

Truth-Driven ThinkingSM

Excerpted Podcast Transcript

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New Testament Scholar: Dr. Robert Price.

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Truth-Driven Thinking for Wednesday, August 16th 2006. New Testament Scholar: Dr. Robert Price.

...Let's move on to Dr. Robert Price, he is a long time teacher of philosophy and religion. He holds twice over Ph.Ds on matters of Systematic Theology in the New Testament, he is a fellow of the Jesus seminar, if you've heard of that, at the Westar Institute. He is also the Founding Editor of the Journal of Higher Criticism. Author of several books, including: 'The Da Vinci fraud: Why the Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction' and 'Deconstructing Jesus'. Also 'The Incredible Shrinking Son of Man' and he's got two books that are coming out this fall, that we'll ask him about. Certainly though, Dr. Price is a leading scholar of our day and I am absolutely delighted that he was willing to talk with me recently. The following is that conversation and I began by just explaining a little bit that I had just read, 'The Jesus Puzzle' by Earl Doherty and that we recently had Canadian Theologian Tom Harpur talk with us on the podcast. Both of these books, which were a new concept to me, because they plainly argued that Christ was probably not even a historical figure, but rather a mythological amalgam. Now I ask Dr. Price where he came down on this question of historicity as the scholar's call it and whether or not, he really thinks Christ existed and or if there were areas he significantly differed with Doherty or Harpur. Here's the answer to that question and our entire conversation.

Dr. Robert Price: Well I like both books. My view is something of an agnostic one on this, because simply as a historian you've got to realize that your judgments are always provisional and tentative and you should not grind an ax. It doesn't matter to me whether there was a historical Jesus or not. I just find a lot of the considerations like that of the dying and rising Gods being so similar to Christianity, is being so powerful that I've rounded the bend of thinking that the burden of proof is on anyone who would argue there was historical Jesus. But I don't think it's -- especially unlikely that there might have been, it's just that there's no way to tell now that if there was a Jesus, he's been completely absorbed into all the myth and legend to the point where, well no evidence really survives. So, and I don't think that Doherty or Harpur really going beyond that, they're not really defending as a dogma of it, Jesus didn't exist. But the only place I differ with Doherty is that he tends to -- and this is hardly a difference. He thinks that in the Pauline epistles, well for one thing that there are earlier Gospels that's a traditional view and a reasonable view, and that they don't even present a historical death of Jesus but are talking about nothing but a divine...

Steve Gibson: Right

Dr. Robert Price: ...incorporeal savior, put to death in some super mundane realm and there are some passages that suggest that they're very powerful and Colossians and first Corinthians. I am not sure that's the whole picture and I am not sure he's provided sufficient documentary evidence for there being such a notion in that time. He has one reading of a particular church father, where he -- the man seems to deny that Christians believe in a crucified criminal and considers that the smoking gun -- aha, you see

they didn't believe in the idea of a trial under Pilate and all that. I think that this is so late in the day. It's probably likely that this church father just was denying that Jesus was really a criminal. But from the very picky nature of these two things, you can tell, I think on the whole he not only is right, but has really shown the way. Doherty points out, like I've never heard anybody, like he culminates what some people like Crossen and Thomas Brody and Randel Helms have been arguing that when the Gospels or the Epistles or any of these writers say, Jesus did this, we know it according to the scriptures, they don't mean. Well, we know he did it, and what do you know, here's some juicy proof text to show its predicted. No, Doherty says, they seem to mean that we know it happened because of an esoteric reading of the Old Testament.

Steve Gibson: Exactly, and that was new to me as I'm sure it is to a lot of people.

Dr. Robert Price: And I thought, well that's likely with some of the Gospel stories but it was only, once I researched this long article I did for a symposium that Jacob Neusner edited for Brill, called, my piece being called -- the old -- that was New Testament -- well what was it, New Testament narratives, Old Testament midrash -- and I researched a whole bunch of books like, would have made the same sort of a commentary on this and that story in the New Testament that I realized, -- very good arguments can be made for virtually every story in the Gospels and acts just coming from this or that Elijah or Moses or David story, that really set me back, and I thought, boy, Doherty is even righter than he thought, the hold darn thing, not just the passion narrative. So he is really a genius and has advanced this whole thing.

Steve Gibson: Well, interesting and I hear, I certainly hear great things by the way, this seems to be my mode of operation here is, I've your book on my way, you're deconstructing Jesus from back a couple of years, because I've heard such great things about that so...

Dr. Robert Price: Oh I'm glad, yeah.

Steve Gibson: So I look forward to that, but let me ask you this, it's my sense that to some degree in talking with Bishops Spong or Tom Harpur

Steve Gibson: And I gather from what I know of you that there is kind of this fine line that you walk, because you're not out to slash people's beliefs, and debunk the Bible and just point out its flaws, you know its Tom, I think, eloquently said, there is a greater meaning here that I think gets missed in the process. So, I guess my question is, how do you balance this, how do you walk this fine line between obviously pointing out these contradictions in the new testament without appearing to be attacking people's beliefs?

Dr. Robert Price: Well, there's no way to avoid that appearance, I didn't say, I don't mean to attack their beliefs but no body who is going to take criticism of the Bible as an attack is going to listen to my disavowal, it won't make any sense to him. And I just feel like what I'm doing is to aim what I say at people who are already questioning it and see a problem, and say, wait a minute, if the Bible is what I am told it is, why is there this problem and that problem and so on. Well somebody like that is going to read something I've written and say, oh, okay I get it, there is something to the Bible, it isn't this. But, I don't think most people are primed to hear this, it's the old Gnostic problem, you better watch what you say or where you say or who you say it too because not everybody is ready to hear it.

Steve Gibson: Yeah.

Dr. Robert Price: I figure, well that's okay, the one's that are, are just going laugh me off as a nut, which is all right by me, and the ones that are in the same place will be served by its -- no that's, that's all right.

Steve Gibson : Now, do you find, and I think I saw a quote attributed to you about batting for the other team or something in this following context that, I have made the observations as I've kind of become somewhat on the fringe of what you might call the skeptic movement or -- its certainly critical thinking movement, where you find that people become so militant in their atheism that, and I think I am paraphrasing you here, that they've just adapted a new religion and are batting for the other team, but still not so much interested in continuing to find new evidence.

