



***The Word for Word Bible Comic – The Gospel of Matthew* illustrated by Simon Amadeus Pillario**

With a dislike of graphic novels and being of a certain generation whose interpretation of a 'comic' lies in the pages of *Eagle*, *Tiger* and the wonderful, yet short-lived, *Cor!!*, I approached the *Word for Word Bible Comic* with, I admit, a degree of scepticism. I am glad to equally admit I was wrong to do so.

This is the sixth in the *Word for Word* series, and it's clear that converting the whole of Matthew's Gospel, word for word, in to a comic presentation is an enormous undertaking for which the illustrator and his team are to be thanked.

Inevitably, by adopting an unabridged approach, the text is dense at times but the drawings are professional, high class and convey both the drama and the message of Jesus' life and ministry. Colour is used to convey particular themes (pink hues for parables, for example) but the predominance of greys and browns make it uneasy on the eye at times. There is humour in the drawings though – the baby Jesus eating a rusk biscuit, for example – and it's good to see there are more than three wise men. Maps are also included and they provide helpful context.

A crowd-funded, self-published book, at over 240 pages it's a long read – but there again so is Matthew's Gospel. The book includes a factual section about Matthew, other key figures and the writing and purpose of Gospels.

Passolini's film, *The Gospel of St Matthew* paints a picture of the 'uncomfortable Jesus': a man who would have been difficult to live with. The *Word for Word Bible Comic* takes a similar approach and with its graphic images and 12+ content rating that does make it an uncomfortable read – but that in itself highlights how the Gospel message has often been sanitised.

This is a publication which will appeal to lovers of graphic novels but will require a well-grounded faith to take the challenges the images present. That said, it is a contemporary and thought-provoking way of conveying the Gospel message to the current generation.

Adopting earlier versions of the saying, Banksy once said 'Art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable.' *The Word for Word Bible Comic* certainly does that.

***The Word for Word Bible Comic – The Gospel of Matthew* is published by Word for Word Bible Comics and [available to order](#). Price £15.99 (digital versions also available).**

Reviewed by Richard Frost

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