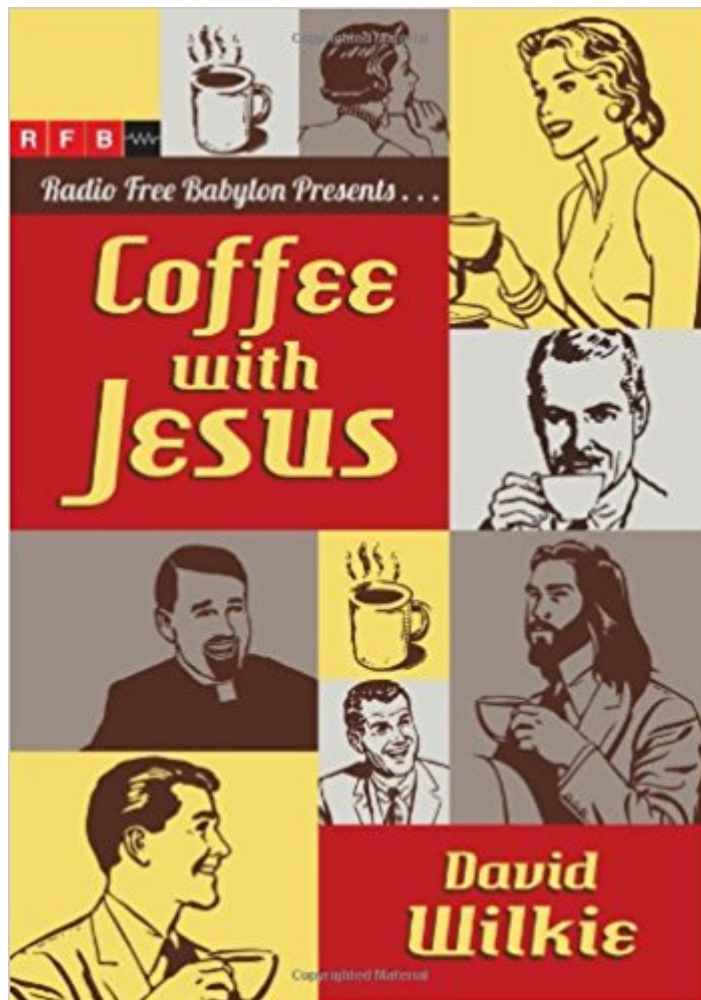


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# Coffee With Jesus



## Synopsis

One of Library Journal's "Best Books 2013" (spirituality/religion) ForeWord 2013 Book of the Year Award Finalist (Graphic Novels and Comics) 2014 Midwest Publishing Association Honorable Mention (Special Trade) Thousands of people start each day with a shot of Coffee with Jesus, the enormously popular online comic strip. Irreverent at times, yet always insightful, this volume features classic entries and all new, exclusive material that was born out of artist David Wilkie's frustration with the polarized political climate in America. "Originally created as a one-off, single-panel comic on my blog, utilizing old advertising clip art for the main characters and Sunday school clip art for the person of Jesus, I simply enjoyed the notion of Jesus appearing at table with these people (dressed as they were and sharing coffee with them) to refute their claims of how he might vote on any particular issue, to convince them that they cannot confuse their flag with their God" — "to set them straight, as it were," explains Wilkie. But it didn't stop here. Soon the Jesus of Coffee with Jesus could be seen offering counsel to a recurring cast of characters on their personal and work lives. The characters — Carl, Lisa, Ann, Kevin and Joe — all honestly engage with Jesus about their successes and failures and wants and needs, effectively showing what conversation with God or prayer might look like. Poignant, pointed, and rife with good theology, Coffee with Jesus is organized around six themes: getting to know Jesus, spiritual disciplines, relationships, culture, church, and the challenges of life. With exclusive material like twelve-panel mega-strips and "behind the strip" reflections on life, faith and art, Wilkie inventively poses answers to the perpetual Christian speculation, "What would Jesus do?"

## Book Information

Paperback: 120 pages

Publisher: IVP Books; UNABRIDGED VERSION edition (December 1, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0830836624

ISBN-13: 978-0830836628

Product Dimensions: 7 x 0.3 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 94 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #551,016 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #111 in Books > Comics &

Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels > Religion & Spirituality #189 in Books > Humor &

Entertainment > Humor > Religion #1090 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology >

