

Preface

Like many of you, I grew up in a culture steeped in Christianity. I went to church, I sang hymns, and I even did Bible studies. As a child, there was no question in my mind that there was a god, although I did have a lot of questions about his holy book. In Sunday school, I was always the one raising my hand and asking things like, ‘Why did God kill the firstborn Egyptians for what the Pharaoh did?’ and, ‘Why exactly did Jesus have to die?’

By my early teens, I found more and more of the Bible objectionable. There were some interesting stories, but it occurred to me that the people lauded as heroes were despicable thugs, and it seemed that the biggest thug of all was this God character.

So, I lost my belief in Christianity, but my fascination with the Bible remained. As I grew to adulthood, I read it even more critically and started to study books on textual criticism.

In around May of 2018, I decided it might be fun to create a Twitter account where I turned Bible quotes into jokes. I chose the handle @MisreadBible. At first, I had only a handful of followers, but they seemed to be enjoying what I was putting out. As time went on, I’d started to accumulate a lot of tweets, and I jokingly told my friend, ‘I’ve nearly written whole chapters of the Bible. Maybe I should turn them into stories.’ They responded, ‘You should! That would be awesome!’

One of the first stories I decided to tackle was Noah’s Ark; for one thing, I’d made a lot of tweets about it, and for another, it’s really well-known. My friends loved it, so I posted it online and shared it on Twitter. And after that... I just kept going.

The point of this book is to make people laugh about a subject, which frankly, is laughable. People take the Bible seriously and base their lives around it, but it's no different from any other book of mythology, and the stories are just as ridiculous.

If, as you're reading this book, you are left thinking, 'Is this part of the original story, or did he just make it up?' I'll reiterate what I wrote online:

If you want to know how much of the absurdity comes from my warped imagination, and how much comes from the inerrant word of God, I invite you to look up the verses for yourself on a Bible website. A lot of the verses are absurd without being 'misread'.

Acknowledgements

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Thanks to Richard whose cover design brings my book to life. I came to you with a vague notion, and you transformed that into awesomeness.

Thanks to Joshua, my very own Metatron. Until I heard your rendition of my stories, I considered Morgan Freeman to be the voice of God. I stand corrected.

Special thanks to those ancient shepherding Canaanites for writing the original stories. You were a twisted bunch of fuckers, but you certainly gave me a lot to work with.

I'd also like to thank the people of Twitter who enjoyed my weird sense of humour. This is what happens when you egg on the class clown.

Introduction

God Writes his Memoirs

There once was a god called God, who decided to write his memoirs using a series of ghost-writers, or prophets as he called them. He wrote about many things, from fanciful just-so stories to his ruminations on ethics.

Over many centuries, and a lengthy editorial process, he published many volumes of his memoirs in Hebrew. He later compiled many of these into an anthology called the *Tanakh*.

He took a brief hiatus of a few centuries, after which he began writing again. By this time, Hebrew had gone out of fashion, so he chose to write in the trendy new Koine Greek. As he had recently become a father, his new memoirs focused primarily on his son, Jesus.

Eventually, he collected enough material to compile a second anthology, a sequel to the *Tanakh* called the *New Testament*. This proved just as popular as his earlier work.

Many of his new readers wanted to read the *Tanakh*, as there were many plot elements in the *New Testament* that didn't make sense in isolation, but they couldn't read Hebrew. So, God decided to produce a Greek translation of the *Tanakh*, and he gave this new edition the name *Septuagint*. Again, this anthology was well received.

As the centuries rolled by, God published many editions of his anthologies, but the public started to complain that many of the volumes were offensive to their modern sensibilities. After much

debate among his fans, God hired a team of highly skilled editors called the Council of Trent to select which volumes were of interest to the modern reader and which should be discarded. The result was a combined anthology he called *the Bible*, which contained both the *Septuagint*, now renamed the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*.

Adam and Eve

And so, It Begins...

Genesis 1

In the beginning, God was living in his mother's basement. His mother had died many years earlier, and he was starting to get lonely, so he decided to make himself a planet full of beings that would worship him.

