

Jesus's Prophetic Knowledge and the Gospels

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IN 1965, at that adventitious moment when a classical dogmatic formation of the Church's critically trained exegetes could still simply be assumed, a young Raymond Brown addressed the twentieth annual convention of the Catholic Theological Society on the broad topic of Jesus's knowledge in a way and in a context that is today difficult to imagine. The survey he offered is honestly rather boring. Its interest is above all that it was in many ways the first and last study of its kind. Importantly, though he could not at the time guess that his contribution would find no echo, Brown did note that: "Dogmatic theologians, not exegetes, have led the way in the modern discussion of Jesus' human knowledge. If exegetes had begun the discussion, the orientation might have been different."¹

The lassitude of Catholic exegetical investigations into this theme certainly owes something to magisterial interventions. Pius X's condemnations in *Lamentabili* are only one of several factors that might be mentioned.² The neo-Modernist panic of the early 1960s also made Brown's effort a manifestly delicate exercise.³ More than half a century later, the air has cleared, but the knowledge of Christ, for all its importance in the Scholastic tradition, is still not a concern that shapes contemporary exegesis. One may lament the fact, but before promptly construing this as yet another index of the theological insensitivity of modern Scripture

¹ See Raymond Brown, "How Much Did Jesus Know?—A Survey of the Biblical Evidence," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (1967): 315–45.

² See especially Pope Pius X, *Lamentabili* (1907), §§32–34.

³ On this crisis, see Anthony Giambrone, "The Quest for the *Vera et Sincera de Jesus: Dei Verbum* §19 and the Historicity of the Gospels," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 13, no. 1 (2015): 88–93.

scholars (such indices are not wanting), it is only fair also to reverse the charge. Systematic theologians investigating this theme have shown themselves remarkably disinterested in probing its scriptural foundations. A thin film of parenthetical proof texts still marks the general depth of the engagement.⁴ At its worst—and I wish I were only thinking of manuals from the 1920s—biblical revelation is flagrantly overruled.⁵

Traditionally, of course, in addition to his divine knowledge, Christ was reckoned to possess three types of human knowledge: acquired,⁶ infused

⁴ Earlier stages of the discussion were much more preoccupied with the scriptural witness, however different many hermeneutical presuppositions may have been. See Kevin Madigan, “*Christus Nesciens?* Was Christ Ignorant of the Day of Judgment? Arian and Orthodox Interpretations of Mark 13:32 in the Ancient Latin West,” *Harvard Theological Review* 93 (2003): 255–56.

⁵ The precise danger is that abstract principles simply steamroll revelation. A very recent and baffling example is the *non sequitur* at the end of the following argument: “La nescience est intrinsèquement liée à la condition humaine, condition finie et limitée. À ce titre l’ignorance, comme la tristesse ou la crainte, sont le signe de la présence de l’âme dans le Christ, car elles sont le signe caractéristique de l’homme de la possession d’une âme humaine. Il est vrai que l’homme ne peut pas tout savoir, c’est pourquoi il ignore bien des choses; c’est une imperfection, mais non un mal. En revanche, l’ignorance est un mal moral quand on ignore ce que l’on devrait savoir. Or, dans le domaine moral et religieux, il ne peut y avoir dans le Christ aucune imperfection, aucune ignorance en ce concerne la fin dont il est, comme Fils et Juge, l’instrument et le principe. *L’ignorance du jour du jugement (connaissance religieuse et eschatologique du dessein de Dieu) est donc incompatible avec l’impeccabilité du Christ* [Nescience is intrinsically bound to the human condition, which is finite and limited. In this sense, ignorance, like sadness or fear, is the sign of the presence of the soul in Christ, for these things are the characteristic sign of man and of the possession of a human soul. It is true that man cannot know everything. This is why he is ignorant of many things. It is an imperfection, but not an evil. By contrast, ignorance is a moral evil when one is ignorant of what one ought to know. For in the moral and religious domain, there can be no imperfection in Christ, no ignorance in what concerns the end, of which, as Son and Judge, he is the instrument and the principle. Ignorance of the day of judgment (religious and eschatological knowledge of the plan of God) is thus incompatible with the impeccability of Christ (my translation)]” (Philippe-Marie Margelidon, “La science infuse du Christ selon saint Thomas,” *Revue thomiste* 114 [2014]: 379–416, at 411; my translation with emphasis added). This ostentatious disregard of Mark 13:32 is ultimately bound up with a version of the “apparent ignorance” argument. On the difficulty with this position, see below.