## Customer Reviews

"The cheeky, online comic strip that has gained a cult audience of 40,000-plus followers in less than three years is now ready to burst upon the world as a giftable, brightly hued coffee-table book. . . . The wit is barbed, theology surprisingly relevant, and the overall effect highly addictive." (John Muraski, Religion News Service, December 2013)"We have much to be thankful for in Wilkie's creative work here, and the ways in which it ever so gently prods us toward a deeper understanding of who Jesus is and what it means to follow him in our times." (Chris Smith, Englewood Review of Books, Advent 2013)"David Wilkie accomplishes in a four-panel comic strip what preachers try to achieve in a 45-minute sermon—making one solid point that delivers a spiritual truth. Wilkie's popular Coffee with Jesus strip invites the reader to eavesdrop on conversations between Jesus and a diverse cast of characters as they discuss everyday topics including relationships, culture, and church. Worship leaders will gain insight into the types of questions and issues real-life people struggle with daily." (Jeff Friend, Worship Leader Magazine, January/February 2014)"Irreverent yet insightful." (Heidi Schlumpf, National Catholic Reporter, December 9, 2013)"This collection of strip cartoons, originally seen online, uses the simplest means—clip art—to the richest ends: disarmingly funny reflections on human failings and faith, featuring stock characters in conversation with an amusing and amused Jesus. Revelatory." (Library Journal's Best Books 2013, December 2013)"The heart is the comic collection and its humor, at once gentle and barbed and more thought-provoking than many a sermon. Buy this for a Christmas gift, to be read over a cup of strong joe." (Publishers Weekly, November 11, 2013)"We can all wish that the author is right and that Jesus was as funny as this; Wilkie's book deserves a place on the shelf of every pastor." (Library Journal, November 15, 2013)"Organized around six themes, the comic strips in this devotional feature a recurring cast of characters who honestly engage with Jesus about their lives, effectively showing what conversation with God—or prayer—might look like. . . . Recommend Coffee With Jesus to youth and young adults." (CBA Retailers + Resources, December 2013)"It's a comic strip, so it's funny, right? Yes, of course. But it's also poignant, and pointed. And rife with good theology. So read it for a laugh, but be prepared to be challenged as well. Jesus probably has something to say to you too." (Tony Jones, blogger and theologian)"I remember when the 'What Would Jesus Do?' tsunami almost completely engulfed all of us who worked with teenagers. Suddenly, we felt compelled to provide an answer to that impossible question. Problem was: most of us didn't really have a clue what Jesus would do, really. And any

honest reading of the Gospels reveals that his disciples didn't know what Jesus would do either. Coffee with Jesus steps into that same tension, responding with plucky, snarky and occasionally awkward honesty. We don't really know the full answer to 'What Would Jesus Say?' But I'd sure like it to be close to the Jesus in these panels." (Mark Oestreicher, partner, The Youth Cartel)"If you don't buy this book, you will be cursed. Everything will begin to go horribly wrong. You will gain weight. You will lose your job. Your car will break down and you'll learn you need a new one. Your mutual fund will lose over 50 percent of its value. Please buy this book--for the sake of your children." (Dan Kimball, author of *Adventures in Churchland*)"The day I discovered *Coffee With Jesus*, I felt a little less alone in Christendom. Wilkie's characters demonstrate our worst flaws, and *Coffee Jesus* skewers them with a wry balance of humor, solid theology and love. This might be the best evangelism tool since *Mere Christianity*. Perfect for a seeker or someone who's fed up with religiosity but thirsty for Jesus." (Susan Isaacs, author of *Angry Conversations with God*)"Sometimes I wonder if one of Jesus' love languages is 'hang out'--you know, time together, minus the quality part. In this little collection of pithy, advice-columnesque comic strips, David Wilkie nails this little love language of Jesus. It might be going too far to call these little comic strips modern icons, but they do serve that purpose." (Chris Heuertz, author of *Unexpected Gifts: Discovering the Way of Community*)"I loved this book! I never use the phrase 'LOL'--I'm sorry, that's just how I was raised. But this book honestly had me laughing out loud." (Jon Acuff, New York Times bestselling author of *Start and Stuff Christians Like*)"Christianity Today, the magazine I edited for twenty-eight years, was not known for its keen sense of humor. That's why *Coffee with Jesus* is one of my guilty pleasures. I read its sassy Jesus as a refuge from sober Christians and to make up for the smart-aleck gene missing from my DNA." (David Neff, former editor in chief, Christianity Today)"Like the first cup of the day, *Coffee with Jesus* offers a much-needed jolt to our culturally captured versions of Christianity and some beloved sacred cows. Yup--including my own." (Sean Gladding, author of *The Story of God, the Story of Us and Ten*)

David Wilkie is the artist behind the popular online comic strip *Coffee with Jesus*. He and his wife Katie cofounded Radio Free Babylon, a media creation consortium that produces literature, music, software, web sites and less tangible ideas about life. Dave has held numerous and varied positions in his career, including writer, creative director, producer, musician, on-air talent, clergyman, fax repairman and artist, sometimes all at once.