² He took a big bowl, put some sand in the bottom, and he topped it up with water. And he bent down to inspect the water, and behold, it was deep.

³ And God said, 'Let there be light,' but, as there was no one around to hear him, nothing happened. So, God flicked on the light switch. ⁴ He saw that the light was a little on the dim side, for he was only using a 50-watt bulb, so he replaced it with a 100-watt bulb. And he saw that it was good.

⁵ Then God set a timer on the bulb so that there would be periods of light and darkness. When God had created this first 24-hour period, he decided to call it a day.

⁶ And God said, 'Let there be a solid dome over the Earth,' but again, as there was no one to hear him, he had to do it himself. ⁷ And God called the solid dome 'firmament', for it was firm, ⁸ but then he changed his mind and called it Heaven, which was confusing as he'd already called the place above the firmament Heaven.

And the timer turned the light off and on again – a second day.

⁹ And God said, ‘Shit, where are the creepething animals going to creepeth?’ ¹⁰ So, he pulled up some of the seabed to make dry ground and he called it ‘land’, for it was land. And he called the water ‘sea’, for it was not land. And God saw that it was land.

¹¹ And God saw that the land was kind of boring, so he experimented with different types of green things, some short and some tall. ¹² And he called the short green things ‘plants’ and he called the tall green things ‘trees’.

¹³ The bulb turned off and back on – a third day.

¹⁴ And God realised that the light he had made wasn’t reaching the Earth because that stupid firmament he’d built was in the way. And God saw that this was bad, so he said, ‘I think some fairy lights dotted across the underside of the dome will do the trick.’ ¹⁵ So, he scattered fairy lights across the underside of the firmament.

After a few hours of randomly dotting fairy lights around, God was starting to get bored, so he decided to fuck around a bit and draw shapes like animals and weighing scales.

When he had finished dotting lights around, he saw that it was... ‘Shit!’ he thought. ‘The fairy lights don’t provide enough light on the Earth!’

¹⁶ So, God took a light bulb and suspended it from a string and hung it in the firmament, and he called it the Sun. And he saw that it was... ‘Shit!’ he thought. ‘The bulb is providing light constantly, and I wanted there to be day and night!’

¹⁷ So, God got some of the track from his trainset and stapled it along the underside of the firmament from one side to the other. Then he made little tunnels on either side of the firmament and continued the track along the top of the dome so that it formed a loop. He tied the bulb to one of his toy trains and set the train on the track.

Now the sun would spend half of the day casting light onto the Earth, and the other half completing its circuit. And he saw that it was... ‘Shit!’ he thought. ‘What if the beings I plan to create get scared when it’s night? Maybe I should make them a nightlight.’

So, God repeated the process with a dimmer light, and he called it the Moon. ¹⁸ And God saw that it was overly convoluted but workable.

¹⁹ Lights off, lights on – a fourth day.

²⁰ And God remembered the packet of Sea-Monkeys that he’d bought for a science fair project, so he ran and got them out of his cupboard. ²¹ He dropped the Sea-Monkey eggs into the water, and they magically sprang to life. ²² And God saw that it was kind of cool, so he blessed them and said, ‘Fill the seas, little brine shrimp.’

²³ By this point, God had been at it for five days straight, so he went off to get some coffee.

²⁴ And God said, ‘Hmm, how can I create creatures to fill the land?’ He got out his chemistry set, and he set about genetically modifying some Sea-Monkeys.

²⁵ After many hours of work, he placed his genetically modified creatures back into the sea, and pretty soon, some of them crawled out of the sea to populate the land. God was really pleased with this.

²⁶ But God saw that none of the creatures he’d created were capable of worshipping and grovelling before him as he’d hoped. He had to think of some way to speed up the process. He glanced over at his coffee cup, and he had an idea. He poured the dregs of the coffee onto the animals, hoping to make them breed quicker.

²⁷ After several more hours, a creature called human evolved.

