
The Cartoon Gospel

Excerpt



by Richard L. Diesslin

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*Unique cartooning of Gospel
Passages adds a fresh
interpretation, challenging the
reader to a new dimension of
understanding.*

Richard L. Diesslin

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The Cartoon Gospel

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PREFACE

The Cartoon Gospel is unique because it is cartooning of scripture passages instead of scripture illustration or normal Christian cartooning (which primarily lampoons church life). The purpose is to add freshness to the interpretation of the passages. It should challenge the reader to (re-) read these verses and see if it adds a new dimension to his/her understanding.

The Cartoon Gospel attempts to portray biblical characters as real people trying to know and follow God's will. It is all too easy to read the Bible and be left with the feeling that they are rigid, perfect, even superhuman characters instead of people with the same possibilities that you and I have. The cartoons are meant to be stimulating and humorous and are based on researched interpretation. Each one is "defensible" theologically (with the exception of minor cartoonist privilege now and then), even though the point is to assist the reader in his/her own analysis of the actual scripture passage. Hopefully, the humor and challenge stand on their own merit.

Whenever humor is mixed with the holy, there is a very delicate balance to be maintained. In order to stay within the realm of good taste, a review panel comprised of clergy/ministers from Catholic and Protestant denominations assisted in defining the boundaries (listed in the acknowledgements). Their guidance and suggestions throughout the creation of the Cartoon Gospel have been important to the process. For example, the cartoons were intended to be published stand-alone which may have caused them to be taken out of context. So one idea was to create a cartoon devotional; this is where the concept of the brief message with each cartoon originated. The message allows for the context to be set and some of the background research to be passed on.

The scripture passages are excerpted from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, since most of the original research was done from this translation. The Gospel scripture selections usually follow the Common Lectionary Readings for Year C.

Thank you for reading the Cartoon Gospel. I hope it entertains you and enriches your spiritual life.

-R.L.D.

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First Sunday of Advent

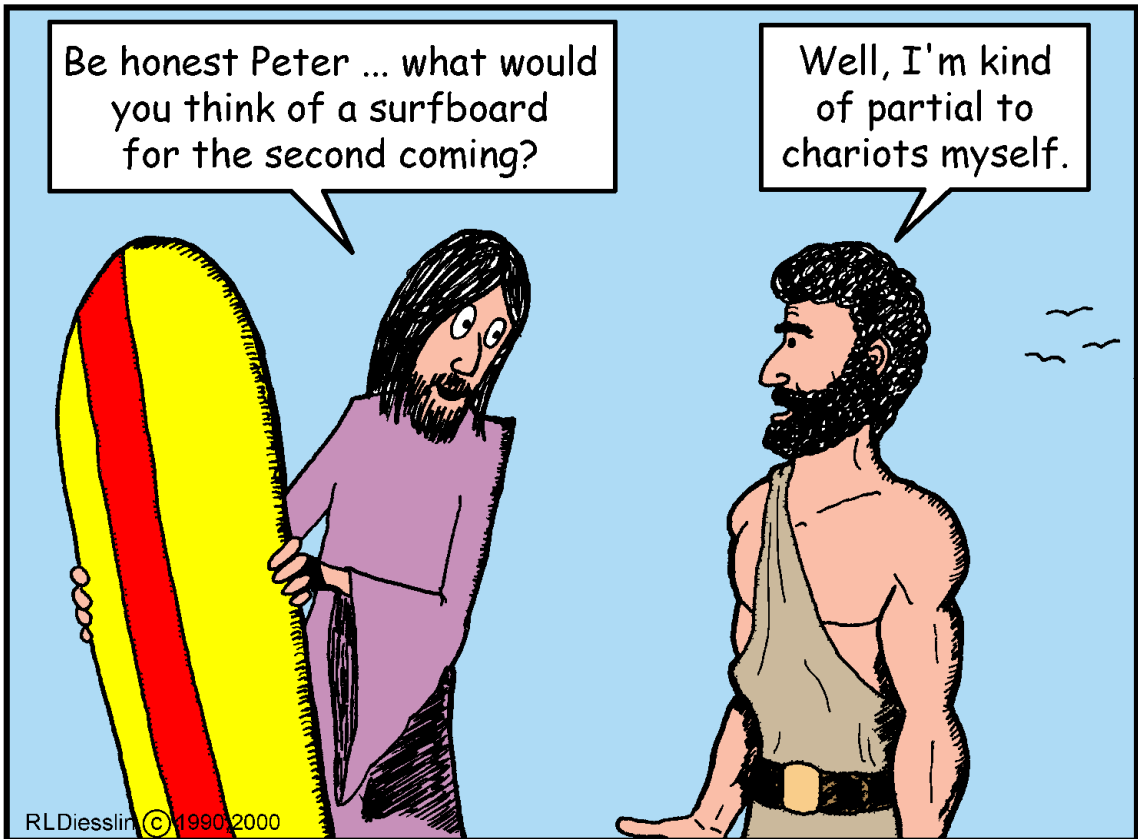
Luke 21.25-36

“And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees; as soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the earth. But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man.”