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah, they've become what Mack Shaler called a postate's rather than converts, they lost faith in their original religion, but they haven't so much joined a new thing that replaced it and inspires them towards something new, as they have just joined the other team in the same stadium and they're using whatever they espouse now as a platform to attack, and destroy and take revenge on what they use to believe. So it has -- their stance has no integrity because it's parasitic upon what it rejects, and I realized as soon as I read that, I mean I thought of that many times, but as soon as I read that in Shaler's book, 'Resontemont,'(ph) it really hit me and I, -- like in the book of action, cut me to the clink , and I thought, yeah, that's what I've been doing here, I need to get in touch with the value religion has had with me if I'm to have any integrity in my own biography here.

Steve Gibson: Yeah, I think that's and that's kind of that fine line that I was referring to earlier.

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah

Steve Gibson: That's a tough one and, but lets get into I guess, here having said that, let me ask you about some of your -- what do I want to say, if I'm in a discussion with a literalist evangelical who is convinced that the Bible is the inerrant perfect word. In a debate format, do you ever -- what are your three favorite contradictions to point out, that we can't look at it that way?

Dr. Robert Price: Well, there's a bunch of historical ones, if they all seem like nit picking but like the duration of the flood and the number of animals Noah brought on board. It was in the same three chapter story their different numbers. And were the resurrection of Jesus, that the women at the tomb see Jesus or not, you can't just start using it well, in some of the gospels decided to record it when Matthew and John recorded the women seeing Jesus but others Mark and Luke didn't ,well why is that? They were running out of ink or something, i mean it's ridiculous, surely would have mentioned it had you believed it happened, and then we pick almost anything else; differences in the three acts' accounts of Paul's conversion....did the men with him, hear the voice and not see anybody or see the light but

Steve Gibson: Right.

Dr. Robert Price: Not hear the sound and so on and so on, but there it goes on and on and on, There are who killed Goliath, was it David or was it Alhaymen depending on which chapter you read, its one or the other and there are many more of them and the thing to point out is, that these are not flies in the ointment, it's not as if they debunked the Bible as the fundamentalist fears, rather it just shows the futility of the model they use to understand it and what I'm trying to get across is, I am the literalist, I am the champion of the Bible because I will not explain these contradictions away, I rather I will use them as levers to uncover deeper levels in the text. It's not as if the Bible is written by a bunch of fools who couldn't keep the stories straight, rather these differences show that they're the seams of the patches in the patchwork of the Bible. Where did Cain get his wife? Well, you'd have to be pretty stupid to not notice that if you were just writing the story of Cain DE novo (ph) or if it were the history.

Steve Gibson: Yeah

Dr. Robert Price: But that shows you that's it neither one, it's a scrapbook of little snippets about Cain from ancient Israelite legend. So, my whole approach to the fundamentalist is to say, do you love the Bible? I do too. However, I fear your view of it is stopping you from seeing what it says. I think I can make sense of its problems and riddles, where as you can't. Come let us reason together. So, that's my approach, I'm just saying, like fool you don't have an inerrant Bible, it's really no better then some stupid romance novels.

Steve Gibson: Yeah.

Dr. Robert Price: That gets no body anywhere and is nothing to prove anyway.

Steve Gibson: I think that's very well said, and again we're talking with Dr. Robert M. Price. And as a matter of fact, one of the things I want to talk to you about, is certainly the early church evolution, which is something that's just fascinating and new to me but, one of the questions that has kind of come up in my mind is, this question of is it possible. My question for you is it possible, that there were people talking about Jesus Christ and or Jesus Christ prior to ever having heard of the historical figure?

Dr. Robert Price: Well, almost certainly, any missionary preaching outside of Palestine or even outside of Galilee, would have talked about the risen Savior coming again on the clouds and all that stuff, and people would assemble, who is this, what are you talking about and then they might say, oh, well this is Jesus of Nazareth, the prophet of Galilee. It is interesting to see in Matthew's gospel at the triumphal entry where Jesus' fans are bringing men on the donkey and hailing him and acclaiming him and the Jerusalem population says that, who is this guy and that was the prophet Jesus from Galilee, where he wasn't even known by everybody at the time. How many people could have seen him, so any kind of PR done already is giving you a Christ of faith before or whether or not you see him. First Peter says to whoever the readers were, without having seen him, you loved him and so on and so on. Well, then, it must always -- I mean by far most of the first century Christians must have read about Christ of faith before anybody fill the men on the details of a historical Jesus, if they ever did.

Steve Gibson: Yeah and I guess that's my question, as it relates to historicity is, it's my understanding that many of these emergent Christ cults if you will, be they in the Jerusalem tradition or over in the you know the Paul Arena or in Galilee, that the use of the name Jesus could well have emerged in multiple places independently without needing to be reference to a historical figure.

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah, at first that sounds like a very contrived attempt of the no historical Jesus Christ...

Steve Gibson: Yeah.

Dr. Robert Price: ...myth people to rationalize, but I don't think it is. I was surprised to read in conservative scholars like Yohimia Ramez (ph) and others you already had people that seem to understand Joshua as the prophet like Moses who would come, but they didn't relegate it to the past, they thought there still would be some kind of Joshua, to follow Moses and feel this the magician so called and...

Steve Gibson: And Joshua means literally Jesus in Greek?

Dr. Robert Price: What's that, I am sorry?

Steve Gibson: Greek, Joshua is literally translated to Jesus?

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah. That's like the Hellenized version of it. Just so that you find even in Jude and Hebrews, they're talking about Joshua, Moses attendant, and they're calling him Jesus, that's just the same thing in Greek.

Steve Gibson: Okay. Just point of clarification.

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah good point to ask, yeah. And so these guys, some of them...the Egyptian prophet with whom Paul is confused in the book of Acts, and then Josephus describes, these guys seem to have thought they needed to recapitulate the deeds of Joshua to be a new Joshua, and if that's the case, you're talking about Joshua or Jesus being equivalent to Christ or Messiah; and it looks as if, I mean there's evidence...there is better evidence for a lot of things...but it looks as if that, that implies there was a Jesus role, a Jesus-Messiah role. Plus the name Yahshua (ph) means Savior and its easy to imagine that like 'Christ Anointed,' this was a title of someone that replaced the name. And in fact there is this fragment of a hymn in Philippians that says after the unnamed hero did his work, after he was subjected to crucifixion and was then highly exalted so everyone would confess his name and bow the knee, he was then given the highest name of all, Jesus. Well what was his name before, who – well this writer, what did he think? Well that's still an open question and my guess is that, this is a hint that the Jesus religion had been some version of the Osiris or Dionysus religion...or...all long well known religions in Israel.

Steve Gibson: And that's what was kind of blowing my mind and Tom Harpur kind of throws in there, "Iusa," the Egyptian lore names according to Massey, and this whole concept that Paul was also competing with apparently other fairly wide spread notions that were not his, but may have been using that same name in a fairly early date.

