



Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt

Anne Rice

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With the Holy Land in turmoil, seven-year-old Jesus and his family leave Egypt for the dangerous road home to Jerusalem. As they travel, the boy tries to unlock the secret of his birth and comprehend his terrifying power to work miracles. Anne Rice's dazzling, kaleidoscopic novel, based on the gospels and the most respected New Testament scholarship, summons up the voice, the presence, and the words of Jesus, allowing him to tell his own story as he struggles to grasp the holy purpose of his life.

INCLUDES A NEW INTRODUCTION AND A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt Details

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From Reader Review Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt for online ebook

Jenifer says

I expected controversy from Anne Rice, but I have to say that she handled the subject of Jesus' boyhood with dignity and reverence. The idea of his learning and growing was plausibly put. I especially liked the descriptions of the lighthouse at Alexandria and the riots at the Great Temple in Jerusalem. It was a well researched account of Jewish life. I liked okay, but I liked it more after I read the author's notes at the end depicting briefly her coming back to the (Catholic) church and God and Christ after many years of atheism. She seems really sincere in her dedication to give her life and her art over to Him.

Timothy says

I have wanted to read this book ever since I heard about it. I hadn't read any of Anne Rice's prior stuff, but on a professional level (I'm a Lutheran pastor) and just on a level of personal interest I thought I'd give it a try.

The very concept of this novel--writing a fictional book about Jesus at age seven, *in the first person*, from a perspective that takes New Testament and Apocryphal writings seriously--is, needless to say, hugely ambitious. And when your main character is someone who 2 billion people on this planet believe to be the Son of God, it's clear that whatever kind of book you write, not everyone will be pleased with where your imagination takes you.

All that being said, however, I think Anne Rice's portrayal is fascinating. I won't say it was flawless, but it was fascinating. There are several aspects of the story that I thought were insightful:

-Jesus being raised in a solidly "middle class" family, if you can say that about a first-century family. To be able to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Bethlehem to Egypt, Egypt back to Jerusalem, and back and forth from Nazareth to Jerusalem on a yearly basis (all of which the NT says Jesus' family did), that takes certain means. I'm fascinated by Rice's idea of Joseph--quiet, principled, hard working, maybe a little stubborn from time to time, but generally a very good man.

-The role models that mold Jesus. Many of these arise from Rice's imagination--Uncle Cleopas and "Old Sarah," for example--and if you pay close enough attention, you can see that she put a great deal of thought into what and who would have created the kind of teacher that Jesus would become. My favorite little detail was the rabbi in Nazareth who walks with a limp from being robbed, beaten, and left for dead on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Sound familiar?

-Rice's historical research. She did a LOT of homework for this book, and it shows. Sometimes it's even a little heavy-handed, where she'll insert sentences and even paragraphs of information that, while interesting, do not advance the plot. OK, I get it. You've read up about first-century Judea. But it's ironic, considering all her historical research, that she adopts apocryphal gospels so uncritically. The book's opening sequence is lifted directly from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, which most scholars date to the second or third century at the earliest. Makes for an interesting story, I guess, but if you're going to go to such pains to make it realistic, then why go there?

My warning to most anyone who will approach this text is that **it is a piece of fiction**, and yet almost noone, religious or secular, will truly approach it as such. If you want to really enjoy this book, then this Jesus has to become a fictional character for you. This is Anne Rice's Jesus, not "your" Jesus. This is a fictional first-century Jewish boy, a creation of the piety and imagination of one woman, not a real human being. I think the learning I take from this book is that in Western society, almost everyone has their "own" Jesus. Whether we're religious or secular, whatever we regard our relationship with Jesus to entail, we all have a mental construct of who Jesus was or is, that may or may not bear any resemblance to Rice's Jesus, or to the historical Jesus of Nazareth. It's fascinating when all those "Jesus's"--hers, yours, the Jesus of the New Testament, the Jesus of history--interact.

