



Exodus

Geoff Livingston

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A dark stranger arrives in the middle of the night, ripping open a centuries-old wound in post apocalyptic Harpers Ferry. Religious zealots have risen from the South, conquering all that stands before them. Now Jason must help his fellow villagers escape to a land far away to preserve their culture and buy enough time to build a defense. Can they succeed without any technology in the face of a rugged American continent? Blogger and author Geoff Livingston confronts America's worst fears with a world destroyed by technology and dominated by Christian fundamentalism. Don't miss the opening salvo in The Fundamentalists Trilogy. Visit Geoff Livingston at www.GeoffreyRobertLivingston.com.

Exodus Details

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Author : Geoff Livingston

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From Reader Review Exodus for online ebook

H says

I won this book via the Goodreads Giveaway.

This book was interesting, but I'm not sure that it's my type of a book.

Tami Nelson says

Thank you Goodreads First reads and Geoff Livingston for this book I won in the giveaway. Ok. Now where to begin. This was not what I expected it to be. Conversations were dry and weird unnatural , I felt I was reading opinion and not fiction Catholics Christians and pretty much every denomination I felt was confused for one another. I just think I would have like the book that the summary was about. Thanks!

Tammy Downing says

I really liked this book and will be looking for the other two books in the series. It is a well paced and well thought out. I really liked the reference to George Bush! Very enjoyable. Thanks to Goodreads First Reads contest for selecting me to win this book!

Ralph M. Rivera says

I really enjoyed this book. I read this book as part of a three book sci-fi extravaganza.

First I read The Prophet of Bones. A speculative fiction novel that asks, "What would the world be like if the scientific censuses of the world's scientists was that evolution is a fraud?" The main character discovers evidence that there may be a deception at play to keep the religious order in power. And then... the novel fails to deliver on its fundamental promise. The core concepts are never fully explored or resolved. It becomes an afterthought. Terrible book. A Dan Brown wanna be.

The second novel in my sci-fi threesome was Redshirts. A delightful novel that had a lengthy coda at the end that bored me to death. While I would still strongly recommend the novel, I would advise skipping the coda that adds nothing to the narrative.

Then there is Exodus. I've met Geoff Livingston, been to his seminars and have a friendly relationship with him online. So I was excited about his book.

First, unlike Prophet of Bones, Geoff delivers on his promise. The book is exactly as he describes and it does not disappoint. I'll share what I liked about the novel and offer a few critiques.

While I don't think that I spoil anything, be warned that if you have not read the novel, some of my comments may ride a fine spoilery line.

For those that have not read the book; buy it. Read it. It's good.

The core of the narrative revolves around a town - Harpers Ferry - that has learned that a Christian army is encroaching on it and converting anyone in its path by force. The townsfolk realize that they can't fight this new foe and decide to pick up and move to another location in the hopes of putting enough distance between them so that they can plant a new town and build up their defenses. This "Exodus" is the challenge that gives the novel its title.

I found Geoff's writing strong and his exposition clear. I hate when I'm reading a novel and can't place where we are geographically in the story or why. Geoff takes his characters from scene to scene in a way that I felt was always reasonable given the circumstances. Geoff doesn't use flashbacks or any other tricks. He starts at the beginning and chronicles the trials of the former residents of Harpers Ferry and the hero of the novel, Jason, day by day.

In this sense, Exodus reads very much like a Dan Brown novel except with a lot less franticness. Exodus succeeds where Prophet of Bones fails.

I always felt the fear of the town when in peril and the sorrow when they lost something or someone in the wake of a catastrophe.

In this sense, Exodus is everything you want in a novel.

I do have a few critiques of the novel.

By chapter 49, at least one character begins to ponder the good side of Christianity. Perhaps, one character ponders, it is not religion that is perverse, but an individual that causes the perversion. It's not a bad thought in our world, but in the world of the novel, this seems more like an apology to the reader for the preceding chapters. In the novel, the Christian army is brutal and repeats many of the horrors of the Crusades. While one deserter does end up being a very good person, in the context of the novel he can hardly redeem everyone else unless he is an allegory for Christ, which I doubt.

