

Who was Jesus of Nazareth?

**2. What Can Be Discerned
About Jesus From His
Words Concerning Issues
Other Than The Kingdom
and Himself**

Outline of Presentation (1)

1. What Can Be Discerned from the Knowledge of that Jesus Shows of the Ordinary Affairs of Life

1.1. Texts Indicating Limited Knowledge

1.1.1. During the Public Ministry

1.1.2. As a Boy

1.2. Texts Indicating Extraordinary or Superhuman Knowledge

1.2.1. Denials of Limitations

1.2.2. Capability of Reading Minds

1.2.3. Knowledge at a Distance

Outline of Presentation (2)

2. What Can Be Discerned from the General Knowledge that Jesus Shows of Religious Matters

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2.1.1. Instances Where a Citation Involves a Mistake

2.1.2. Instances Where a Citation Reflects Imprecise Ideas

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2.3.1. Foreknowledge of His Own Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection

2.3.2. Foreknowledge of the Destruction of Jerusalem and its Sanctuary

2.3.3. Foreknowledge of the Parousia

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1.1 Texts Showing a Limited Knowledge of the *Ordinary Affairs of Life*

1.1.1. During His Public Ministry

Mark 5:30-33: Woman touches Jesus in a crowd and is healed. Jesus asks who touched him.

Luke 8:45-47: similar

Matt 9:22: leaves out question

1.1.2. As a Boy

Luke 2:46: age 12, Jesus asking questions

Luke 2:52: “growing in wisdom. . .”

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1.2. Texts Showing an Extraordinary / Superhuman Knowledge of the *Ordinary Affairs of Life*

1.2.1. Denial of Limitations: Later

Gospels (esp. John) suppress suggestion
Jesus had to gain ordinary knowledge:

John 6:5. Jesus asks Philip where bread can
be found (but says Jesus only testing
Philip)

John 6:64: Jesus chose some disciplines of
poor quality (but knew from the
beginning)

John 6:71, 13:11: Jesus knew Judas
Iscaiot's would betray him

1.2. Texts Showing an Extraordinary / Superhuman Knowledge of the *Ordinary Affairs of Life*

1.2.1. Denial of Limitations

In general, there is a Johannine tendency to picture Jesus without human weakness or dependence

1.2.2. Capability of Reading Minds:

- Mark 2:6-8 and par.
- Mark 9:33-35 and Luke 9:46-47
- John 2:24-25; 16:19 and 30

Could be:

- keen perception of human nature
- superhuman knowledge

1.2. Text Showing an Extraordinary / Superhuman Knowledge of the *Ordinary Affairs of Life*

1.2.3. Knowledge at a Distance

John 1:48-49: knew what Nathanael was
doing under fig tree

Mark 11:2 and par; John 12:14: tells
disciples about the colt they will find
in nearby village

1.2. Text Showing an Extraordinary / Superhuman Knowledge of the *Ordinary Affairs of Life*

1.2.3. Knowledge at a Distance

Mark 14:13-14; Luke 22:10-11: tells disciples going out to make Passover preparation that they will meet man with water jar (Note unremarkable version in Matt 26:18)

Matt 17:24-27: tells Peter to go to Lake of Galilee; first fish he catches will have a shekel in its mouth

Summary: 1. Knowledge of the *Ordinary Affairs of Life*

“there is an ancient Gospel tradition that accepts without noticeable difficulty that Jesus had normally limited knowledge of the ordinary affairs of life; most likely the suppression of this by Matt. and John is a secondary theological modification. On the other hand, probably as far back as one can trace the tradition, Jesus was presented as a man with more than ordinary knowledge and perception about others.”

- Father Brown

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2. Jesus' Knowledge of Religious Matters

“In the use of the Scriptures and of theological concepts did Jesus manifest a knowledge far beyond that of his time, so that one would be forced to posit a supernatural sources for this knowledge?”

2.1. Jesus' Knowledge of Scripture

2.1.1. Citations Involves a Mistake

Mark 2:26: Abiathar high priest, not Ahimelech in 1 Sam 21:2-7

Matt 23:35: Zechariah son of Berachiah confused with Zechariah son of Jehoiada (2 Chron 24:20-22)

2.1.2. Citation reflects imprecise ideas of his time

Mark 12:36 and par. Jesus attributes Ps. 110 to David

Matt 12:39-41 & 16:4; Luke 11:29-32: Jesus refers to Book of Jonah as if historical (now felt to be parable)

2.1. Jesus' Knowledge of Scripture

2.1.3. Marginal "Hermeneutics" (= Interpretation of Scriptures)

John 10:33-36: refutes accusation of making himself God with Ps 82:6 (speaks of judges as "gods")

Mark 12:36: insists "my Lord" in "The Lord [=God] said to my Lord" refers to *the Messiah* (but there was no such expectation when Ps. was written)

2.1. Jesus' Knowledge of Scripture

2.1.4. There is a general admiration for the authority and depth of Jesus' teaching:

- Matt 7:29
- Matt 22:16
- John 7:15

Summary:

2.1. Jesus' Knowledge of Scripture

“. . . the overall impact of . . . Jesus' use of the Scriptures would not lead one to think of him as more than a very distinguished teacher of his times.”