Zweegas says

This is the only Anne Rice book I've ever read. I've tried reading others but they didn't hold my interest -- so I'm open to suggestions about that. Anne Rice is definitely an interesting person with an uncommon point of view but I tried not to think about that while reading this book because the book itself is pretty amazing. I don't see this as a religious book at all just because millions of people consider the main character to be their saviour. There are a lot of other characters in a lot of other novels I consider to be my saviours in one way or another.

I'm a sucker for stories about a child growing up and discovering his specialness and gifts which is what this book is about. This book is so beautifully written that it turns a common story into something poetic and universal.

Also, my Christian childhood might have something to do with why I love it so much too. I appreciate all the details and research that went into creating the time and place and the making characters with sympathetic attitudes and situations.

Douglas says

What do you do when you're told there are things you're not supposed to ask about, and you have to know about them? You wonder, and keep an eye open for someone to drop a hint they didn't mean to drop, or did. What do you do when you're confronted with what your family and nation have been anticipating for years and generations and centuries and forever? If you believe in angels, what do you do when an angel comes to you? Anne Rice takes up these questions in looking at the childhood of Jesus in Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt. Maybe this was something we weren't supposed to wonder about, but if God didn't want us to wonder about it, He wouldn't have given us a heart and an imagination. Anne Rice does an excellent job of painting a believable picture of that time. You can imagine things that Jesus was thinking when he said certain things in the Gospels, by reading this book. The author's note at the end of the book, showing the historical sources used by Rice, is particularly helpful. The Jesus in this book is a Jesus who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

BAM The Bibliomaniac says

2018 Book for all Seasons Challenge: spring equinox

Rice traces the steps in the life of Jesus at the age of seven for a year from one Passover to the next. We start in Egypt and meet Jesus' entire family and his tutors. He can speak Greek as well as Hebrew and has basic painting and carpentry skills. He's very sensitive and loves his mother very much. But he knows he's different. I mean, no one else can bring his friends back from the dead, can they?

He witnesses serious carnage at the great temple-the Romans against the Jews when the family moved back to Nazareth. And he keeps asking everyone, "what happened in Bethlehem?" No one wants to tell him.

This was a refreshing perspective. Jesus was very human and very much a little boy. He cries, he laughs, he hugs, he learns.

This almost sounds like the beginning of a case study and I suppose it could be. It's the study of a special little boy who grows up to be the greatest man.

Gen says

I have been an Anne Rice fan for years, especially the Vampire Chronicles. My favorite of that series, Memnoch The Devil, completely opened my eyes to the realization of the truth in every side of the story, and every story having infinite sides. It was the story of the Beginning, good and evil, god and the devil, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Told from Memnoch himself to Lestat, beloved vampire.

So it was with great surprise and interest that I discovered that Anne Rice has taken the burden on herself to tell the tale of the Christ Child; the story of Jesus himself, as a boy, living in Egypt and returning to Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem.

I liked the story. Her character of Yeshua (the Aramaic-native-version of the name Jesus) was likable and real, and very much what I imagined him to be as a child reading stories in Sunday school. However, Sunday school, nor the Bible itself, never really described Jesus' life as a child; other than a scarce few notable events (one of which this story is about) the Bible does not attempt to tell the story of The Christ Child at all, which leaves the imagination to fill in the details. Once again, Anne Rice has done that exquisitely.

I only rated it 3 stars because the story is still empty, still unfulfilled. I hear she is working on at least 2 more novels for this series, hopefully they will fill in the missing pieces to an otherwise rich, historical novel. And I look forward to one more story for the Vampire Chronicles, which I hear is in the works as well!

Jon says

I enjoyed this book and learned a lot from it! I've never read Anne Rice, and from the paragraph or two I've glanced at of other books, I wouldn't recommend them. But this one, while it has some serious drawbacks, also has some great strengths.