Dr. Robert Price: Well there is an actual statement in Second Corinthians where Paul says, that if somebody comes to Corinth with a different Jesus, a different spirit, a different Gospel, they are ready enough to accept it, what does he mean by that? He might mean a different an inadequate interpretation of Jesus of Nazareth, but I wouldn't race to assume that, that does imply it seems to me some kind of a multiplicity of these characters.

Steve Gibson: Are you familiar with this Egyptian Iusa, am I pronouncing that properly?

Dr. Robert Price: That beats me, I have read stuff like this, he and -- Harper and others mentioned that, and Acharya S. mentions lot of the Egyptian background and there sure was an ancient connection between Israel and Egypt, the Exodus seems to have been a myth, but it reflects the fact that Egypt ruled Palestine for many centuries before the time of Abraham's on. And so, there could well be Egyptian background and sure is Osiris material, but one thing that bothers me a bit about both Acharya and Harpur and the people he is depending on, is that they have so many plausible parallels, but that's about it, I mean the names are kind of like Jesus, et cetera that in so many similar myths or details about myths, that I begin to wonder well, are you really just saying everything is a reference to this, I mean that the Christian myth drew on everybody else's myth, its almost like an embarrassment of riches, there's so much of it, it almost cancels itself out in some way.

Steve Gibson: Yeah, that's an interesting point. And as you mentioned that, that the Sacrament, the Eucharist if you will, kind of becomes part of that argument as well, where he goes back to, well to Horus I believe on that, would that be correct?

Dr. Robert Price: Well its not in loose terms what I am talking about the both sides of my mouth, but the idea of a Sacred Meal, that is one of the things that I find pretty convincing, that there were Sacred Meals of Mithras, Dionysus and Osiris and if you read in it that it sometimes represented the body and

blood of the God and there, I think that, yeah that must be the origin of a Christian Eucharist, you just cannot, from everything we know about variegated Judaism, there is just no way Jews would be talking even symbolically about eating human flesh and drinking blood. And then that has to be a Myster religion borrowing, but there things that Harpur appeals to, for instance that when the sun crosses the, I forget all the stuff the ecliptic or the axis or something rather, it's attended by two heavenly bodies, which are called thieves in the mythology, because they -- so is this really likely to be the origin of Jesus crucified between two of these, I suppose its possible, but some of it, strikes me as so far flung that almost anything can mean anything that could be right, but I'd rather stick with things that are a little closer to home and a little more definite, it may well be right, I am not saying that they are not.

Steve Gibson: Well in your point about the rich parallels symbolically behind a lot of this stuff, that's the other revealing thing I guess is just how many elements, be it the Sacred Meal, be it how many elements were not original, whereas I think we traditionally view that there is a snap, a death, a crucifixion and these things were laid out from nowhere and that's just new to a lot of us.

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah. I find myself wearied of that in some of these books, because I'm not sure that it matters even in Christian terms, whether you say that everything was totally new, it matters if you say, well wait a minute, these people have long known of dying and rising Gods which never existed, now that strikes me as highly important, but if you say, well the Christians weren't the first to have a speaking in tongues or a Sacred Meal, there I say, well what, I mean you are just talking about the forms of the religion _.

Steve Gibson: Yeah, what's your point.

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah, but this surprise you that people prayed before Christianity's (Voice Overlap) so it's a funny thing, so I try not to go -- to draw the circle too wide, but the state of the stuff that really makes you think, hold on a minute, maybe there's nothing basically distinctive about this.

Steve Gibson: Yeah. Well on this Eucharist question, how does in your estimation, the -- how does this tradition get into the Galilean counter cultural movement of the Gospels.

Dr. Robert Price: Well it had already been in popular Israelite religion, because we know from at least from Second Maccabees, one of the sources too that, that a lot of Jews during the period of Hellenization when Jude of Maccabee and his brother said, okay enough is enough, people, -- were Jews were converting to the religion of Dionysus in Palestine and we know, it seems to me its very clear that the Joseph's story and the Old Testament was already a rewrite of the Osiris story and there are many, many points of connection on that, and so it seems to me they already knew this, there was not some sort of hermetically -- no pun intended -- sealed container with Judaism here and everything else over there. The reason they were staunch Jews opposed to any influence at all is as a reaction against the main body of Jews being open to far end influences. And plus they weren't really even that far, I mean this is all a kind of a sneaky survival of the dogma that the chosen people of God had a true revealed religion and only occasionally contaminated it with its Hedonism where its clear from the Ras Shamra text and all that kind of stuff that Israel was simply one more Tenanite (ph) nation that essentially shared the same religion with a few different names. And so Christianity comes out of that, it didn't really even have to borrow a lot of this paganism; it was all just in the atmosphere and always had been.

Steve Gibson: Yeah. Now, when do we first see this blood sack -- with Mark?

Dr. Robert Price: Well, depending on how you date things. You have a Last Supper scene in First Corinthians and I think William O. Walker and Winsom and Rowen others arrived that it probably was

not originally part of First Corinthians, but it was. That's a bit earlier, it's a synoptic type Last Supper scene but ...

Steve Gibson: But its not as literalistic is it? Or I should say, its not, as narrative as the Mark end version?

Dr. Robert Price: Well it is. It just not very long, but what there's of it, sounds very much the same. On the night he was handed over, Jesus took the bread and said, this and took the cup and said that and it does sound so close to it that it seems to be another version of it, is it now most scholars would have looked at it, think that Marks' is the original, but I think he made a case of it, First Corinthians was, but then again it could – one could have been assimilated with the other and manuscripts four hours, but its not even clear to me that First Corinthians is earlier than Mark, its I think all the pulling of pistols really just go back to him in name, I think there, they and the Gospels are both late, first, early, second century products, so it may have been borrowed from the Gospel's and in turn placed in the First Corinthians.

Steve Gibson: Yeah which is kind of Doherty's take I believe.

Dr. Robert Price: I forget what he says on that, Hayer Macabee is real interesting on it, he said that, okay it originated with Paul, Paul wrote this, Paul said it, but what does he say, I received from the Lord what I passed on to you, he say, -- which seems to mean he got it as a revelation, not as some report from people who were there, so that's interesting. So, I mean there's so many good possibilities, here they did, that's why I think responsible historian cannot just pick a hobby horse and say, well this is it, and you certainly cannot do what the apologist do and say, yeah really all of that means absolutely nothing, it's the same way you learned it in Sunday school.