- Father Brown

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2.2. Jesus' Use of Contemporary Religious Concepts

2.2.1. Demon Possession

- “sometimes in relation to demon possession both the evangelists and Jesus are reflecting the inexact medico-religious understanding of their times.”
- Mark 9:17-18: symptoms of epilepsy
 - Mark 5:4: dangerous insanity
 - Matt 12:43-45; Luke 11:24-26: reflects primitive idea of demons looking for a place to dwell

2.2. Jesus' Use of Contemporary Religious Concepts

2.2.2. Afterlife

Rarely spoke of afterlife; why?

Used materialistic images in the rare instances he did speak of it

- Mark 9:43ff: enter heaven with bodily defects
- Mark 9:48; Matt 25:41, Mark 9:48, Matt 8:12, Matt 13:42, Luke 16:24:
“unquenchable fire” “ravenous worms”
“grinding teeth and weeping” “insatiable thirst”
- Luke 16:24: chasm bet. heaven/hell
- Mark:13:26, 14:62: heaven above clouds

2.2. Jesus' Use of Contemporary Religious Concepts

2.2.3. Apocalyptic (Jesus' descriptions of the end of time)

- Mark 13:24-25 and par.: sun, moon darkened; stars will fall
- Mark 13:7-8 and par.: wars, earthquakes, famine (= stereotypic descriptions from centuries old Jewish apocalyptic writings)

Summary:

2.2. Jesus' Use of Contemporary Religious Concepts

“In the three areas of demonology, the afterlife, and apocalyptic, Jesus seems to draw on the religious concepts of his time without indication of superior knowledge and without substantially correcting the concepts.”

- Father Brown

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2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

If “Jesus’ knowledge of his own future or of the future of God’s people . . . is very detailed, it might show that he was privy to God’s own knowledge; if it is less detailed, it would at least give us a clue as to what he considered his destiny.”

- Father Brown

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

General Problems:

The Gospel writers were writing after Jesus' death. Matt, Luke, John were probably written after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. It is possible they added details to clarify Jesus' words as prophecy.

If the original details in Jesus' words are vague: do the words represent an unshakable conviction about how things will turn out, or real foreknowledge?

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.1. Foreknowledge of His Own Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection

All of the Gospels attribute to Jesus detailed foreknowledge during his ministry
Yet: the disciples who supposedly heard these predictions did not foresee the crucifixion or expect the resurrection.
(see Luke 24:19-26 as typical reaction)

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2.3.1. Foreknowledge of His Own Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection

2.3.1.1. Son of Man Sayings

- Mark 8:31
- Mark 9:31
- Mark 10:33-34

(and par)

Three sayings in John the Son of Man that
must be “lifted up,” echoing Isa 52:13

- John 3:14
- John 8:28
- John 12:32-34

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.1. Foreknowledge of His Own Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection

2.3.1.1. Son of Man Sayings

Did Mark and subsequent Synoptic Gospel writers (Matt and Luke) represent traditions that had embellished the Son of Man sayings with details from the passion, and does John represent a tradition without this embellishment?

Yet: Passion details different some from the predictions

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.1. Foreknowledge of His Own Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection

2.3.1.2. Sayings about the Sign of Jonah

- Matt 12:39-40. A clear prediction of the Resurrection

But compare to version in Luke 11:29-30; 32; (echoed in Matt 12:41)

Another form in Matt 16:4 mentions the sign without explanation: was this the original form?

Did the early church communities add the two possible explanations found in Matt 12 and Luke 11?

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.1. Foreknowledge of His Own Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection

2.3.1.3. Foreknowledge of Judas' Betrayal

Present during Jesus' ministry in John 6:70-71

Present at the Last Supper in all the gospels:

- Matt 26:25 and John 13:27: Jesus knows it is Judas
- Luke 22:22: Judas not specified; but Jesus knew his plans (Luke 22:48)
- Mark 14:18-21: Judas not specified (but implied? by Mark 14:10-11)

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.1. Foreknowledge of His Own Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection

2.3.1.3. Foreknowledge of Judas' Betrayal

If this prediction is genuine, we must ask if it represents:

- a supernatural foreknowledge
- or a penetrating insight into:
 - Judas' character and/or
 - the direction events are leading

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.1. Foreknowledge of His Own Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection

SUMMARY

“In summary, it is difficult to decide about Jesus’ foreknowledge of his passion, crucifixion, and resurrection. Modern criticism would cast serious doubt on a detailed foreknowledge. Yet, we should not undervalue the general agreement of the Gospel tradition that Jesus was convinced beforehand that, although his life would be taken from him violently, God would ultimately vindicate him.”

- Father Brown

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2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.2. Foreknowledge of the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple Sanctuary

2.3.2.1. Destruction of Jerusalem:

Mark 13:2 and par. Temple will be destroyed and not one stone will be left standing.