It's always risky to attempt to portray Jesus, let alone in a first-person narrative. I think Anne Rice does this surprisingly well, although I think the inner life of Jesus would actually be much richer and fairly different than she portrays. In this sense, the book is a little dangerous, because it paints the most advanced inner spiritual life in a way which I don't think is actually very advanced or nuanced. She also makes a few choices to include incidents from apocryphal accounts of the life of the young Jesus which are almost certainly not historical, and in my mind very doubtful--even troubling (for example, *spoiler alert--from the first

chapters*--killing another child).

That being said, I can't imagine a better way to understand the social, political, religious, and day-to-day realities of the life Jesus lived as a child. This book offers invaluable insights to anyone who wants to understand the cultural context of the New Testament, especially the Gospels. If you can read it just for the sake of entering the historical-political-social world of 1st century Palestine (and Egypt), I think you'll gain a treasure-trove to help with interpreting and understanding the Gospels.

Karen L. says

This is the first of Ann Rice's books I have read. It is also the first of her books written since her return to her childhood Catholic faith following years of doubt. She has a beautiful writers voice, that makes one feel as though one is there with young Jesus and his family. She paints the biblical scenery eloquently evoking the senses. She did a great amount of research to create an accurate history and included some material from the legends about Christ's childhood. ***See the following interviews:**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3N9vg...>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzeHQQ...>

I learned so much from reading this book. It opened up to me a great deal about the humanity of our Lord and how he truly felt much of what we feel. Rice has the Christ child gradually learn stories of his miraculous birth and the historical circumstances of it all. She has him grapple with the understanding of it. I now more clearly can picture Christ's childhood world. I can see he was indeed a Jewish boy taught by his parents, extended family and the local Rabbis, as any other Jewish boy. She gives such beautifully detailed descriptions of the temple in Jerusalem; the smells of the candles, the blood of the sacrifices, the sights of the priests with blood on their tunics moving about doing what they do, and the description of the beauty of the temple with its intricate decor. I even enjoyed the descriptions of the daily life, with the women weaving, cooking lentil dishes and "pottage." I enjoyed also finding out the kind of carpentry that Joseph and his family did, not only the description of the furniture , but the description of the homes as well.

I learned of the women who wove the temple curtain twice a year. Apparently they were young virgins, living holy lives who did this and the story depicts Mary as doing this as a young girl.

Overall it was a wonderful book, and I look forward to reading the sequel.

Jennifer says

I realise that authors go through many stages of their careers, exploring different facets of their personality, trying different roles.

I am a great fan of Anne's work. I have attended dozens of her events in New Orleans, and own numerous signed copies and first editions. I love (with the exception of Queen of the Damned) the Vampire Chronicles, I enjoyed The Witching Hour, I owned the Beauty Trilogy when you still had to ask for it quietly in kink shops on the lower East side. I had read the historical novels when few people knew she'd even written them. I forgave her for selling the title of Exit to Eden to that debacle of a film. And I understood that she became

deeply ill with diabetes, had lost a daughter, and then lost her husband Stan. I suppose such things could turn any renegade Catholic back to the Church.

I don't know how I would have felt about this book if it had been written by anyone in the WORLD other than Anne Rice. I have read other religious and antireligious works... I believe "The Red Tent" was one of the best books I read the year it was released. I have nothing inherently against fictionalized accounts, I've seen JCS, Godspell and Joseph so many times I sing them in my sleep (some folks dream of the wonders they'll do...)

However, over the many years I have read Anne's work, I have come to expect a certain kind of character, and a certain kind of book. Not even necessarily horror, the original scene aside books like "Cry to Heaven" are not horror novels. But I have come to look for the sort of sweeping tale Anne has given us for years. This was not it. This book creeps well into the range of what I would consider to be "oppressively preachy." While alienating her HUGE fan base with a book so off-the-charts Christian, I doubt Anne was able to approach the audience who would have enjoyed this book-- Bible Belt readers, most likely-- since she would have hopelessly alienated them by the time Belinda was released. I still own my copy because it completes my collection, but unless I encounter G-d on the road to Damascus, I do not anticipate being able to finish it. I am just completely unable to reconcile the authoress I have read passionately for two decades with this work.

