be many, I'm sure) are missing the bigger picture. As Moore relates in his afterword, the book was "not designed to change anyone's beliefs or worldview." But, for me, it did. I'm a Christian, and after reading Lamb I came away with a new understanding of Jesus (called Joshua in the book--Jesus is the Greek translation of the Hebrew, Yeshua, which is Joshua) as a human being. The fact that Jesus became human to redeem the world is the core of the Christian faith, and Christopher Moore brings that belief home with an almost magical tenderness. I found it moving to think of Jesus as a real person, and not

some mystical, unreachable Godhead. Regardless of Moore's own religious beliefs--it's difficult to determine whether he views Christ as the Son of God, or a fascinating historical figure with a 30-year hole in his life story--Lamb meant something to me, and I know I'll read it more than once. Is Lamb a perfect book? No. Some of the humor was a little too slapstick to really work. But as a whole, it's a bright spot in a world that has grown far too serious and cynical. Lamb was painstakingly researched; it's poignant and real; and, oh yeah...it's incredibly funny.

The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John leave a gaping hole in the story of Jesus. They tell of the shepherds, the angel, the virgin, the manger, and the wise men, then jump to Jesus as a thirtysomething rabbi. What did Jesus do during his formative years? Christopher Moore has an answer in his latest novel *Lamb: The Gospel According To Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal*. Biff is Levi bar Alphaeus, son of a stonemason and childhood friend of Joshua [Yeshua] bar Jehovah, son of God. The first section of the novel tells of the adventures of Biff, Joshua, and Maggie [Mary of Magdala] in and around Nazareth. The next three sections take Biff and Joshua to visit and learn from each of the three magi. The last section puts a Christopher Moore spin on the story told in the New Testament. We can read the good news according to Biff because the angel Raziel has resurrected Biff [and one other person] to write their versions of the Gospel. Biff's interactions with Raziel are interspersed with the main story, usually at the beginnings of chapters, and [inconsistently] set apart as long block quotes. This is a humorous book from a master of humor, but also a sensitive book. I loved this novel. Humor fans, Christopher Moore fans, believers, non-believers, mainstream Christians, and non-Christians should all love this wonderful book. If you find sacrilege in non-Biblical mentions of Jesus, stay away from this novel. You'll hate it. You might even want to burn it. You'll convince your friends to write gratuitous negative reviews of this book. But in my opinion, any open-minded person who has ever mused about the life and teachings of Jesus will find a lot to laugh about and think about in Christopher Moore's *Lamb*.

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