So, God created mankind in his own image,
In the image of God, he created them;
He was God and they were mankind, and his own image was
the thing in which they were created.

So, to sum up, God created mankind in his own image.

²⁸ God blessed them and said, ‘Hi, little humans. I’m your daddy.’
And the humans cowered before him, and he saw that it was good.

²⁹ Then God told the humans, ‘I give you every plant on the face of the whole Earth and every fruit tree as food. ³⁰ Some of them are poisonous, but I’m not telling you which ones!’ Then he laughed maniacally.

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and he was pleased with himself. And the bulb switched off and back on – a sixth day.

Genesis 2

Thus, the Heavens and the Earth were completed. ² And on the seventh day, God ended his work, and he said, ³ ‘Now let’s rest, because tomorrow, we’re going to create the universe all over again in a slightly different order.’

Mr Play-Doh and His Amazing Talking Rib

Genesis 2

When the LORD God made the Earth and the Heavens, ⁵ there were no plants, because it hadn't rained, and the gardener hadn't shown up. ⁶ So, the LORD God said, 'Fuck it,' and turned on the sprinklers.

⁷ Then he made a little clay man to work as his own personal gardener. As he breathed life into its nostrils, he sang:

'Oh, Adam, Adam, Adam,
I made you out of clay.
And when you're dry and ready,
I'll teach you how to pray.'

⁸ Now the LORD God planted a garden in Eden to the east, and he picked up the little man and dropped him into the garden. The man landed on his arse with a thud, causing a big fracture to form down the middle. But the LORD God liked it, so he decided to give all humans butt-cracks.

The man got up, dusted himself off, and walked off mumbling to himself that the LORD God was a pain in the arse.

⁹ The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground, because, apparently, he didn't really need a man to work the ground after all. The trees were all exceedingly beautiful and yielded tasty fruit, even the Tree of Life™ and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil™.

¹⁰ Now for a quick geography lesson, so that you can find Eden on a map. A river flowed from Eden watering the garden and making the LORD God's sprinklers redundant. It split into four parts: ¹¹ the Pishon, which winds its way through Nirvana ¹² (there's gold in them there

hills); ¹³ the Gihon, which goes through the land of Kush (where the best cannabis grows); ¹⁴ the Hiddekel, which runs along the east side of Assyria where the gangs roam; and the Euphrates, which leads nowhere.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man, who was already in the Garden of Eden, picked him up, and dropped him again, saying, ‘Now get to work!’ ¹⁶ And he instructed him, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the delicious fruit of the completely unnecessary Tree of Knowledge, which I placed right there, even though it will screw up everything, you shall not eat.’

‘Why can’t I eat from the Tree of Knowledge?’ inquired the man.

¹⁷ The LORD God panicked and answered ‘Look, even though I’ve told you it’s called the Tree of Knowledge, it actually... erm... kills you! Wooo, scary tree. Don’t touch!’

¹⁸ A little time passed, and the LORD God noticed that the man was spending an inordinate amount of time playing with himself. ‘This is no good at all!’ he declared to nobody in particular. ‘I’ll have to make him a fuck buddy.’

¹⁹ So the LORD God sculpted some animals and birds out of clay, and he brought them to the man to see what he would name them and if any of them would take his fancy. ²⁰ Although the man showed some interest in the sheep, the LORD God concluded that it wasn’t a suitable mate, so he said, ‘Fuck it, I’ll just cobble something together from a rib, some melons, and a beaver.’

²¹ So, he knocked the man unconscious with a swift blow to the head, and while he was sleeping, he stole one of his ribs. ²² After haphazardly sewing the man back up, he fashioned a woman. Then he woke the man and gave him the woman that he had made, saying, ‘Here, a rib for your pleasure.’

²³ The man was so overjoyed with his new plaything that he sang:

‘This is the bone I will bone,
And the flesh that’s caressed.
She shall be called “woman”,
For she has those nice breasts.’

²⁴ This is why men leave their parents and go off chasing tail, and also why they’re so fond of ribs.

²⁵ The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame, for shame hadn’t been invented yet.