I recommended this book to "The Pope" in my review, because I assume one of the only reasons she would write such a completely out-of-character novel is to "make amends" with the Church for her earlier sexually-charged works, so she might as well get credit for it upstairs.

Alexis Colbert says

I was so excited to read this book because this is the one Ann Rice wrote as a Christian. I love her vampire novels, of course, and I have always been a fan. So to hear that she had some kind of dramatic conversion and had written a book about Jesus made me drool. So, I finally started to read it last night. The book jacket says that "Christ the Lord is based on the gospels and on the most repected New Testament scholarship." With heart pounding I began to read (insert sound of a defalting balloon here). Ok, it was really interesting and well written, engaging. However, the book is based less on the gospels thus far and more on the gnostic gospels. So we have a childhood Jesus killing bullies with a word and making clay birds come to life. Any NT scholar worth his salt will tell you the gnostic gospels have little to do with the canonical gospels. Having been written one to three centuries after the death of Jesus, mostly written in Coptic, in Egypt - an era, a language, a culture, a world away from the original source of the gospel stories. THat is the eyewitness accounts of his life and death and resurrection. Why are people so fascinated with the gnostic accounts? I hope her conversion is real,I suspect it is. SHe treats the material with the love of the faithful despite it's gnostic narrative.

Jennifer de Guzman says

Why is it that the first-person books set in ancient times invariably have a hyper-simple, naive narrative style? This is supposed to be Jesus telling his own story, not as a child but as a man (there are some nods to "when I was a child, I spoke as a child" in the narrative, just in case you didn't catch on that this is JESUS

THE CHRIST narrating, even though I believe it was Paul who was supposed to have written those words), and I'm just not buying that Jesus was Forrest Gump with a better copy editor. Many people say it's written in the voice of a seven-year-old, but the narrator at one point actually writes something like, "But I was a child then and there were many things I didn't understand." Rice depicts him as having received a good education in Greek, educated in the literary tradition of Old Testament, so if you take that along with the stories Jesus tells in the Gospels, there's no reason to think his narrative style would not be more complex, perhaps even lyrical.

But, no, it's the same narrative voice as I've found in C.S. Lewis's *Till We Have Faces* (one of my favorite books, mind) or Martha Rofeheart's first-person novels about Cleopatra and Sappho or *The Red Tent*. It's the "I am a person in the ancient world. Even though I am an educated and worldly Queen or a celebrated poet or the Messiah, I am a simple person because you see, I live in the ancient world" voice.

And in this simple voice, Jesus tells you about his childhood, about his need to know who he is and why. This is the most enjoyable part about the book, the struggle of a little boy who knows that there is something different about him. I only regret that Jesus the boy is a bit too serious. We get to see so much of serious Jesus in the Bible, and I wish Rice had chosen to show parts of his personality that might have been neglected. However, she chooses to take up the story just as Jesus decides he won't have fun and play like other children, which makes him nearly the same as the Jesus of the Bible, just smaller and not yet filled in on the details of his birth and parentage. You want to give the kid a ball and tell him to have some fun. Sure, you're the Messiah, but you don't need to worry about that just *yet*.

The historical details are interesting and seem well-researched. Some of that research really wants you to know it was there because you see, you really ought to be clear on the fact that there were many languages spoken in Jerusalem in the early first century. Even Latin! Did I mention that there were many languages spoken in Jerusalem in the early first century? Even Latin? Oh, and Mary is so innocent, like a child! Very innocent. Because she's a virgin, you know. Innocent, just like a child.

I found Anne Rice's author's note annoying. She writes against New Testament scholars who "hate Jesus Christ" and offer faulty arguments against him and yet doesn't mention who these scholars are and in what way their arguments are "based on assumptions." (If it's the assumption that perhaps Jesus was *not* the Son of God, I think that's a fine assumption for an academic to make in doing research.) And all the personal stuff about her return to Christianity made the book seem so damned earnest that I just couldn't even enjoy it as a story.