Steve Gibson: Yeah, fair enough. One of the questions that I have, and again I'm so ignorant on all this, its truly is all new to me, and we can talk about how that evolves, someone having grown up in a church for years and not even having really the corporate line very straight for that matter, just plain ignorance, but we'll come back to that, but the Davadic thrown question is, one that is unclear to me, seems pretty clear in the Old Testament that the Messiah has to be of Davadic genealogy, is that true?

Dr. Robert Price: I am not sure there really is a Messiah concept in the Old Testament. Bruno Bauer said, there was really a Christian creation and I am almost willing to agree with that, because virtually every supposed Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament not only has nothing to do with Jesus, but doesn't even seem originally to be envisioning a future king, things like unto us a son is given and child was born, the government should be on his shoulders and all that stuff. It seems to be -- there seem to be birth oracles or influngment oracles for a new heir to the throne, who has just been born or when the king died and his son takes the throne for the first time, its hard to tell which, but Psalm 2 is another one, I will tell if the decree of Yahweh said to me, you are my son, this day I have begotten you, ask of me and I will give you the ends of the earth as your possession, you shall smash them with a rod of iron, (ph) all that stuff was talking about their own contemporary kings of Judas, it was only once they had no autonomy anymore after the Babylon, as of the Babylonian exile, that people began to reinterpret all these things, as references to a coming king. And so, I am not, I think maybe the only thing you could say was a genuine Messianic prophecy might be the stuff in Ezekiel about how God will sent David his servant, but that's a little ambiguous and in Haggai and Zechariah where they appear to think that Zerubbabel, the Jewish governor under Persia is going to overthrow the Persian empire, those might be the only two genuine Messianic prophesies and the latter was obviously a misfire, but its true that in Jesus day, the dominant rabbinic view was that the Messiah had to be Davadic,

Dr. Robert Price: but one more thing -- and I'll shut up with this, there was also a view that there might be either with them or instead of them a Levitical Messiah, priestly one, which seems to have

arisen as propaganda for the Hasmonean Kings, Judah Maccabee and the successors, because they were priests not kings and so suddenly you start reading in the Testament of Levi that God is going to send to two anointed ones, etcetera. So, that was part of the furniture (ph) of Messianic expectation, but not all Jews believed it and I am not sure it really is a central Old Testament notion.

Steve Gibson: Well, that's no small thing you're describing here, that in essence, you're questioning whether or not there was a Messianic... I am looking -- I happened to be looking at 2 Samuel 7:12, and when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, which is interesting. I will set up thy seed after thee, which is supposed to, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom, its supposed to refer to David, am I totally wet on that.

Dr. Robert Price: He is -- what is it, Nathan or Gan I forget which one of them is talking to David and says that God is like promising him a continuing dynasty, and your sons will be sons to me and I'll be a father to them, and if they sin, I will chastise them for it but I won't abandon them as I did the household of Saul and he said that what kind of house could you build for me, but I'll build you a royal house and you'll never lack a man to sit on the throne.

Steve Gibson: And so those looking for a Davadic tie and later could look to that?

Dr. Robert Price: Oh definitely, because the notion of being -- like in Northern kingdom Israel, they didn't have any dynastic thing like that, one dynasty succeeded another and it didn't matter, they were done with the house of David, but in the South, in Judah, you could only be a legitimate king if you were from David or could get people to think you were, so they had the fiction or the reality, I don't know of all Davadic descendants on the throne, so if the monarchy was out of business and would one day pick up again, whoever did it would have to be descended from David.

Steve Gibson: Okay.

Dr. Robert Price: Most people thought anyway.

Steve Gibson: Yeah and this helps me explain a little bit, some of the confusion in the Synoptic Gospels about the -- if you will the genealogical problem.

Dr. Robert Price: Yup, right that's the whole reason I think. Its interesting if you notice Jesus ties the scribes in knots, He says in Mark 10 I think it is, why could scribe say that the Messiah is David's son. How could he be his son, because David wrote Psalm wrote 1:10 of course he didn't, they thought he did and it says, The Lord said to my Lord sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool Now how could David call -- I mean this must be by David and about the Messiah, how could David call the Messiah my Lord if he was his son? I don't care what dignity he has to the king, and this seems to convince somebody, but its sure implies that whoever said this didn't think the Messiah had to be Davadic. So, if Christians originated it, you've somebody saying, all right we know Jesus wasn't descended from David but let's make the best of it. What do you know the Messiah needn't be Davadic, in fact couldn't be Davadic, so it's all right, that Jesus was from whatever.

Now, but that didn't convince a lot of people. I said look that's merely clever, we don't buy it and so Christians tend to say, well all right he was descended from David, who didn't have any idea who his ancestors were, but he must have been. So how would we connect the dots? Just like modern genealogists do, they're not trying to fake anybody out, they just have assumptions, okay I got this guy and I got this guy, what's the most probable linkage and they came up with different versions of it, just on the assumptions, he must have been Davadic, what a mess.

Steve Gibson: Interesting and we're talking with Dr. Robert Price about New Testament theology here and something about which I have to admit tremendous ignorance, but I am in the process of trying to correct that. One of the things that I've read about is, is this Marcian character, tell me about him.

Dr. Robert Price: He was apparently a ship-builder and a rich guy from Sinope and Pontis, oddly the same town that Diogenes, the Cynic founder was from, and he thought a kind of Christianity that succeeded and spread like wild fire all over the Roman empire. He was active somewhere between about 100 and 140 and he believed that Jesus had come as the son of, hitherto unknown God or the father, not the creator God of Judaism and that he appeared among Jews to invite them to abandon the creator and law giver and to believe in the loving father who would not judge anybody for their sins. But one would be right just in gratitude toward him, and he picked 12 disciples, but as Mark depicts there are other idiots who couldn't keep it straight and so they didn't understand the different God, thought Jesus' father was the Old Testament God and confused Judaism and this whole new thing Christianity. Well once Jesus died and rose from the dead, He saw where this is going, so he said look I need a new apostle who I can just teach the straight stuff to on the spot and he picked Paul. So Paul becomes the only legitimate apostle and Marcion read the Pauline letters as talking about the God of this age, the creator and then the father of Jesus Christ and so he taught this -- he taught a lot of other stuff but he apparently didn't really have anything against Judaism, he just believed that it wasn't Christianity. He thought that Jewish scriptures were true and that there was such a God and he was more or less righteous and he would send the Messiah for his people in Israel, but we're not Israelites, that's none of our business. Jesus isn't the Jewish Messiah, He is the representative of the unknown father. So we got a new religion here and let's not try to exploit the old scriptures of Judaism. What we need is a Christian scripture instead. So he says, let's take the ten Pauline epistles, they hadn't written first and second Timothy and Titus yet. Their anti-Marcionite reactions to them and let's take this gospel, the gospel of the Lord which seems to be an earlier version of Lincoln Schroeder (ph) -- and this will be of the Christian's scripture and they call it the apostolicon, the book of the apostle, Paul, being made writer.

