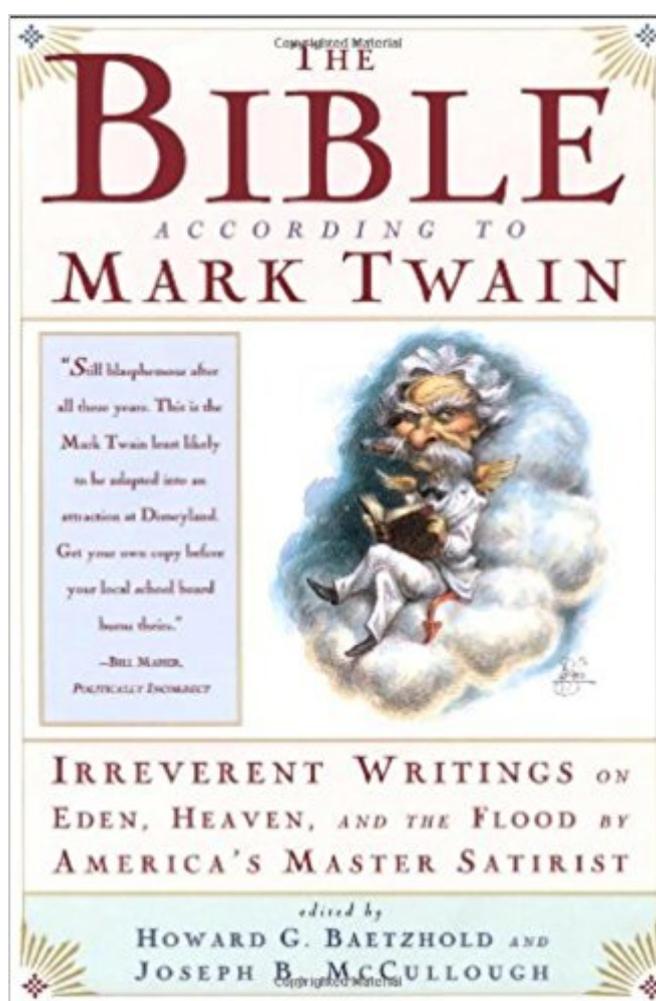


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The Bible According To Mark Twain: Irreverent Writings On Eden, Heaven, And The Flood By America's Master Satirist



Synopsis

An indispensable and provocative compilation of witty essays dealing with Biblical stories and their inconsistencies from America's master satirist, Mark Twain. This is a selection of essays spanning forty years of his writing career, which touch on and satirize stories and figures from the Bible. In his characteristic style, Twain illustrates the inherent comedy and inconsistencies found within Holy Scripture, simultaneously entertaining and provoking questions about man's place in the world and his relationship with God. An important installment in the Twain canon, this book is perfect for fans of America's master satirist.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the decades since his death, many of Mark Twain's writings have been reorganized into common themes such as protests, speeches, short stories and sketches, and full works of fiction in larger volumes. A recent welcome addition to these is *The Bible According to Mark Twain*, which includes diaries of Adam, Eve, and other Old Testament characters, various speculations on what the imaginary Heaven might be like (including Captain Stormfield's), some autobiographical dictations, a few pieces that appear in print for the first time, and, of course, *Letters From the Earth*. It also contains too many of the editor's notes that plague most of Twain's posthumous releases. Here, notes take up 50 of the book's first 260 pages (10 more are blank). Why do editors feel compelled to insert their version of Twain's autobiography before every entry? If they must share this information with readers, they can do so at the start or the end of the book, without interrupting Twain's far superior writing. Granted, some of the details are worth knowing: Twain read Paine's *Age of Reason*

while piloting riverboats. This helped shape his views toward Christianity. But other statements are extremely irritating: "...we have omitted the five-and-a-half page attack on the concept of the virgin birth (mistakenly referred to as the immaculate conception) because that discussion is not closely related to the writings in this volume." Yes it is! Claims like this make me wonder what else is missing. The rest of Twain's writings on religion need a book of their own, WITHOUT the gratuitous editorial comments.

In this book Mark Twain aims his satire at favorite stories from the Old Testament. He worked on these essays for most of his life but was afraid their irreverent nature would damage his career, therefore, he just kept re-writing and re-editing them. Most of them were not published until after his death and for some this is their introduction. Adam and Eve, in their diaries, present bittersweet divergent stories of their dysfunctional relationship. Their accounts could be prototypes from a marriage counsellor's office, or short versions of "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus." Captain Stormfield has a dream about ending up in Heaven when he thought he was going to the other place. "He was deeply religious, by nature and by the training of his mother, and a fluent swearer by the training of his father." In this original and inventive story, we learn all those things about heaven that were left out of the Bible - but would be included in an imaginary book, "How to experience Heaven in six weeks on \$10 a day." An "Etiquette in the Afterlife" excerpt: "Do not try to show off. St. Peter dislikes it. The simpler you are dressed, the better it will please him. Above all things, avoid overdressing. A pair of spurs and a fig-leaf is plenty...leave your dog outside. Heaven goes by favor. If it went by merit, you would stay outside and the dog would go in." In the masterpiece, "Letters From The Earth," Satan has been temporarily expelled from heaven and is wandering around the universe. On a lark, he decides to visit earth, an outlying little spot in an outlying galaxy that God had once played around with for a few days.

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