



KIRBY McCook

AND THE **JESUS CHRONICLES**



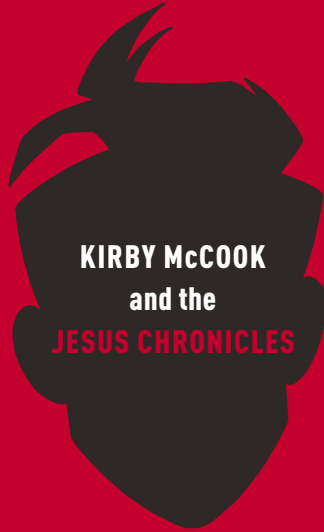
A 12-YEAR-OLD'S TAKE ON
THE TOTALLY UNBORING,
SLIGHTLY **WEIRD** STUFF
IN THE BIBLE, INCLUDING
FISH **GUTS**, WRESTLING
MOVES, AND **STINKY FEET**



STEVE ARTERBURN AND M. N. BROTHERTON

ILLUSTRATED BY **DAMIAN ZAIN**





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A NOTE TO PARENTS AND TEACHERS

You'll notice a lot about Jesus in the pages to come, even as we go through some Old Testament stories. That's because this book is more than a simple retelling of the usual kid-friendly Bible stories.

It's a book that traces Jesus' involvement through the whole larger Story.

We want kids to see Jesus as the main character of the entire Bible, and we want kids to watch Jesus walk through history right from the beginning.

It's important to note that we're not primarily trying to teach morality with this book. We want to inspire kids to draw close to Jesus, to have a relationship with Jesus, and to live in light of God's holiness, sovereignty, and grace.

Here's how this Bible storybook can help:

It's comprehensive. This book looks at the life of Jesus from cover to cover, specifically helping readers see that Jesus has had an important place in God's plan for redemption from the beginning of time.

It's kid friendly and conversational in tone. This book is meant to be enjoyed by kids.

It's fun and lively, humorous but never irreverent. It meets kids on their level, speaking their language and inviting great conversations.

It's biblically and theologically whole. This book takes the whole canon of Scripture into consideration. For instance, when we tell the story of Creation, we also weave in corresponding portions of John 1, Colossians 1, Hebrews 1, and other sections of the New Testament.

It roots and establishes a child in Jesus Christ. We want children to begin to see and think of themselves as *in Christ*. Think of this as an exhorting, identity-establishing book for children in the spirit of Colossians 2:6-7: "Just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him."

It represents a full picture of the character of God. In communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Story of grace, we emphasize God's love, holiness, and sovereignty. All three characteristics of God are important.

We pray that children and families everywhere would follow Jesus, that their lives would be transformed by him, and that ultimately they would join Jesus on his mission. Life is far too short to spend it in rebellion or willful disobedience against God.

Ultimately, we pray that our readers would grow in the grace and knowledge of God. We want them to understand the bigger picture of Jesus, and we pray they would walk closely with Jesus throughout their whole lives. Amen.

I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth.

3 JOHN 1:4

START READING HERE

Jimmy let out a sneeze louder than a motorbike with no muffler.

And we knew we were doomed.

We were sitting around in junior church that morning while the grown-ups were upstairs in big-people church. All twelve of us kids: Jimmy. Noah. Emma. Olivia. Mason. Felipe. Jayden. My sister Aggy. Aisha. Zuri-Claire. My brother Jo-Jo. And me, Kirby McCook.

The sneeze blasted out of Jimmy's nose. Ka-blaz-a-blam! His sneeze-goop slammed onto the carpet—wham!—and sat there like a pile of steaming monkey barf.

That's when our teacher, Mrs. Higgins, threw up her hands and said, "Oh! I can't do this anymore!"—and walked out.

Jimmy wiped his nose on his shirtsleeve, elbowed Jayden in the guts, and said, "Go see where she's going." So Jayden slunk out to follow Mrs. Higgins from a distance, and that's the last we saw of him for a good eleven minutes till he came back and said, "Guys—she's gone."

"Gone?" Jimmy said. "What do you mean?"

← **Yep! That's Jimmy.**



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“Slammed-her-car-door-and-roared-down-the-road gone,” Jayden said. “I saw Kirby’s Grandpa McCook talking to her before she left, but she still left. I don’t think she’s coming back. Remember what Mrs. Higgins told us last time Jimmy treated us to a blasto sneeze?”

Aisha sighed. “Mrs. Higgins said her blood pressure went up. ‘Way, way, way, way, WAY up.’ Whatever that means.”

“That’s five whole ‘ways,” Jayden said knowingly. “It means we don’t have a teacher anymore. We’re sunk.”