Come Again?



It appears that the second coming will be hard to miss...but that's what they thought about the first coming.

Second Sunday of Advent

Luke 3.1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness; and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his path straight.

Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall

be brought low,

and the crooked shall be made

straight,

and the rough ways shall be made

smooth;

and all flesh shall see the

salvation of God.”

Pass the Locust, Honey.



You're kidding ... right!?!

It isn't always easy being called into God's service.

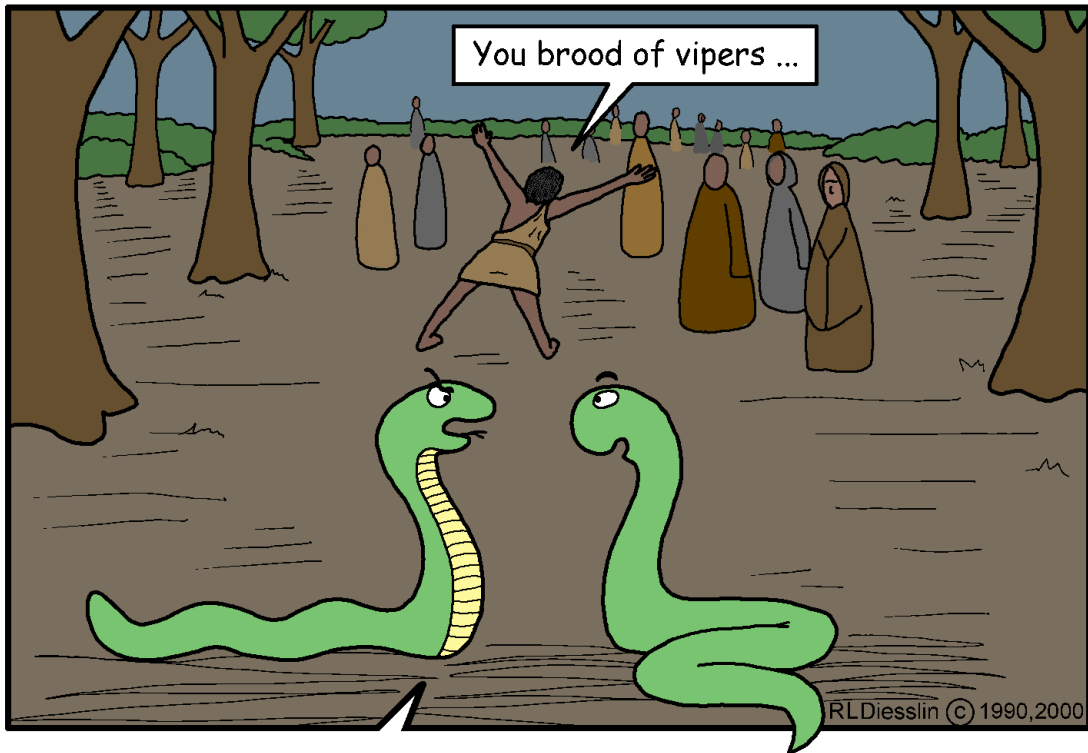
Third Sunday of Advent

Luke 3. 7-14

He said therefore to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits that befit repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the multitudes asked him, "What then shall we do?" And he answered them, "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect no more than is appointed you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

Sticks and Stones ...



There he goes blaming it on us again! Honestly, we never should have given them that apple to begin with!

Snakes have taken the rap for passing on the knowledge of good and evil ever since the garden of Eden, but it is our lack of Spiritual knowledge that hurts us. The point is to continually prepare for the coming of the Lord, which means viewing our daily life through spiritual eyes and has no room for religious pride.