In chapter 53, Brachus offers the following thoughts about the leader of the Christian army, Parvus:

"This is not the first time the world has seen such a monster. In the ancient world, there was Pharaoh, and then the Roman monster Caligula, and his even more monstrous nephew, Nero, and many other Romans. More recently, in the old world, two madmen, Hitler and Stalin, killed close to forty million men, all to protect their form of power. There was Vlad the Impaler, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Alexander the Great, Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, George Bush the second, and many more. All of these men killed hundreds of thousands of people to achieve personal agendas of power, ideals, religion, or lust. Some have been condemned by history, others glorified, but they were all the same: Brutal fanatic killers who ravaged lands in search of power, glory, and self-righteousness. Pravus is simply the next one."

Contextually, I'm not convinced that a group of people in a dystopian future who hear the above story would be so apologetic and conclude, "But look at the bright side of Christianity."

It's like saying, "But think of all the good things that Hitler did," in a modern conversation. Giving the

Christian army's behavior, this form of dispensation doesn't have any demonstrable rationale for these characters.

On the matter of dialogue, I found this to be the novel's sole weak point. Much of the dialogue is good, but some is inconsistent and improbable.

For example, one character, Marcus, sees a bronze statue of a man at one point and says that the man looks like a "dork." Hundreds of years in a post apocalyptic world, they use the word "dork?" Imagine a person in their 20s in 2013 referring to an adult as a "square." It's unlikely. That's because slang has a very short shelf life. To compound the problem, 6 paragraphs later, Marcus says:

"True enough. We haven't even crossed the Mississippi yet. The elders say traveling will become easier in these flatter lands, but I wonder if they speak the truth, or if their words are rooted in some wild tale of the past that promises geographic delight and fantastic cattle. We seem cursed with floods, disease, and difficult terrain."

I find these two pieces of dialogue mind bogglingly improbable on their own let along separated by a few sentences, given they are spoken by the same character.

While I think that my perspective on the cast's thoughts on Christianity is highly subjective, I do think that the second volume of this planned trilogy can be improved by making the dialogue tighter, consistent and more realistic given the circumstances.

So that's it. Thanks to Geoff for offering such an entertaining read. I'm hooked and can't wait for the second volume.

That's all folks.

Susan Alvarado says

Thought this was a pretty good book. The characters were pretty solid and the story moved right along. Absolutely am looking forward for the sequel :)

Gloria says

OMG what a great story!!! I am on pins & needles waiting for the next book.

Chris says

A seriously imaginative story. Hundreds of years in the future, after a cataclysm brought about by fundamentalism and technology run amok, the village of Harpers Ferry is under threat from a tyrant and his army marching north. At the epicenter of the story is Jason, a young man with leadership thrust upon him. His mission: to lead the uprooted village towards the Rockies, battling wolves, flooded rivers, disease and his own crises of confidence along the way.

This is part 1 of a trilogy and I'm looking forward to the next installment. Disclosure: I know Geoff Livingston professionally. He's actually hinted at what lies in store next – it's going to be good.

Amy says

I downloaded this book for free through a blog, in which Geoff wrote a guest post. I intended to check out the editing, because Geoff gushed about how much editing he went through, and it drew my curiosity. I ended up reading it and was impelled to review it.

Though, Geoff explains much about his editing processes, I found the editing was the biggest problem with the book. I can't imagine Geoff has researched the subject of how to write fiction. He incorporates every "don't" of writing. The advice helps writers move their story forward and keep the reader engaged. Extra words, such as to be verbs, passive voice, and prepositions make the writing drag from unnecessary words. It's hard to get into the story.

The writing is also impersonal. The words on the page don't engage. They state the story but don't really incorporate personalities or draw the reader into the story.

And the dialog isn't realistic. For example one character is roused from sleep and says this, "Diane, you are quite the sight for any man suffering horrible dreams. Thank you for waking me. Tell me, have you any news of Mordecai's whereabouts?" Who talks like that? No one. It's super dry and unnatural.