Now this, as I say was fabulously successful even though you had to renounce sex to join, everybody had to be celibate and so this was so popular. The bishops of emerging Catholicism said, wait a minute, we're going to keep the Old Testament and interpret as a Christian text as we've always done, but this isn't a bad idea to have explicitly Christian scripture but...

Steve Gibson: Yeah, those pulling books together thing kind of makes some sense.

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah, and what they had to do is they said well, if you can't beat this guy, you might as well try to corrupt him so let's add some material to the Pauline epistles, the Paul was a heretic, let's try to make him look less like one. Let's write up some new ones that will push Paul, spin Paul in our direction, and let's pad out this gospel, and that's where we get Luke, and let's add a sequel to it, that will show that Paul is not the only true apostle but Peter at least is just as good, And so you lined up by having Marcion virtually invent the idea of a New Testament and he created the basis of it that the Catholic church had to use, even though they despised him and eventually Marcionism is stamped out by Constantine though it survived bit longer outside the empire.

Steve Gibson: Now, that sounds almost a little bit cynical the way that that plays out, that there was outright fabrication of additional material to booster an anti-Marcion religion.

Dr. Robert Price: It does and the agents weren't above pious fraud but on the other hand, I want to open the door up wide enough to say that they seemed to -- like the four evangelists, seemed to understand that what they were dealing with was sacred more and if they needed to amend it, then that was the thing to do, they didn't think they were hoaxing you by telling you Jesus did some thing, that He didn't actually do. They said well these stories teach what we are to do and eventually this needs to be

amended so let's update the text. So I am not sure that's not what the Catholics were doing, they said well here are these text, they do have good stuff in them but let's eliminate the heresy and pad it out a bit. Did they even care whether Paul had actually written this or that or whether Luke had have written it. I doubt if that even mattered, they were probably beyond that and just said, here are authoritative documents that we can adapt.

Steve Gibson: You know and that's where this whole thing just becomes fascinating to me because that -- what you've just said is absolutely earth shattering to a lot of people, that this document that was supposed to be, or is supposed to be and its believed by so many people, and that's part of my whole epistemology, a fascination with epistemology is, we believe this inerrant literal word of God. So that what you just said is just earth shattering, is it not?

Dr. Robert Price: Well, yeah it does force a paradigm shift, but if its true, it sort of gets the Bible writers off the hook, it shows its not a question of hoax or history as Apologists like to say.

Steve Gibson: Right.

Dr. Robert Price: When Mark has Jesus say, no you can't get divorced, and Matthew uses that, but rewrites it, you can't get divorced except for Pornea, whatever that means.

Steve Gibson: Right.

Dr. Robert Price: He's not -- I can't imagine Matthew is sitting there thinking, I think I'm going to just fabricate this and pull a wool over the dope's eyes and make him think Jesus said something we didn't (Laughter), it seems to me obvious, he is saying, here is the charter we try to live by, but this is excessive, I'd better accommodate the law to the hardness of their hearts and he thought here's the law, and it needs to be amended. I don't think it occurred to him that he is like one of these Mormon documents specialist, forging letters from Joseph Smith, like this character they arrested some years ago. I don't think that's going on there, they're saying here are our authoritative text, they need to be amended from time to time. Well that shows you, you can accommodate this kind of critical observation without saying, oh they are evil, the Bible is phony, you just have to realize there's a bigger picture, you don't have a grasp on how the agents viewed this stuff. Though in fact, the fundamentalist still view it the same way. They also believe it all really happened, but that's not their real interest in it, they want to live according to its dictates, its like a written constitution which is why it never really bothers them that there are pure narrative contradictions, that the voice from heaven, as the Baptism say, You are my son or this is my son. They don't really care about that, they're just concerned that it says, Jesus is the Son of God" and both do say that, so they've a textbook here and if somebody points it out, because there's a contradiction, they'll come up with some crazy harmonization and can't they see its crazy, well they don't care, that's not why they're interested in the Bible. So in a sense their instinct is sound, they just have a misplaced and misunderstood way of dealing with the problem.

Steve Gibson: Yeah and I guess that the interesting question in the end of all this is, what does it all matter? And you've probably read Sam Harris's book 'The End of Faith'?

Dr. Robert Price: No I haven't, I am ashamed to say.

Steve Gibson: Okay, that's okay, believe me, I understand there's a lot going on in the world. The point I think of 'The End of faith' is, that there can be harm taken, when we take action based upon literalist interpretations of these sacred text and he certainly ties that into terrorism and many other atrocities committed by Christianity over the years, even up through anti-Semitic elements of the underpinnings of

the holocaust and any number of activities. So, I guess, and I don't even know that this is a question so much as, what is the harm, is there any harm in taking this literalistic view of the Bible?

Dr. Robert Price: I think the only reason people do it is that they want a guarantee of going to heaven when they die and they want an answer book for problems they can't quite figure out or think they can't. Otherwise, would it really matter to them if there's a story of a guy walking on water or something that – does that help them in anyway, I think they just feel stuck with the whole thing because they want to be able to say, yes, I know there's a heaven and I am going there because there was a savior that gave me passage to it...and I can find out what to do by looking at this and that passage. It's a kind of a false piece they have because the Bible is so ambiguous on many ethical points, like abortion, I tend to agree with them, I think abortion is at least second-degree murder, I'm not a good card carrying liberal on some points I must read.

Steve Gibson: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Robert Price: But I don't think you can get that out of the Bible. They will say, yeah, but abortion is murder, I'd say, I find that convincing, but I must admit its an inference, it doesn't actually address abortion in the Bible and so they're really doing the kind of ethical inference, they don't want to do, they just hide it from themselves and that's the essence of dogmatism. I don't need to listen to you, because my passion says the Bible says this. So it is very dangerous unfortunately.

Steve Gibson: Well and of course, certainly others argue that be it AIDS in Africa, and the Catholic position on birth control or even population decimation issues. I think in one of his books, I don't want to put words in his mouth, but I think Bishops' Spong talks about the moral choice of taking abortion out of the -- off the table if you will, so...

