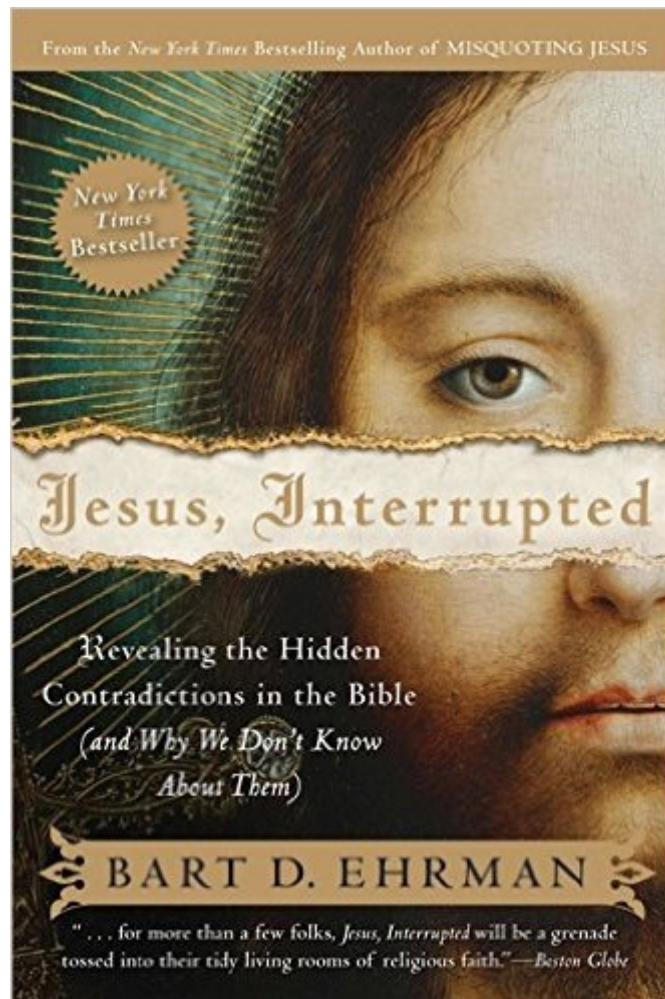


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Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing The Hidden Contradictions In The Bible (And Why We Don't Know About Them)



Synopsis

The problems with the Bible that New Testament scholar Bart Ehrman discussed in his bestseller *Misquoting Jesus* and on *The Daily Show* with John Stewart, NPR, and *Dateline NBC*, among others are expanded upon exponentially in his latest book: *Jesus, Interrupted*. This New York Times bestseller reveals how books in the Bible were actually forged by later authors, and that the New Testament itself is riddled with contradictory claims about Jesus' information that scholars know but the general public does not. If you enjoy the work of Elaine Pagels, Marcus Borg, John Dominic Crossan, and John Shelby Spong, you'll find much to ponder in *Jesus, Interrupted*.

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Customer Reviews

Full disclosure: the author of this review is a former Catholic altar boy (unmolested), was briefly enrolled in a Franciscan seminary, had eight years of Jesuit college/graduate school education, and is now what President Obama referred to as a "non-believer" in his inaugural address. In his own full disclosure, author Bart Ehrman relates that he attended a fundamentalist Bible college, furthered his theological education at Princeton, and is currently a professor specializing in New Testament studies at the University of North Carolina. He also states that he is agnostic, though specifically stating that it was not his study of the Bible that led him from evangelical Christianity to this alternate state of conviction. This is a special book. It is not a rant, nor a screed. It is a careful, scholarly, and considerate review of what is either known, or reasonably conjectured, about the amazing book called the Bible. How was this book put together in the first place? The first listing of the 27

canonical books that are generally accepted as part of the New Testament today was in 367 CE. How did the 27 canonical books get chosen over many other candidate letters, Acts, and Gospels that existed (and still exist)? What, one wonders, did early Christians do in church without a Bible to read from? Ehrman has some thoughts on the subject. The earliest possible date that a church could have been "Bible-based" was more than 300 years after Christ's death (in reality, extremely low literacy rates and the lack of the invention of the printing press made "Bible-based" churches not feasible for another millennium). How did Christians come to agree on what they believed in without a canon of Sacred Scripture?

If you are a fan of Bart D. Ehrman like I am, there are four books essential to understanding his work. The first is *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*; the second, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (popularized in his book *Misquoting Jesus*); the third is *God's Problem* where he argues that the problem of evil is what caused him to lose his faith; and this one, *Jesus Interrupted*. In a way I like *Jesus Interrupted* the best, probably because its aim is to reach the masses with solid Biblical scholarship. I've long thought that scholars mostly talk to themselves in hopes for a nice pat on the back from other scholars. Don't get me wrong here. We need scholars, and Ehrman is one who writes good scholarly material too. It's just that Ehrman also wants to inform the masses about what Biblical scholars have known a long time, but which pastors and ministers aren't telling their parishioners for fear that they might be troubled to learn about it. And Ehrman is a master communicator of it when it concerns the New Testament, which is his specialty.

Bart Ehrman, a distinguished professor of religious studies at the Univ. of North Carolina, is one of the foremost popularizers of New Testament (NT) research today. His latest book, *Jesus Interrupted*, continues along the path he followed in his previous and more technical work, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*, but is superior in that he now is dealing with fundamental issues of the Bible and Christianity that are of more interest and relevance to the average layperson. While being a more provocative book than MJ, it is still not nearly as controversial as one would think from the inappropriate subtitle, which, like the subtitle for MJ, appears to have been chosen for marketing purposes. In fact, no new ground is broken here, as he once again devotes a lot of space to material he has covered thoroughly in other books, and people who are well-versed in NT research are unlikely to encounter anything that they haven't seen before. Prof. Ehrman's motivation in writing this book is to introduce the results of 200 years of critical NT scholarship to the masses. He laments the poor level of knowledge of the Bible, even

among students entering seminaries, so here he gives an overview of what has been determined through historical-critical methods, focusing generally only on the most widely agreed (among critical scholars) conclusions. Even though this material has been a standard part of the education of ministers and priests for decades, little of it has been passed on to their congregations, a deficiency that the author hopes to address.

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