Sydney (?????) says

I wanted to like this.

It's a story of Jesus based on (mostly) Catholic and Orthodox traditions with some Biblical history woven in. The idea is nice, but it reminds me of the Red Tent. It just is awkward because someone entirely unconnected to the story is telling it and making up what they think happened. I just don't believe that this type of story telling works with certain characters...

Kelly Flanagan says

I ADORED THIS BOOK! AND I AM NOT CHRISTIAN!!!

sorry but I felt those disclaimers needed highlighting before I begin ranting about this book. I couldn't put it down.. I was so absorbed by it I walked into a dozen crosswalks,thankfully only getting hit once, and it was gently. READ THIS BOOK!

Sara says

I can only remember reading one Anne Rice novel before and I know I liked it - I think it was the one about the Mayfair Witches.

This book is definitely a far cry from that. Rice is now a born-again Catholic and has written an interesting novel from the perspective of Jesus as a 7 year old boy. The language and style of prose is so spare, that sometimes I wanted more from it. Not as much as George Eliot or Tolkien would give - but not as spartan as Ernest Hemingway either! Anyway, that being said, I thought the biggest strength of the book was the relationships between Jesus and his older brother James (which kind of broke my heart at times, and the climax of that plot line was well executed) and the general relationship between Jesus and his parents, especially Mary. Her wrestling with the nativity story and how/when to tell Jesus about the events surrounding his birth, and her desire to protect him from knowing too much at too young an age, was very well done and gave me a greater appreciation for her unique role in the story of salvation.

I gave it three stars, only because I prefer to read prose that is somewhat more lush.

K.D. Absolutely says

Ten best-selling books included in her The Vampire Chronicles (1976-2003). Three erotic books about Sleeping Beauty (1983-1985). A dozen of other gothic works most of them landing in New York Times Bestsellers lists. Then her atheist husband for 41 years died from brain tumor in 2002. Before he died, he married her at a Catholic Church as she was a devout Catholic before their marriage. The death shook her up. For two years, she devoted her time reading the Holy Gospel and all its historical references. Night and day. The end product: *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* (first published in 2005).

With this book, Anne Rice (born in 1941 as Howard Allen O'Brien) tried to fill in the gap in Jesus life as a child. We all know about His birth in Bethlehem and His family's escape to Egypt. Then the long gap.

?????? Before He resurfaced, this time in a temple as a young man worrying his parents of His whereabouts uttering the words to his mum, Mary: "*Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?*"

Yes, that gap. Anne Rice filled it in beautifully with her well-researched story peppered with attention to details. The setting. The chronology of events. The human characters in contrast to Jesus as innocent child-God. The words she used like "our daily bread" referring to the freshly baked bread that is a staple during Jesus time. They are all so logical that, if not because Anne Rice is using contemporary English and her name is not prefix with "St.", you would have thought that she suddenly became a Bible-writing prophet trying to atone her grave sins of propagating false stories about vampires and turning Sleeping Beauty into a

masochist sex object.

My only comment is that it would have been more fun if the 7-y/o Jesus was given more chance to be a real boy. The only toy he had was a clay bird that he turned into a real one. There are other innocent miracles like when He wished His playmate be dead and when He was accosted, He resurrected him like how He raised up Lazarus. He wished there was snow and snow fell down from sky. Eleven year old James, his half-brother, thought "why not wish for gold bars to fall down from heaven?" Fortunately, Anne Rice did not think it would be a good idea.

The selling part of this novel? It is the eagerness of boy Jesus to know who He was. The appearance of an angel to His mother. His foster father's dream of another angel telling him to flee to Egypt. The shock and grief the boy Jesus felt when Mary told Him about the massacre of 200 babies after His birth. All carefully worded and realistically depicted without being preachy and going overboard.

Simply beautiful.

*My next soon-to-read books will of course include the sequel: **Christ the Lord: The Road to Cana** (first published in 2008). Thanks, Sherish.*