Dr. Robert Price: Well a lot of his stuff, like the opposition to birth control as far as I know, that comes into Roman Catholic ethics only through Aquinas who got it from Aristotle's single use doctrine, that every organ has but a single approved use and so you can't get around that of the genitalia there for reproduction period, there's nothing in the Bible about this, and Roman Catholics don't claim there is, as far as I know. So they just got old, true or false I don't know, but very old philosophy, that's one reason why I think they get a raw deal when people say, oh the Catholics are trying to legislate their theology, it's not their theologies Its inheritive piece of philosophy from Aristotle that might or might not be true, but it has nothing to do with Catholic theology.

Steve Gibson: You know and what show would we complete without talking about sex of course. One of the questions I asked Bishop's Spong is, certainly through the years, there has been a real anti-sexuality under current in Christianity, is that a fair statement?

Dr. Robert Price: Oh yeah, yeah.

Steve Gibson: And where does that come from was my question?

Dr. Robert Price: Well, way back in the first or second century there's this movement called Encratism from Encrataos (ph), to have self-control, but it tended to be used to mean, celibacy, chastity and so on even within marriage, and there were several groups, one called the Encratites with a capital E but also the Marcianites and most Gnostics and others believe that the original sin was sex, because there should have been just the one Adam and as an afterthought God created Eve, but as a companion to the man, but didn't want them to reproduce and in fact ,this is a whole can of worms, but I think that we're right about the Myth in Genesis, I think it does imply that. And that their sin is to gain the carnal knowledge to multiply and propagate and so, God takes away immortality, if the races to be immortally, individuals

cannot be. Well, the division of the primal man into the whole human race introduced sex, and it was the occasion of all the class differences and oppression and crime and all of that, and so they said the only way to be safe is to get ourselves back to the garden. In Baptism, we overcome all these differences and become one in Christ, the second Adam and that means no distinctions among us, but also no sex, distinctions come from sex role differences. So we're not going to have that. Everybody will be celebrant brothers and sisters. This was so popular, they couldn't stamp it out and finally Saint Augustine and others introduced a kind of compromise measure, they said, you guys are right, that is the will of God, and if we all swore off of sex right now and there's no future of the human race, that will be all right, we want Christ to come anyway. But in fact, let's face it, most people just can't quiet deal with that. So the elite in the monasteries and the convents and in the priesthood will be celibate.

But the poor slobs, the pew potatoes, as I like to say, they'll have to let them indulge in sex as a necessary evil, which is why all these centuries later, Pope John Paul II could say, it's not only adultery if a man looks at another's wife with lust, if he looks at his own wife with lust, it's adultery.

Now where the hell does he get out...It's like the Orwellian anti-sex league?

Steve Gibson: That is fascinating.

Dr. Robert Price: I think he gets it right out of this ancient Encratite doctrine.

Steve Gibson: And it seems like Bishops Spong or someone else in one of his books has argued that, adultery is essentially a property crime in the Old Testament?

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah, that's certainly correct and the only time premarital sex is mentioned, it's even more clearly a property crime. It says, if a guy seduces a virgin, he has to marry her, but if he's such a skunk, her dad can in good conscious hand her over to him. He's got to pay the bride price because the dad is now stuck with useless goods. You'll never be able to marry or opt anybody else and he's got to feed her, so he damn well better get the bride price from the scoundrel, it's nothing but a property issue. In fact, it's not clear that there even is a Biblical sex ethic.

Steve Gibson: Well, certainly in the Old Testament, my goodness I mean, from concubines to whatever certainly...

Dr. Robert Price: Do they ever criticize prostitution, only if the prostitute is a married woman committing adultery.

Steve Gibson: Right.

Dr. Robert Price: So you're right, they're just -- they've certain things like, they didn't go for homosexuality or bestiality but even there, those were abominations, they were ceremonial category violations, not moral in the first instance. In the same way, we would say that somebody is having sex with an animal is just crazy. They are not so much of moral, its just nuts.

Steve Gibson: Define an abomination for me.

Dr. Robert Price: It comes from the word tab-el , (ph) which I'm probably mispronouncing, which means confusion or mixing. So they believed if you've violated the categories of God's creation that, in this case sexually, but there were many other ways, that was blasphemy, and they said you couldn't -- that's why he couldn't eat pork. Mammals that could be eaten had cloven hooves and chewed with cud,

well Porky and Petunia have the hooves, but they don't chew the cud. So they don't fit the category so they are off limits.

Steve Gibson: Very interesting. Well Dr. Robert Price, do you --are we up against time, do you have five more minutes?

Dr. Robert Price: Oh sure.

Steve Gibson: You were just too kind. I could just keep learning from you all day in my ignorance here, but I do, I wanted to ask you about C.S. Lewis because I also was thumbing *Mere Christianity* recently, going back through -- what do you think of Lewis' theology?

Dr. Robert Price: I appreciate his love for the past, which I suspect this Christianity is a function of murky medievalism, I like that a lot and I go to the Episcopal church because I like it, but I find less and less of -- he says to be cogent anymore. It seems to me, it's all based on fallacious logic and just cheap debating points and cleverness. I just find he his circular he indulges in special pleading and I think he -- I hope he was better when he wasn't talking theology, but when he was, it just seemed shoddy to me.

Steve Gibson: Interesting...

Dr. Robert Price: And I want -- I like this guy, I mean the first religious book I've ever read was one of his, and I enjoyed reading and I just keep thinking, jeez that's doesn't wash.

Steve Gibson: You know, and again from my viewpoint, what do I know, but I went through that with my highlighter and just found there were points passed, which one assumption's built on another that I just couldn't buy.

Dr. Robert Price: Or like he'll say, well how is it that, the son could be, eternally the son of the father and yet there was never a time when the son didn't exist. Oh well that's so odd. Just imagine a table with a book on it, doesn't that imply somebody put the book on it, but imagine that the table and the book have been there for all eternity. So the one is dependent upon the other, but it's always been that way. Now that doesn't help, that just creates the same conundrum...

Steve Gibson: Yeah.

Dr. Robert Price: And there's all kinds of, sort of clever but phony arguments like that.

Steve Gibson: Yeah yet I find him championed as kind of the modern popular apologist rational approach to understanding this stuff.

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah, here's the apostle to the intellectuals.

Steve Gibson: Yeah.

Dr. Robert Price: That's very sad, worse than him is G.K. Chesterton who's just a windbag and it's really sad, they are fun to read but they got nothing to say.

Steve Gibson: Yeah, interesting. I think my final topic and again I appreciate your time and won't get too far into this, but I am curious about the Jesus seminar? You were a fellow of the Jesus seminar, correct?

