Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them) by Bart D. Ehrman,
Harper Collins, 2009

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Recommended Readings

**Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them)**
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Reviewed by James F. McGrath

In his latest book, Bart Ehrman seeks to introduce a wider audience to important aspects of the New Testament. The historical-critical approach Ehrman outlines is familiar to Biblical scholars, and common knowledge to anyone who had studied in a mainline seminary in the past half century or so, but beyond such circles is often unfamiliar, as pastors often do not pass on this information, for whatever reason.

Ehrman tells how he entered seminary as a conservative Christian, ready to resist the attacks he expected liberal scholars to wage against the Bible. Instead, he discovered that this scholarly way of viewing the Bible in fact made better sense of, and did more justice to, what one actually finds in the Bible.

Over the course of the book's chapters, Ehrman discusses topics such as: the diversity of views found in the New Testament about Jesus, the Law, and other matters; the process of defining what works would be included in the Bible; the authorship of the New Testament writings; and what historians can and cannot tell us about Jesus.

I highly recommend Ehrman's book as a readable overview presenting information about early Christianity that ought by now to have become common knowledge. Perhaps most importantly, Jesus, Interrupted demonstrates that everyone who appeals to the Bible in support of their views is engaged in "picking and choosing" - even (perhaps especially) those who most firmly deny that they are doing so.

- James F. McGrath is associate professor of religion at Butler University. He blogs at Exploring Our Matrix, where you can find (among other things) a longer version of this review.