70 AD: *Roman armies* plundered Jerusalem, *partially* destroying the temple (portions of the Herodian temple remain today: the Wailing wall)

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.2. Foreknowledge of the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple Sanctuary

2.3.2.2. Destruction of Temple Sanctuary:

I will/can destroy the sanctuary, and in three
days will build it/raise it up:

before 70 AD:

- Mark 14:57-58: I will . . . build it up

after 70 AD:

- Matt 26:60-61: I am able . . . build it up

- John 2:19-21: Destroy this sanctuary. . .
I will raise it up

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.2. Foreknowledge of the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple Sanctuary

SUMMARY

2.3.2.2. Destruction of Temple Sanctuary:

“This process of various interpretation shows that the original form of the prediction, although it manifested conviction, did not show a foreknowledge of detail that could be given by God alone.”

- Father Brown

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.2. Foreknowledge of the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple Sanctuary

SUMMARY

2.3.2.2. Destruction of Temple Sanctuary:

Use of “I” in the destruction of the temple goes beyond OT prophetic warnings about Jerusalem.

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2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.3. Foreknowledge of the Parousia (= Second Coming)

Did Jesus claim to know when it would happen, or mistakenly expect it to happen within a short time?

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.3. Foreknowledge of the Parousia (= Second Coming)

2.3.3.1. Anticipation Immediately after Jesus' Death

- John 14:3. Last Supper: Jesus will return to take his disciples with him.

Cf: I Thess 4:16-17

Passages that make sense with this interpretation:

- Mark 14:62
- Mark 14:25
- Luke 23:42-43

Other interpretations are possible.

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.3. Foreknowledge of the Parousia (= Second Coming)

2.3.3.2. Anticipation in Lifetime of Jesus' Hearers

At least one generation before Parousia supported by Jesus':

- references to church / community life
- sending disciples to Israel and beyond
- parables on growth
- commands to baptize and commemorate him in the Eucharist

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.3. Foreknowledge of the Parousia (= Second Coming)

2.3.3.2. Anticipation in Lifetime of Jesus' Hearers

- Matt 10:23 plus Mark 6:7,30: “you will not have gone through all the towns . . . before the Son of Man comes.”
- Mark 13:30 and par. “this generation will not pass away before all these things take place.” (But which things?; Mark 13 a collection of sayings)
- Mark 9:1 and Matt 16:28 “some will not taste death . . . before they see the kingdom of God come with power.”

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.3. Foreknowledge of the Parousia (= Second Coming)

2.3.3.2. Anticipation in Lifetime of Jesus' Hearers

- John 1:51: “you will see the sky opened up and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”
- John 21:22: the Beloved Disciple will remain until Jesus comes

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.3. Foreknowledge of the Parousia (= Second Coming)

2.3.3.3. Anticipation Phrased to Imply Indefinitely Delayed Parousia

2.3.3.3.1. *A Parousia Preceded by Apocalyptic Signs:*

List of portents before the Parousia gives the impression it is not coming too soon (reasoning: II Thess 2:3ff)

- Mark 13
- Matt 24-25
- Luke 21

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

2.3.3. Foreknowledge of the Parousia (= Second Coming)

2.3.3.3. Anticipation Phrased to Imply Indefinitely Delayed Parousia

2.3.3.3.2. *A Parousia the Time of Which Cannot be Foretold*

Sayings which insist the disciples cannot know when the Lord is coming

- Matt 24:42-44; Luke 12:39-40. Like a thief in the night
- Matt 24:50; Luke 12:46; Like the unexpected return of a master
- Matt 25:13: unprepared bridesmaids
- Luke 17:20-21: no observable signs
- Mark 13:32: Jesus himself did not know.

2.3. Jesus' Knowledge of the Future

SUMMARY

2.3.3. Foreknowledge of the Parousia (= Second Coming)

“ . . . one finds it difficult to believe that Jesus' own position was clear. The NT Epistles give independent evidence of the confusion that reigned in the 1st century thought about the Parousia; and such confusion could scarcely have arisen if Jesus both knew about the indefinite delay of the Parousia and expressed himself clearly on the subject.”

- Father Brown

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Summary:

Jesus' Ordinary and Religious Knowledge

“Jesus had to know all things” *Problem:*

- Signs of limitations in Jesus' knowledge are present throughout

“Jesus presented himself as just an ordinary man.” *Problems:*

- Jesus had “more than ordinary knowledge and perception about others”
- taught with authority and depth
- was convinced God would punish Jerusalem and the Temple and make him victorious

Summary:

Jesus' Ordinary and Religious Knowledge

Was Jesus then a *prophet*, one especially sent by God to challenge the Jews?

But Jesus' self-estimation went beyond OT prophets:

- Rejection of Him would cause divine action against Jerusalem and the temple
- Said "I will" / "I am able" to destroy the temple
- He is the one who will bring God's plan to completion

Reference and Source

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4.