



New Adventures of Jesus

Frank Stack

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Jesus is back in this collection of groundbreaking collection from Harvey Pekar's *Our Cancer Year* collaborator.

Underground comics were known for their satirical assaults on beliefs held dear by middle America. None was more witty or biting than the very first underground comic ever published Frank Stack's *The Adventures of Jesus*. Stack's controversial strip first saw print in the Texas counterculture publications, *The Charlatan* and *The Austin Iconoclastic*, and the University of Texas humor magazine, *The Texas Ranger*. In 1964, *Texas Ranger* editor Gilbert Shelton (who would later go on to create the little known Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers) made 50 photocopies of about a dozen strips, stapled and collated the pages, designed a cover and distributed it to friends around campus.

Stack used the pseudonym Foolbert Sturgeon for his Jesus comics, fearful of being ostracized from the university (or killed) in his pursuit of a bachelor of Fine Arts degree. After receiving hate mail addressed to Sturgeon containing threats of death and other forms of religious retribution, he decided it best to retain the alias. "I suppose at first, in the foolish idealism of the satirist, I hoped to reform the world just a little bit, but I underestimated the power of ignorant fundamentalism in this country, a power which is, if anything, more militant and dangerous today than when I began drawing the cartoons."

In this witty addendum to the New Testament, Jesus fulfills his promise "to reward the just and punish the unjust," yet returns to Earth with remarkably little fanfare. He soon realizes he may have postponed his second coming a bit too long, arriving when the planet has fallen into a dangerously advanced state of decrepitude, i.e., the late 20th Century. Nonetheless, Jesus is determined to carry out his sacred obligation. Being half-human, after all, he can relate to the skepticism of the jaded populace and isn't above performing a few parlor tricks to convince those skeptical of his divinity. The main concern, though, is whether or not planet Earth is too far gone.

Fantagraphics Books is proud to collect, for the first time, over 40 years worth of *The New Adventures of Jesus* including a brand new story by Stack. This edition also features an introduction by R. Crumb and a preface by Gilbert Shelton.

Apart from being one of the true underground pioneers, Frank Stack is an accomplished fine artist and currently a Professor of Art at the University of Missouri. His collaboration with Harvey Pekar, *Our Cancer Year*, won the Harvey Award in 1995 for best graphic album/original material.

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