Then there is the overabundance of life lessons, like an after school special. For example the dad says this to his son who is the leader, "No one man or woman has the strength, experience, or hope to successfully guide a town. They must work together and rely on each other's strengths and knowledge to collectively guide the town." Who is this directed at? Adults don't need to hear this, maybe young adults or children. This "advice" is pretentious and demeaning to adult readers. The author would benefit from showing instead of telling. Plus, this same lesson is repeated through the entire book by multiple characters. We get it; we got it before you wrote it.

When Geoff isn't relaying unnecessary life lessons, we see the main character talk to every person about his relationship with his wife. If he needed advice on how to be a leader, the first lesson: keep your private life private; showing your weakness with your wife makes you look weak. Jason is the weakest character by far; his wife is stronger than he is in this story.

Many opportunities for a good story present themselves, but the author has no idea how to use them to his advantage. Instead we get boring details that no one cares about. And the interesting parts are way overdone, like several chapters about a wolf attack. This is a one scene event, tops. This book, as written, should have been 50 pages. The rest is filler and boring.

The ending is awful, no resolution, no questions answered. It just stops. His afterword explains he broke it up to make it a trilogy and it is obvious. This isn't a full story. Still, to think he has another 400 pages of awful writing is scary.

Now, I'll talk to the Christian bashing aspect of the story. First, and foremost, he doesn't understand Christianity (funny enough, he has another life lesson, where Jason is told to understand Christianity. Geoff

should've taken his own advice.) For example the book states, "There's one lord in the Christian religion, but he is divided into three gods: God himself, the Holy Ghost, and Jesus Christ, a son. Christ, who once was mortal, is the one they swear by and are named after." This is not a Christian belief. It's a heretical, anti-Christian belief. There aren't three gods. There is one God and He is Trinity. God is one substance. Anyone who believes in more than one god is not Christian.

He also mixes up fundamentalists with Catholics. They are not the same group, nor do they have the same beliefs. Fundamentalists say they believe every word in Scripture is literal, Catholics do not believe such a notion. Yet, the author talks of Constantine (a figure fundamentalists despise and would never want to emulate.) The crusades were not part of the fundamentalist movement, as the fundamentalists didn't even exist until the 1500s. And of course, the author got the crusades wrong, as there were more than one and they were not all equal. I'm sure he is referencing the time when the Roman government mandate that all people be Catholics, so when Islam threatened Catholicism the government sent soldiers to defeat them. As in any army, many did not hold the beliefs of the cause, they were there to kill and their sins against the people were not sanctioned by the Catholic Church. Constantine, himself, only promoted Catholicism because of his mother. He didn't really grasp or care about the Church.

Saying a Christian who sins is a hypocrite is a total atheist belief. Christians see sin as something we will all do until we die because we are in a fallen state and succumb to temptation. However, we also need to Confess our sins for forgiveness and receive the Grace to prevent those temptations in the future, though in our fallen nature we know it's possible to fall back into those sin, especially if we lack in Grace.

Fundamentalists may accuse a sinner of being a non-believer, which makes the fundamentalist aspect of this story unbelievable. It's not likely they would follow a sinner who encourages raping and pillaging village to convert people. They are not devoted to their leaders the way Catholics would be. They will drop a pastor for sin, in a heartbeat. Catholics wouldn't sanction such behavior either.

The whole "brainwashing" thing always makes me laugh. The same argument could be made for atheists. It isn't as though Christians have people in rooms torturing them into believing Christianity. We are all free to believe whatever we want to believe. Atheists just want to view Christianity as a bunch of weak-minded people who fall for anything anyone tells them. However, I could make the same argument about atheists. Just because some college professor they admired said God wasn't real doesn't mean they have to believe it, yet they do. I would say it takes a lot more for a person to accept true Christianity than it does for a person to accept atheism, there isn't anything intellectual, mysterious, or worthy of exploring in atheism. It is simple, straightforward, and easy to believe. Nothing requiring intelligence, true Christianity appeals to intelligent people like St. Aquinas because of the deep knowledge, exploration, and understanding required. You can't be weak-minded and believe true Christianity.

If this author had hopes to change Christians than it would serve him better to learn about Christianity, otherwise he looks silly and makes Christian view him as a typical Christian-basher with no clue. If the point is the keep people from Christianity than all this ignorant information does is spread more ignorance.