(01:05:02)

How long have you done that? Tell us and maybe give us the thumbnail history for those who don't know what the seminar is about?

Dr. Robert Price: In 1982, Robert Funk, may he rest in peace, and John Dominic Crossan started the thing up and their method was to do what text critics do with the Bible, meet to discuss all the different manuscript readings and then to rate them as certainly authentic, brightly authentic, probably not authentic and no way like the woman taking an adultery, no not part of John. Well, nobody has the trouble with them doing this. I said, supposed that we just do as the starting and I said, look at the gospels and what -- we know they said, I mean part of the text, but did Jesus really say and do this stuff and so we've got the four colors; Red, yeah certainly he did, Pink, it's likely, Gray - probably not possible though, and Black - no way. Lets discuss every gospel saying and every gospel story and even thrown in Thomas and so on and then debate and vote and so they did and the results with the explanations are in these two books: 'The Acts of Jesus' and 'The Five Gospels'.

Well, why did they want to do this, the results were not that exceptional and they knew that, and they said, Biblical Scholarship has known for a long time, but it isn't the way you hear it in church, why don't more people know this? Well, obviously people are afraid for their pay checks and their pastors who heard it in seminary are not going to tell it from the pulpit. Lets make it public, so people will know, and then of course and that was their point but their critics said well, they are just publicity hounds as if anybody would have any reason to do that and so they completed that work, I joined them in about 1994, I think it was, and so they finished that and they've been doing similar things of Paul's Epistles in the book of Acts, but now they've really done what they used to claim they wouldn't do, but their critics said they were doing, trying to reinvent Christianity for the new millennium, and that's when Karen Armstrong and Bishops Spong and others got in on it. I don't happen to like that part of it, I tend to think they're just reinventing the bumpy unitarian wheel and they're still kind of taking things literally and just saying, well what's left that we can believe.

Steve Gibson: Yes.

Dr. Robert Price: But they're still doing good historical work too, and they've just started a new thing, where they're saying, all that stuff Jesus didn't say, who did and why? Can we reconstruct the history of the tradition and how, what it tells us of early Christianity and it's evolution.

Steve Gibson: And the group also addresses the physical resurrection at some point in 95, is that?

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah that was a lot of fun, we voted, Gerd Luedemann insisted we vote on whether Jesus rotted because Crossan and others wanted to hide behind euphemisms, they he rose in some sense and so we did vote on that and overwhelmingly people said, yeah he died and rotted but then the next morning Crossan in one of his damage control measures, [said] "but that doesn't mean that he didn't also rise from the dead in some pickwickian sense". So there was a real -- there were pickets outside of that one...

Steve Gibson: Wow!

Dr. Robert Price: That was a lot of fun and very revealing I thought.

Steve Gibson: So, fair to say though that this group does not believe in a physical resurrection then, that's the conclusion out of that deal.

Dr. Robert Price: Right, yeah so they would point out -- a number of them, that that's not the only view of resurrection you have in the New Testament, First Corinthians 15 has some more Gnosticizing (ph) kind of a thing where he rose in a, some sort of transformative sense that wouldn't even have guaranteed an empty tomb and then they do have a point there it seems to me, it's not clear that was the only Christian view of it at the beginning.

Steve Gibson: Well, and I think that's what's been interesting to your point to bring at full circle about Doherty and about Harpur and is that, we can find, as he uses the term an eternal truth or a more significant meaning, perhaps even more significant meaning I should say in all of this, if at the same time give up on some of those pieces of it.

Dr. Robert Price: Yes, I think Harpur is a little too rough on traditional Christians though. To me it's not clear what he thinks the abiding message is, just something that the ancients knew and he seems to think as some of it was divine power within, but every fundamentalist believes that too.

Steve Gibson: Right, well I guess that's -- yeah...

Dr. Robert Price: I think he's a little -- he's sort of killing a mouse with an elephant gun. Just I mean, it really bothers him that these people are literalists, not that they have no spiritual sustenance.

Steve Gibson: Right, right. Well, and I guess that's just what--when I first spoke with Spong, to show again my ignorance, we were talking about what is true and what isn't, and he said you got to be really careful to separate mythological truth from historical truth. And I think that that's a valid point, that a lot -- again on the atheist side of things...and some of the people that get upset with me -- I think miss, is that it doesn't mean just because it's not historical, that there is no truth or value in it.

Dr. Robert Price: And just like at Young and Joseph Campbell, these guys didn't resort to super naturalism, but they had a psychological theory that makes a lot of sense to me that explains, why myth and ritual are nourishing. I cannot believe the whole human race throughout its history, has just been tricked into mummery that nobody ever got anything good and noble and wholesome from this. It's obvious they did. And then so you just have to ask, what did it, was it the base of which -- was it sadly based on a dilution, I feel good if somebody tells me, I've been given a million bucks (Laughter) but I'd like to have it or is there some kind of healing thing with certain stories that resonate with the collective unconscious, I think, yeah there is, that doesn't mean there are spooks in the world or anything.

Steve Gibson: Yeah, and I guess the flip side as you describe that is, I still look at the violence around the world very often centered on religion.

Dr. Robert Price: If these guys can't be Stalin and Hitler, it's just absurd to blame religion, it's obviously -- people are going to -- religion aids and abets lot of people that are nuts and I suspect Iran and these guys wouldn't be on the war path if it weren't for religion, but people will use anything to kill as many people as they can.

Steve Gibson: Well, and it's back to, even Hitler though. Is not Anti-Semitic underpinnings of these belief systems, pretty clearly involved in that whole deal?

Dr. Robert Price: Yes, but I'm not sure that is -- that's proof tested in the Bible, but I think that that's been made too much of, to me it's not even clear that they are interpreting this thing right in Matthew...

Steve Gibson: Oh, yeah, that makes sense.

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah, but there is some Anti-Semitism in the Bible, but I don't know that that would have created Nazism, or even accounted for Luther's awful anti-Semitism. I think it's just that the anti-Semitism, the ancient Persians and others didn't get it from reading the Bible. There's just been anti-Semitism, some of it shows up in the Bible, but not enough of it that if you didn't, weren't already an anti-Semite, you would discover it there. I'm sure Luther and Hitler didn't and in fact even this passage, where the Jews said, pilot, (ph) all right let his blood be on us and our children, this strikes me, I've just finished up a big project of my own New testament translation, Pre-nicine New Testament. It doesn't strike me as clear at all, but they say no, you will take the guilt for his death, I mean it might suggest that, but the language is so strange, it sounds like atonement theology. Let his blood be on us if there's at least a double entendre there, that is--that they're actually saying, may we benefit from the atonement that Matthew's trying to say two things at once. And so I'm not sure, you have to be real careful or this idea of it raping the environment, is based on the book of Genesis, that is utterly nonsensical, just the Bible becomes and there's lot of stupid, barbaric stuff in the Bible, but its -- at least people make it sound like it's Mein Kampf, that's just ridiculous.

