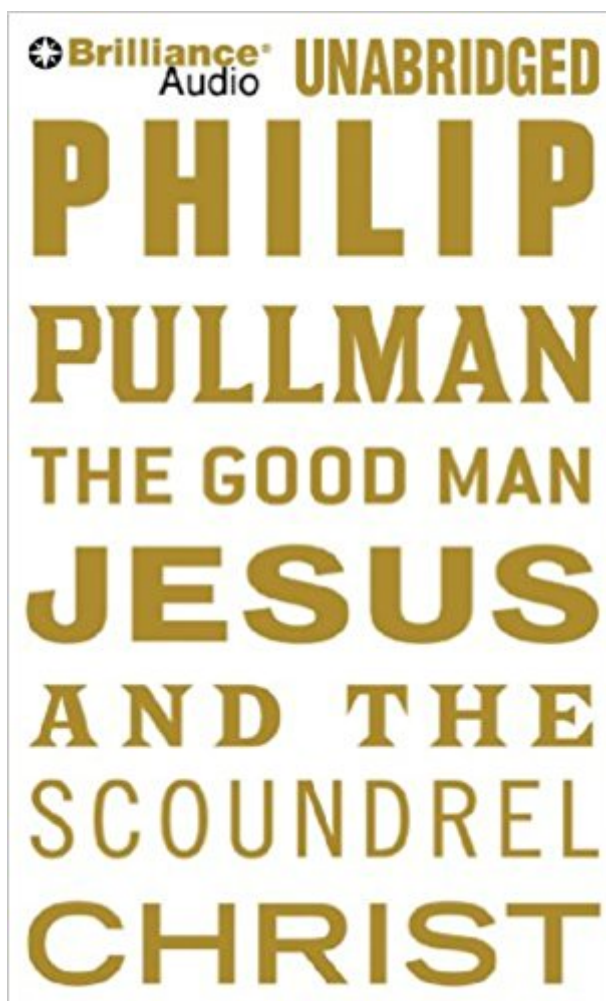


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The Good Man Jesus And The Scoundrel Christ



Synopsis

This is a story. In this ingenious and spellbinding retelling of the life of Jesus, Philip Pullman revisits the most influential story ever told. Charged with mystery, compassion and enormous power, *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ* throws fresh light on who Jesus was and asks the listener questions that will continue to reverberate long after the final word is spoken. For above all, this audiobook is about how stories become stories.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This gospel retelling is relatively faithful in style, time line, and events to the four canonical gospels-though Pullman injects a very Pullman-like spin on it by splitting Jesus Christ into two men, among other creative twists. Twin babies are born of the virgin Mary, one called Jesus, the other Christ. After a childhood in which Christ is a goody-goody and Jesus the popular one, Jesus and Christ continue down separate but intertwined paths, with Christ sneaking around, spying on Jesus's ministry and writing down his every word and deed. Jesus becomes a philosopher-revolutionary and Christ is the politically savvy brother, who ultimately proves naïve. Pullman's gospel version reveals how the politics and structure of the institutional church were plotted by power-hungry men, who used the renown of Jesus and his well-meaning, devoted brother Christ as pawns in their corrupt game-a critique that will be familiar to readers of *His Dark Materials*. This is a tale of (almost comedic) mistaken identity and good intentions gone horribly awry. Readers will find the parables, the Good Samaritan, healings, and the Sermon on the Mount, among other

familiar scenes. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

"After drawing the ire of religious conservatives with his young adult book trilogy *His Dark Materials*, the author Philip Pullman is again taking on potentially controversial subject matter. His next novel is to be a fictionalized account of the life of Jesus that will differ from the version presented in the New Testament." -- Dave Itzkoff --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Publication of this book caused a deal of controversy, with some offended readers labelling it as blasphemous. That such readers took offense is understandable. In Pullman's version, "Jesus" and "Christ" are brothers, and the former is manipulated into dying so that the latter can leave writings that can be used to establish a new religion. The plot stays close enough to the traditional biblical tales that it takes relatively small changes for the author to weave an entirely different (and secular) account. In understanding the author's intent, it is worth noting that this book was published as #14 a series on ancient myths. While interpretations may vary, I take the author's account as a way of capturing the dual nature of the historical Jesus as viewed from today's perspective -- not the man vs. the god, but the itinerant faith-healer vs the unwitting founder of a new religion. I found the book neither offensive nor particularly interesting, but am glad if it opens some reader's eyes to possibilities more likely than the supernatural myths of 2000 years ago.

