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Twitter + Bible = Twible
The Twible: Each Chapter of the Bible in a 140-character Tweet
Now Available in Book Form
It's the Bible, now with 99% fewer begats!

For nearly four years, religion scholar Jana Riess tweeted the entire Bible: a chapter a day, 1,189 chapters, from Genesis to Revelation. Her interpretive question in approaching the text was “What would *The Onion* say about this passage?” The irreverent distillation of Scripture gained thousands of followers and retweets, and was featured in *USA Today* and *The Guardian*, among other media. It’s now available in book form: *The Twible: All the Chapters of the Bible in 140 Characters or Less . . . Now with 68% More Humor!*

Riess understands that busy people with stuff to do want the Bible, only funnier and shorter. With tongue firmly in cheek, she delivers:

- Leviticus 20:** More people and animals you can’t have sex with. Death penalty for you and the cow. Though why it’s the cow’s fault we really can’t say.
- Corinthians 13:** Love is patient and kind. It does not get annoyed or impatient that this chapter is read at Every. Single. Wedding. Love bears all.
- Revelation 12:** A sparkly woman gives birth to baby Jesus with a killer dragon as midwife. This could really spice up the nativity crèche at Christmas.

In addition to the tweets for each of chapter and more than 50 original cartoons, *The Twible* print edition includes informative sidebars that answer pressing questions such as “WTF is Revelation?” and handy lists such as:

- Top Five Incestuous Relationships in Genesis;
- Ten Biblical Names that Shouldn’t Be Used Again Anytime Soon;
- Five Deuteronomic Laws We Really Hope You’re Not Observing.

Riess also summarizes every book of the Bible in seven words or less and provides a glossary to help readers keep track of who’s who.

Reading the entire Bible as a unit—the mix of stories, letters, histories, and poetry, spanning several millennia—is mind-blowing, Riess says, and the experience deepened her appreciation of scripture. “What struck me most is how human and flawed the biblical characters are. In church we tend to quote Paul’s gentle odes to love (1 Corinthians 13), but we ignore the rougher edges, like when he wishes aloud that his opponents would be castrated (Gal. 5:12). Knowing that those rough edges are there increases my admiration and sense of connection with Paul and other biblical figures. They were ordinary people, more like us than not, who did extraordinary things for God.”

The Twible is available in paperback and Kindle from Amazon.com.

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A Talk with Jana Riess, author of *The Twible*:

All the Chapters of the Bible in 140 Characters or Less . . . Now with 68% More Humor!

How did you get the idea for *The Twible*?

In the fall of 2009, while looking up something in the Bible, I had an epiphany of sorts. I was struck by how many parts of the Bible I knew little or nothing about. What the heck was the Book of Habakkuk, anyway? Or Nahum?

I'd been thinking of ways to use Twitter where I could actually help people and not just tweet out what I ate for breakfast. Religion scholar Stephen Prothero had done a mini-course on Twitter where he taught about world religions in 140 characters or less. I thought, why not tweet the entire Bible? I'd tried several times to read the Bible from cover to cover in a year. I always failed around February. This time, if I did it in public with other people holding me accountable, I thought I might make it all the way through. And if it was entertaining, we would all enjoy it together. So my interpretive question in approaching the Bible was always, "What would *The Onion* say?"

What did you learn about the Bible by doing *Twible* tweets every day?

The first thing I learned is that the Bible is long. *Very* long. There are 1,189 chapters, which is over three years of your life if you're tweeting a chapter a day. I also did an overview tweet of each book, which added 66 more days. There were some times when I wondered how on earth I was going to keep it up.

But there were some parts of the Bible that affected me in a deep and personal way. I was tweeting Job during a rough time in my life, when someone I loved was in the hospital and I felt helpless about what to do. Having that book say out loud many of the things I was feeling right then about despair and injustice was tremendously helpful. The Job tweets are funny, yes, but there's an undercurrent of serious theology too as Job's friends trot out every worn platitude in history and none of them can meet the bleak situation. Why do bad things happen to good people? In the end, there's really no answer to that question . . . but it's extremely important to keep asking it anyway.

What are some favorite *Twible* verses?

Gack! I'm not going to be able to choose just one. Here are a few I enjoyed tweeting:

- **Genesis 17:** Abram now Abraham. G was clearly not thinking ahead about the Twitter character count. Name longer; foreskin snipped. A tradeoff.
- **Ecclesiastes 3:** To everything (turn, turn, turn) there is a season (turn, turn, turn). Except for orange plaid. There is absolutely NO season for that.
- **Jeremiah 47:** G says the day has come to annihilate all Philistines. This is fair punishment for never learning to appreciate opera.
- **Luke 2:** "Ma'am, the rooms are full at Bethlehem Inn, but there's a rustic barn out back that is quite charming. And the hay is complimentary."

Jana Riess blogs for Religion News Service and is the author of many books, including *Flunking Sainthood: A Year of Breaking the Sabbath, Forgetting to Pray, and Still Loving My Neighbor*, named by *Publishers Weekly* as one of the top ten religion books of 2011. She has a Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Columbia University. She wonders if maybe *The Twible* is the book that will guarantee her room reservation in hell. Just in case, she is donating 25% of the proceeds after expenses to five charities that provide humanitarian aid and disaster relief around the world.

For more information about *The Twible*, or to schedule an interview with Jana Riess, please contact Kelly Hughes, 312-280-8126 or kelly@dechanthughes.com.