

The Gospel Truth: Sometimes A Little Hazy

One of my all-time favorite interviewers is Terry Gross, the host and co-executive producer of *Fresh Air* on NPR. I have done her show six times over the years for various books I've written, and it has been a terrific experience each time. She is an amazing interviewer. She asks really perceptive questions and knows how to get to what is especially interesting about a guest's work.

If you've listened to her show, you'll know that it always sounds like she is in the same radio studio with the person she is interviewing, talking to them face to face. That's not how it is. The person being interviewed is physically somewhere else, in a radio studio in their own location, and the interview is happening over headphones and cable hookups. It certainly never seems that way! But I've never met her face to face.

Here is an interview I did with her on March 4th, 2009 about my book "Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them)." The book tries to present information that scholars have long known about the Bible but have not successfully communicated to a wider public. One of the themes of the book is that this material is presented to (non-fundamentalist) seminary students during their training – so that pastors of churches do know about it. But they normally do not tell their congregations!

One of the points I make in the book involves some of the familiar stories of the Gospels, such as: What do the Gospels say about Jesus' birth? How did Judas die? What did Jesus say when he was crucified? As I point out in the book, and in the interview, the answers to these questions vary from one Gospel

to another, and it is probably a mistake to “smash the four Gospels into one big Gospel and think you get the true understanding.”

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