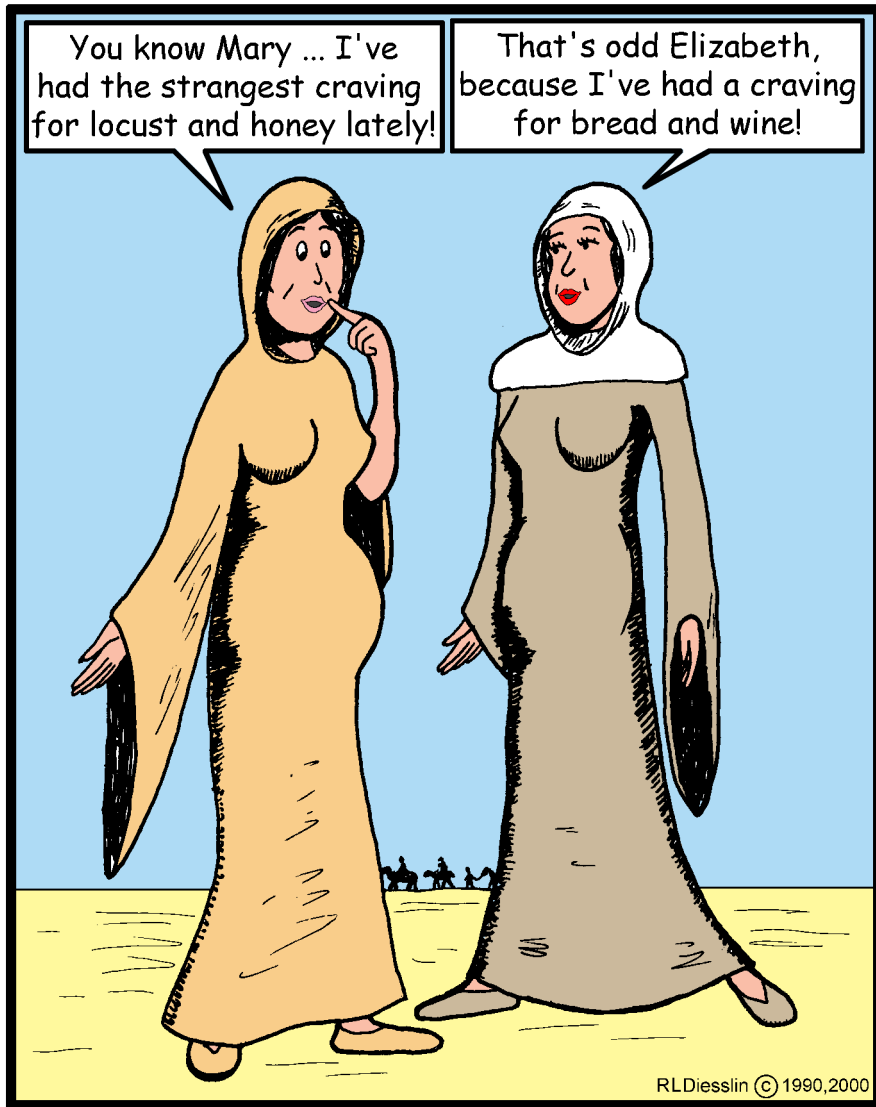
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Luke 1.39-55

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever."

Pickles and Ice Cream, Anyone?



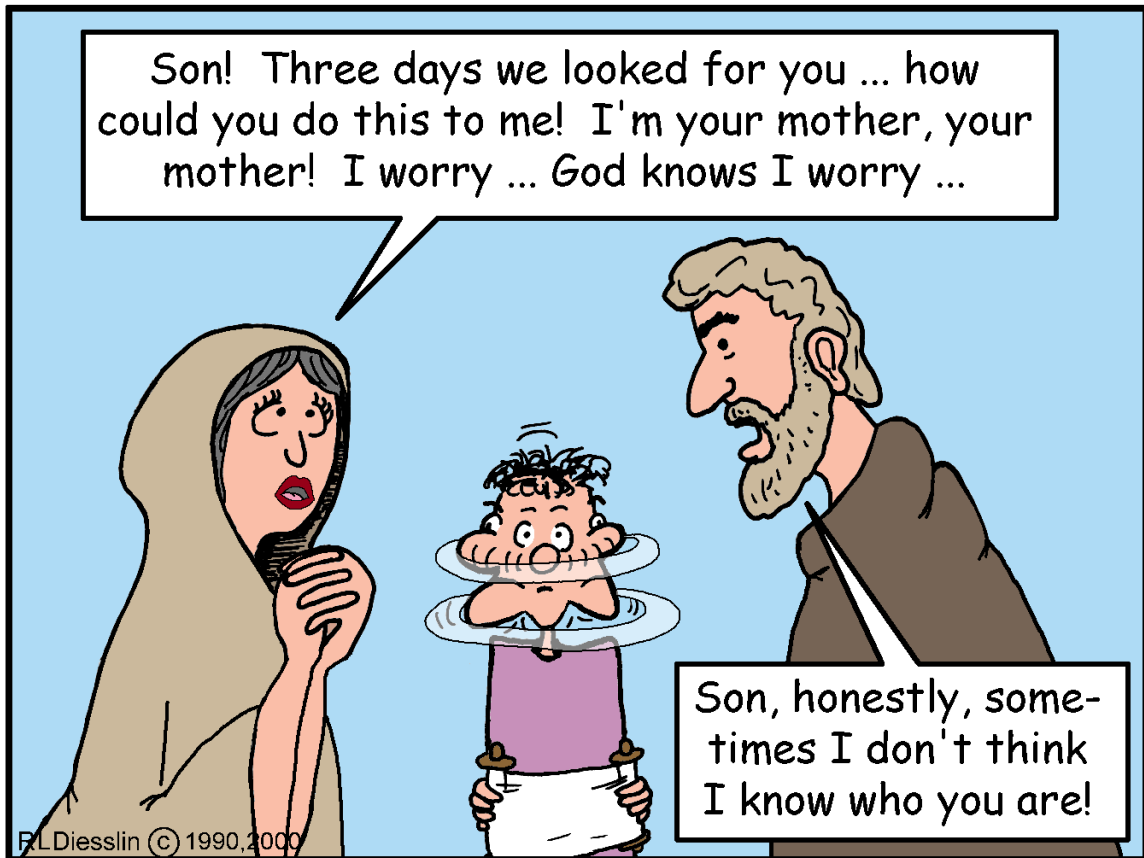
The Holy Spirit works in mysterious ways.