Steve Gibson: Yeah, now I'm sorry, but back on, you're talking about the narratives of Synoptic's here. Do most scholars find it plausible that things unfolded that night in front of the St. Hedrin as described?

Dr. Robert Price: I don't know what, I would say most probably think that no, there may never even have been such a meeting because with the St. Hedrin, the highest and holiest group have been having a meeting on passover eve, its highly unlikely...

Steve Gibson: Yeah.

Dr. Robert Price: and what is said doesn't fit, what little we know of their procedure and the claim that he, this guy is a blasphemer because he believes himself to be the messiah, that was no crime, other people did it, were endorsed by Rabbis and the fact that he claims to be God, he doesn't. So, what is going on there, it's like they just transferred later Christian Dogmas that got Christians into trouble to the mouth of Jesus and have him already get into trouble. So, I don't think anybody outside of fundamentalists thinks that this is really a transcript to what happened.

Steve Gibson: Yeah, interesting. I just kind of an aside there, but...

Dr. Robert Price: That's mighty important though, because they -- we would have to give up the Christ myth theory, if we could show that Jesus was knitted into the history, was contemporary as Caesar Augustus was, for instance though many of the same stories are told of him, but here we find -- well this clamp, that puts Jesus into history is probably fictitious itself. And the pilot thing, would he really have gone to such trouble to release Jesus, not from every thing we know about him, its sounds very strange. For Herod the great, would he have taken such measures to eliminate a possible rival, well he might have, but it sure matches the myth of the tyrant trying to the kill the infant savior. So, the few places where Jesus seems to be clamped on to history are exceedingly loose, and that's very significant, more so then it might seem.

Steve Gibson: Yeah, yeah. Interesting, well listen, before we leave here too Dr. Price and I so appreciate your time, tell me a little bit about what you're up to, your web site, where people can find you and that type of thing?

Dr. Robert Price: Now the web site, the product of my wife Carol's genius is, I love everybody's scrutiny of it and comments on it is: robertmprice.mindvendor.com, mind vendor is m-i-n-d-v-e-n-d-o-r. So, it's robertmprice with no dots or underscores or anything. www.robertmprice.mindvendor.com and I've just a huge bunch of Sermons, articles, stories, bibliographies and all kinds of stuff there and my

favorite thing at the moment is a book of mine that's about to come out from Prometheus called 'Reason Driven Life'.

Steve Gibson: Oh, yes.

Dr. Robert Price: Which is a like chapter-by-chapter debate with Warren's purpose driven lives.

Steve Gibson: Oh, beautiful.

Dr. Robert Price: I can't wait to get reactions on that.

Steve Gibson: I can't wait to have you get that out there. That's not one of my favorite books though, I can't even see that I made it very far, I found it so...

Dr. Robert Price: Oh, It's really awful.

Steve Gibson: (Laughter) I was going to joke that I'm just impressed you read the whole thing. (Laughter)

Dr. Robert Price: Oh! I wouldn't have mind, my mother-in-law who loves the book gave us a copy hoping it would set me and Carol straight. I read it and said, I think the right refutation of this is dedicated to my mother-in-law.

Steve Gibson: You know even the Clergy with whom I'm friends seem to just find it. Truly I haven't read it. So, I should be careful here, but I mean I have read the first few chapters, but the Clergy that I know locally here, it just certainly didn't strike them as anything, but some weird proof texting that...

Dr. Robert Price: Its just stale wormed over fundamentalism, there's nothing new in it and it just an infantile, and in fact I mentioned that to the Rector of my Church, and he kind of agreed, but then he wound up teaching it in the adult Sunday school because people love this.

Steve Gibson: In this guy, and I'm again -- he may be the greatest guy, but marketing genius, because I haven't read the book and -- but I have got three, four copies sitting here.

Dr. Robert Price: (Laughter)

Steve Gibson: You know the volume of the number of books that -- I can't think of a Church that I know locally that hasn't done this thing.

Dr. Robert Price: That's amazing. I'm just hoping that we -- I've had students say, Dr. Price, you've got to read this book, I just hope that people, that are challenged or even the Purpose Driven Life will say, well I'll make a deal.

Steve Gibson: Yeah.

Dr. Robert Price: I will --if you'll read the Reason Driven Life. I am just hoping that will happen.

Steve Gibson: Absolutely and you know that's our whole mantra here is, one of my most important statements is, availing ourselves to both sides of opinion.

Dr. Robert Price: Yeah.

Steve Gibson: And it's great to have these books. It's great to have the -- I read Lee Strobel's 'Case for Christ' and I have, but have not yet read the refutation of that and forgive me, who's that buyer?

Dr. Robert Price: Earl Doherty wrote a great one.

Steve Gibson: Yes, that's the one, yes. So, I think it's great to have these two sides of the story counterparts out there for exactly what you described, which is our ability to be able to say, hey that's great, I'll make you a deal, read the other one. Good for you, I can't wait to read that one, is that due out?

Dr. Robert Price: I think September.

Steve Gibson: Okay, excellent.

Dr. Robert Price: Its already on Amazon along with my Pre-nicene New Testament so that's, that's probably also going to come out in the fall from Signature books. I'm working on one now, about the popular eschatology and the Tim LeHaye (ph) books left behind and all that stuff, to be called the paperback Apocalypse , I think they are completely off the track too, so there's no chance of (Inaudible)

Steve Gibson: Well, good for you. I got to say, I made it through like eight or nine of those before I felt like I was being milked.

Dr. Robert Price: (Laughter)

Steve Gibson: Yes, well Dr. Robert Price, thank you so much for your time today and we just really appreciate learning from you.

Dr. Robert Price: Okay thank you, for having me on.

Steve Gibson: Oh, you bet. Well that wraps up our 'Back to the Bible' episode with such an excellent teacher Dr. Robert Price. We certainly appreciate his assistance and time with that interview. Please do join us again in a couple of weeks, we'll be back to talk about 9/11 conspiracy theories among a large folder of news, notes and commentary from both myself and from Tim Bennett who will join us. In the meantime, have a great week or two and we'll see you again next time on the road to Truth-Driven Thinking.