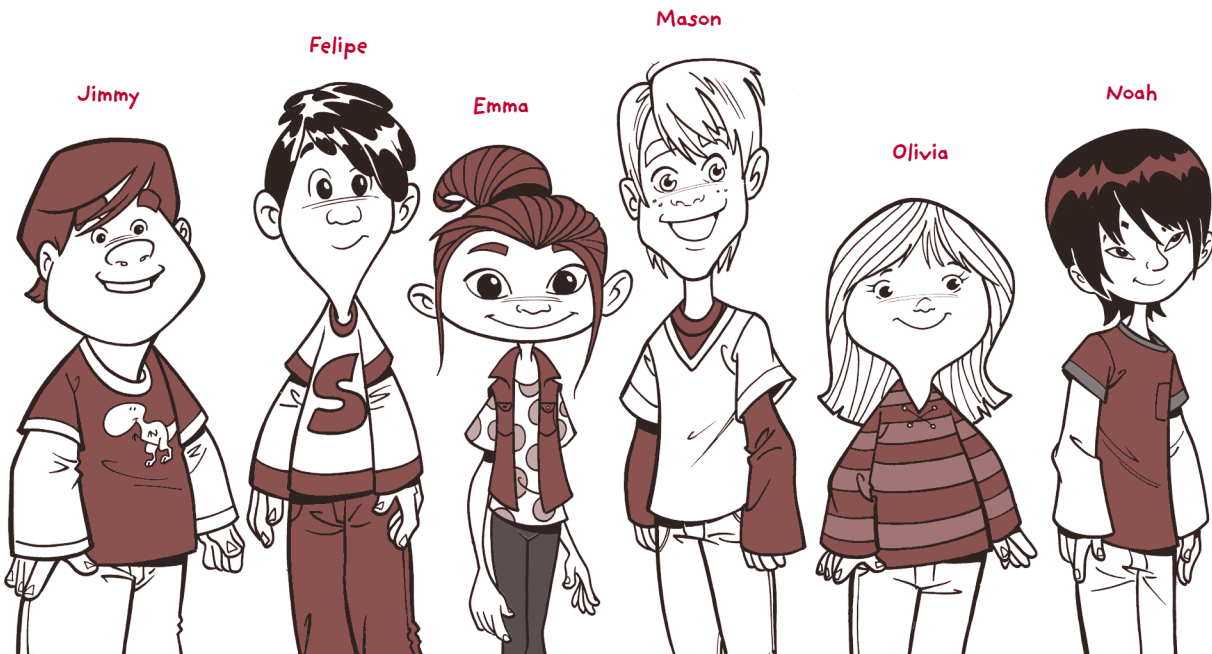
Trembling, Mason said, “Oh no. If we don’t have a regular teacher, we’ll get Mr. Cowburn as a substitute again. He’ll bore us to death!”

Everyone started talking at once, really freaking out.

“HERE’S THE PLAN,” Jayden said. He has a real big voice, like his dad, the pastor, so we all got quiet and looked at him. “One of us kids hasta teach junior church today. And the rest of us better listen, because our parents will ask what we learned. Maybe Mrs. Higgins will come back next week.”

“So who’s going to teach?” said Felipe.

Fifteen silent seconds passed. Then every eyeball looked at me, Kirby McCook, age 12.



"You do it, Kirbs," Jo-Jo said. "You've been in church forever. You should know something by now."

I looked him square in the eye and said, "Nuts to you, potato-boy, I'm not teaching anything."

"But you have to," Zuri-Claire said. "You're THE BEST." And she gave me a little grin.

"OKAY, I'LL DO IT," I said quickly. Way, way, WAY too quickly. (I have a secret crush on Zuri-Claire. If you tell anyone, I'll punch you in the nose.)

Before my face went ketchup-colored, I walked to the front, and with as much coolness as you ever saw, I said, "Okay, class, what shall we study?"