The only other Philip Pullman stories I've read are *His Dark Materials*, which I completely loved. This is entirely different in how it is written and the type of story being told. I found the most interesting part of the story the epilogue where Pullman discusses his own meaning behind the text and the background of why he wrote this. It's a strange read but offers a fascinating, very different take on the Gospels. It's also a very quick read so I think it's worthwhile.

I am a big fan of Philip Pullman's writing. He is easy to read, clear, concise, and just generally a very talented writer. Pullman maps out many of the popular biblical stories as having plausible non-miracle explanations to how they may have come about as Jesus and Christ move through their lives. His title however is confusing to me, "The Good Man Jesus and Scoundrel Christ". In this story it is Jesus who causes trouble as a youth, who denounces his parents, is cruel to his twin brother Christ, and appears to act cruelly to those who are not of the Jewish faith. It is Christ who is the obedient child, who spends his life defending his brother's actions and words, who shows

kindness and reverence to others, who shows respect and love to their parents, and who in the end begs to be able to die in his brother's place. I do not understand from the story how Christ is a scoundrel. My only other confusion was in Pullman's use of the term "gentile" when referring to the Romans who were not Jewish. I always had equated the term with Christianity, which would not have existed prior to the Crucifixion. Upon further research have learned it often refers to any non-Jewish faith. If you can have an open mind about God and religion it is a great story and can also be a great tool as an accompanying text to any "Contemporary view of Christ" college course.

This book is part of the Canongate Myth Series - a "series of short novels in which ancient myths from myriad cultures are reimagined and rewritten by contemporary authors." (Wikipedia). I've read this and the "Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus" by Margaret Atwood. Both are very good and thought provoking. I would not have labeled Christ a scoundrel, but misguided (and influenced by the devil). This is an interesting take on the Jesus myth (all myths are history, please don't take calling the story of Jesus a myth wrong). The story of the good man and the scoundrel offers one illustration on how such a wonderful message (Jesus) became world wide religion institutions with massive power and influence (Christ). When you get right down to it, the Romans institutionalized Christianity and made it part of their power base. Kind of an interesting turn around when you consider the brutality of the Roman Empire and the goodness of Jesus. Good and bad here that still exists today.

For the person who has a hard time seeing the traditional Jesus Christ as the man who had time to do all the events prescribed him in the Bible. If you have a problem believing that one man, who was as human as the rest of us (as well as the Son of God to some), then this will be an interesting read. Pullman writes this in an interesting story format instead of a bunch of reasoning put in bullet points to make it more of an interesting read.

Down to earth alternative on how a man named Jesus, his twin brother Christ and a mysterious stranger might have sparked the biblical mythology we understand today as the New Testament. A fanciful short story that is every bit as likely as anything the bible lays claim to.

Having read most of Pullman's work, I was pretty confident that I'd like his next project. I'm an atheist, so in a sense I wasn't going much outside my safety net in picking this book up, but good grief, did I get a treat! Pullman's style in the book is decidedly hands-off, and very rarely did I

remember that I was reading what is technically a "novel," and not an addendum to the actual Bible. Pullman doesn't add any unessential language or prose, instead focusing on what the message is that is being conveyed, and I found this consistently refreshing and enlightening to read. I'm looking forward to Pullman's next project.

Very good spin on the Judaeo-Christian beliefs. I would defiantly recommend to both religious and non-religious people alike. I let my english teacher (very religious) read it and she loved it as well.

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