“Coffee with Jesus” is a remarkable comic strip, consisting of

characters talking over coffee with Jesus. Obviously, this is a way of portraying prayer in a broad sense, including an ongoing conversation during the day. Many strips will speak to part of your life, and others will help you empathize with others. Almost always with a smile. Wilkie has developed a very interesting Jesus here, one that may rub literalists the wrong way. Jesus is a counselor with a sense of humor and not a little irony. At the same time, he does assert his prerogatives as God, and he's not above trash talking with Satan. But don't think this comic is only for Christians. Indeed, I first learned of this strip from an atheist friend, who is a big fan. Wilkie touches on issues everyone deals with, and you'll identify with parts of each character. It has the same kind of life insights as another remarkable comic, "Calvin and Hobbes." You don't have to be a boy or a tiger to appreciate that, do you? Artistically, this is the simplest comic you'll ever see. With one exception, each character has only one pose, seen at two distances. A smile will occasionally become a closed mouth. Jesus almost always appears in the second and fourth panel, and one character in the other two. That's it. It's remarkably effective. Some features of the Coffee world will shape the reader's reaction to this material. Wilkie comes from an evangelical background that clearly stamps the kinds of Christianity he knows, the world of mega-churches, charismatic pastors, and a certain kind of Bible study. African Methodist Episcopalians and Catholics will recognize their neighbors here, but not their own church. When Wilkie talks politics, it's clear that his characters are G. W. Bush evangelicals. But Wilkie is more inclusive. Indeed, Wilkie would rather get partisan politics out of the church entirely. Even so, whatever your church, whatever your politics, you'll find something here.

I have been a regular follower of the webcomic, Coffee with Jesus, for about a year. I saw earlier this year that they were pre-selling the comic in paperback form, and thought it would be a good purchase as a conversation starter for when friends came over. I could not have been more wrong! It is an amazing conversation starter, but that isn't even the beginning. This book is laid out in a way where it is easy to read in spurts or as a discussion book. I am already starting a curriculum to use a few of the comic story progressions in a Sunday school class. It is grouped in such a way that the comics on one page present a narrative that allows me to laugh one moment, seriously reflect the next, and then be inspired to go out and share the love of Christ over a cup of joe with a friend, so that maybe they'll get the feelings that these characters get. It isn't just laughs, but some serious issues. It doesn't present Jesus through a denominational lens, but as a Man with whom we can

relate, a God who we can trust, and a Friend who comforts, protects, and even critiques us, when appropriate.

These comic strips are funny, but not laugh-out-loud funny. They will make you think, they'll make you smile, they'll make you grimace as you recognize yourself in these coffee-shop conversations. I am not a Christian. My view of Jesus (in the context of "Coffee with Jesus") is that he represents a moral and ethical ideal, a role model that we can aspire to emulate, a friend. In these strips, Jesus punctures pomposity, humbles hypocrisy, and provides brilliant insights not only about ourselves, but also about the nature of good vs. evil... or more appropriately, as the eternal battle between doing what's easy and doing what's right. Some of these strips fall flat with me as a non-Christian, particularly those that urge that someone should simply trust Jesus (i.e., God) to handle the hard stuff. That's not how *my* God works; as the saying goes, God helps those who help themselves. The bulk of the strips offer a less denominational message. When Jesus chats with a vain woman, a hard-working gardener, a couple with relationship issues, a weary preacher, and even with Satan (who mocks him as "Boy King") these strips make you think. You could imagine Mohammed, the Buddha and Moses nodding along with this Jesus' pithy observations and terse one-liners. This is not a book to read in one sitting; the subtlety and thoughtfulness would be wasted. Instead, put "Coffee with Jesus" on your nightstand, and read a page before you go to sleep. Even if you aren't a Christian, you'll find that this is a Jesus you can relate to. By the way, Volume II is out; I have ordered it and will review soon.

I begrudgingly read this book on the recommendation from someone who is much more god loving than I am. She said it was unlike any other book she had ever read on Jesus. She also said it would get my attention because of its witty content. I took the book and went right home and proceeded to give it to my close friends a Pastor and his wife. This man is funny, witty, and has a sense of humor quite like mine so I knew, if this book made him laugh, I would love it. Sure enough, the analogies, questions, conversations with Jesus and the answers he gives (which are written in an almost Sunday Comics format) are spot on with today's society and how Jesus would handle all the ME ME ME issues presented to him. He told me that he not only personally loved it, but that he constantly referred to it over the few weeks he had it. And with that glowing endorsement, I bought him his very own copy. You don't have to be one ounce religious to enjoy this book, instead you'll find yourself enamored by it...

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