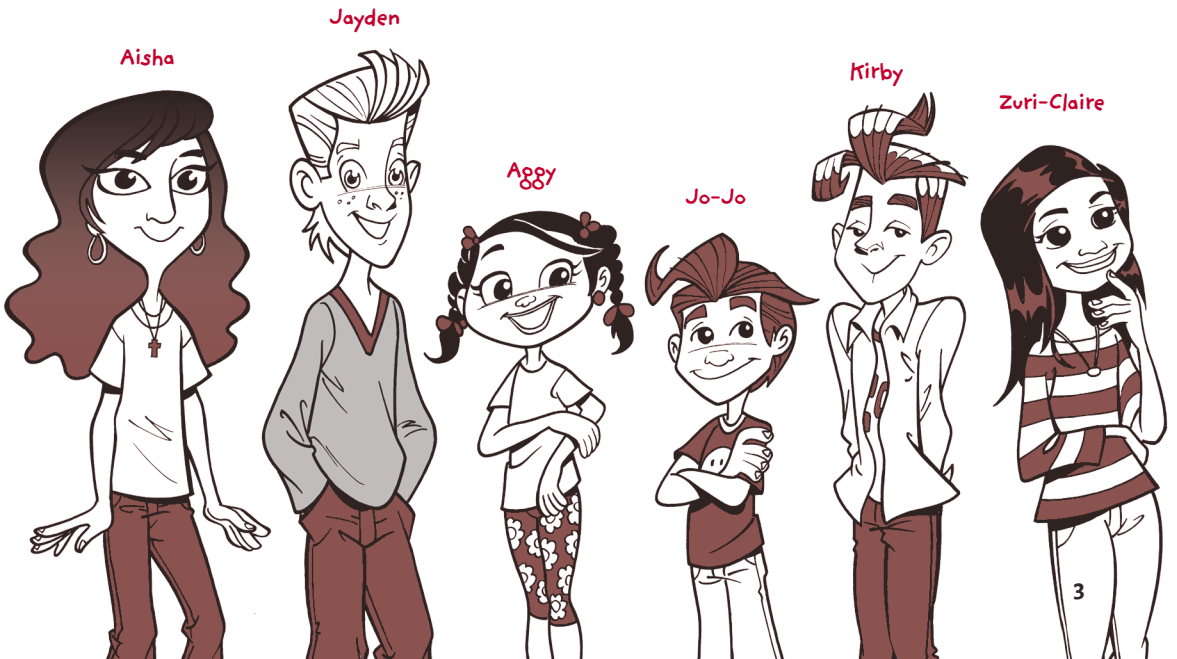
"Dinosaurs!" Jimmy shouted.

"Not again!" yelled everybody. Jimmy always wanted dinosaurs.

I said, "I'll tell you what we're going to study—Jesus."

"JESUS?" everybody said, like that was such a surprising topic for junior church.

How could I go wrong with that subject? Right?



1.

JESUS—RIGHT FROM THE START

Ahem.

Everybody listening? Jimmy? Olivia?

Okay. We'll learn about Jesus right from the start. The story of Jesus doesn't start with a baby in a manger. Nope. Not with a shining star hung over a stable, not with shepherds watching sheep sleep. And it certainly doesn't start with three wise guys and their gold, Frankenstein, and myrrh.

Every kid thinks Jesus' story starts at Christmastime, because we like Christmas presents. *Yahoo!*

But Jesus' story actually starts before the beginning of time. Long before there were books or bathtubs or skateboards or purple shag carpets. Long before cheeseburgers or pizza or cookies with sprinkles. Long before anything ever was, Jesus was.

Jesus existed before anything was created. In the beginning was Jesus, and Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God.

Now we all gotta get really brainy here—even Jimmy the Astonishing Sneeze Machine—because usually we just say that God was there before anything else, and when we say “God,” we're thinking about God the Father.

But here's this mysterious idea to wrestle with—God in Three Persons, aka the Trinity.



My Grandpa McCook once told me that there's God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and all three were there as the Great One before anything else existed. That means Jesus' story starts way back when, because Jesus is God the Son. Well, Jesus' story actually has NO START, because he's eternal, which means any start point you can name, Jesus was there before that.

We don't know exactly what God's Son did back then, but he didn't just hang out in heaven, killing time until he wrapped himself in a human body and came to earth as a baby. Nope.

The Bible says that Jesus is "supreme over all creation," and that God created everything through Jesus. Jesus made the things we can see and the things we can't see. Hey, just because you can't see something doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

Think about it: we can't see gravity, but it's real. Throw an apple up and stand directly underneath it. You'll know gravity is real when that apple lands on your head. *Thu-thunk!* Gravity is something Jesus created.

We can't see air, or love, or hate, or radio waves, or subatomic particles like those whatchamacallits—quarks. Thanks for shouting that out, Jimmy. You do use that incredible brain sometimes. Quarks are even tinier than atoms. And all those unseeable things are real.

We can't see God the Father, but he's real. What's one way we know God is real? Because Jesus is the "visible image of the invisible God." Jesus radiates God's glory and expresses God's character.

God the Father had a job for Jesus in the beginning. Jesus gave life and breath to everything. That's right. Jesus was the Designer and Creator. Jesus was



the Amazing Person who made this whole universe out of—get this—*nothing*. Yep, his raw material was a big bunch of nothing.

We don't know exactly how Jesus did it. But we know for sure that when the universe came to be, the Father started it all through Jesus.

The bell rang, and we all noticed Grandpa McCook talking to Mr. Javier, the children's minister, outside our classroom window. We all silently left, eyes wide, wondering what would happen next week.



KIRBY'S NOTES

STICK INSIDE YOUR BRAIN

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-16

WANNA READ MORE?

John 1:1-3

Acts 17:24

Hebrews 1:2-3, 10