First Sunday After Christmas

Luke 2.41-52

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

Hello, Is Anyone Home?



You can't stop a mom from being a mom. Jesus' response, "did you not know that I must be in my Father's house," might indicate that mom and dad still really can't fathom their child ... what parent can. Before we charge them with parental neglect for not noticing Jesus' absence right away, realize that Mary and Joseph were probably traveling with the whole family, relatives included (vs. just the three of them). Another thought here might be that God's truth appeals to all ages.

Over 47 more cartoons and 94 more pages in the full version of The Cartoon Gospel.

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I hope you found this informative and entertaining. If so, please consider purchasing this or one of my other books (listed below).

Books by the Author

The Cartoon Ten Commandments, Diesslin, Richard L., Dayton:Diesslin, 2001\$11

A Journey Through Christian Theology, edited by Anderson, William P.; illustrated by Diesslin, Richard L., Minneapolis:Fortress, 2000. List Price: \$29 my website: \$22

A Journey Through Christian Theology Color Cartoons CD, CD-ROM, Dayton:Diesslin, 2000.
.....\$15

Cartoon Gospel Series by the Author

The Cartoon Gospel of Matthew, (Year A) Diesslin, Richard L., Dayton:Diesslin, 2001\$15

The Cartoon Gospel of Mark, (Year B) Diesslin, Richard L., Dayton:Diesslin, 2002\$15

The Cartoon Gospel (of Luke), (Church Liturgical Year C) available as :

- Paperback - New Berlin:Liturgical Publications, 1990.\$11
- Color Cartoons CD - Dayton:Diesslin, 2000.\$15

The Cartoon Gospels, (The Complete One-Volume Set of Cartoon Gospels in Book/Verse Order - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) Diesslin, Richard L., Dayton:Diesslin, 2002\$20

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ABOUT THE HUMOR OF CHRIST:

"The widespread failure to recognize and to appreciate the humor of Christ is one of the most amazing aspects of the era named for Him. Anyone who reads the Synoptic Gospels with a relative freedom from presuppositions might be expected to see that Christ laughed, and that He expected others to laugh, but our capacity to miss this aspect of His life is phenomenal. We are so sure that He was always deadly serious that we often twist His words in order to try to make them conform to our preconceived mold. A misguided piety has made us fear that acceptance of His obvious wit and humor would somehow be mildly blasphemous or sacrilegious. Religion, we think, is serious business, and serious business is incompatible with banter." *-Excerpt from The Humor of Christ, by D. Elton Trueblood, Harper & Row.*

REVIEW OF THE CARTOON GOSPEL:

"One of the barriers to hearing the word of God when we read the Bible is the feeling, "I've read all this stuff before." One way to break down that barrier is to see the humor that is often hidden in the Scripture.

Rich Diesslin, in his THE CARTOON GOSPEL, uses a sometimes "off the wall" sense of humor to show us a humorous and, paradoxically, a dead serious side of the Scripture. [...] Jesus, who often used humor in his teaching would, we think, be pleased by these unorthodox and penetrating insights into his teaching." *-Douglas A. Dickey.*