⁶ Remarkably, it seems that Thomas Aquinas was the first thirteenth-century theologian to posit experiential human knowledge in Christ. See Jean-Pierre Torrell, “Le savoir acquis du Christ selon les théologiens médiévaux,” *Revue thomiste* 101 (2001): 355–408.

or prophetic (which are overlapping but not coextensive categories),⁷ and beatific.⁸ As a rule, the arguments formulated in favor of Christ's possession of infused science follow formal logical lines such as appeal to the necessary perfection of his knowledge,⁹ its regulative role in his meritorious deeds,¹⁰ or the necessary fullness of his charismatic endowments,¹¹ ignoring the fundamental testimony of the Gospels. It is appropriate, however, and indeed imperative to ask: Do the Scriptures reveal Jesus as possessed of infused, prophetic species, and if so, in what way and in what specific connections? It is to be held *de fide*, as the First Vatican Council teaches, that Christ both performed miracles and uttered prophecies (Denzinger-Schönmetzer [DS], no. 3009). Is there anything more, or more interesting, left for the Gospels to say? The question is plainly rhetorical. If *sacra doctrina* is indeed a single science, the contributions of positive and speculative theology must here (as elsewhere) be better synthesized.

So, if exegetes had begun the discussion—or if even now we have the liberty to intervene—in which direction might the investigation go? In what follows I would like to suggest that upon inspection the evangelists attribute prophetic knowledge to Jesus less often and less fantastically, but in far more provocative and diverse ways, than is often assumed or understood in dogmatic discussion. Let me say that, although I will attempt to thread the needle and avoid some extremes as I see them, I do not discount the possibility of a maximalist construction of the Lord's hidden knowledge. His words in John 16:12 certainly leave open a tempting crack in the speculative door: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." Nevertheless, I stick to the positive evidence revealed in the Scriptures—which seems to me little preoccupied with demonstrating a plenary endowment.

Let me start with a curious irony. Leaving aside Augustine's *scientia vespertina*, the infused angelic knowledge that he detected lurking behind

⁷ A significant modern discussion of Jesus's infused knowledge appears in Jacques Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* (New York: Herder, 1969).

⁸ See most recently Simon Gaine, *Did the Savior See the Father: Christ, Salvation, and the Vision of God* (London, Bloomsbury, 2015).

⁹ See, e.g., Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] III, q. 11.

¹⁰ John of St. Thomas crafted this argument; see *Cursus theologicus*, vol. 8, q. 9, d. 11, a. 2, nos. 3–5.

¹¹ Other arguments, or variations of these arguments, also appear. For instance, the necessary expressability of Jesus's knowledge has also been emphasized by, e.g., Alexandre Durand, "La science du Christ," *La nouvelle revue théologique* 71 (1949): 497–503.

Genesis 1,¹² the category of so-called “infused science,” while it appears at first blush to be improbably medieval and abstract—hardly the way a hard-nosed exegete would chose to get the conversation rolling—it is not, in fact, an unbiblical idea. From the earliest strands of biblical prophecy right down to its final transition into apocalyptic, in the biblical tradition prophets routinely behold visionary portents, infused species, if you will. The book of Zechariah provides one of multiple examples:

Zechariah, What do you see? A lampstand all of gold with a bowl on top. . . . What do you see? A flying scroll (Zech 4:2; 5:2).

This form of imaginary apparition, mysterious as it is, while hardly exhausting the range of possible prophetic experience in Israel or the ancient Near East, nevertheless occupies an important place in both the literary construction and wider representation of prophecy for the biblical mind.

A quick glance at Jewish apocalyptic writings of the Second Temple period confirms the endurance and even expansion of this construction. The characters of this literature are consistently *seers*, men who penetrate hidden mysteries and peer far into the future. To take just one example, 1 Enoch is, from start to finish, “a holy vision from the heavens” (1:2), punctuated by phrases like “he showed me” and “I saw” (see 14:8; 18:1; 21:1; 22:1; 23:2; 24:1; 26:1; 28:1; 29:2; 30:2; 31:1; 32:1; 33:1; 34:2; 36:2; 37:1; 40:1; 41:1, 3; 43:1, 2; 44:1; 46:1; 48:1; 52:1; 53:1; 54:1; 56:1; 57:1; 59:1; 60:1; 61:1; 64:1; 66:1; 72:1; 73:1; 74:1; 76:1; 80:1; 81:1; 83:1; 85:1; 86:1; 87:1; 88:1; 89:2, 28, 51; 90:1, 13, 20, 30, 37, 40; 93:2; 103:2; 107:1; 108:4). Other examples could easily be cited.

As a rule, prophets see visions. Nevertheless (and here is the irony toward which I have been driving), despite being a legitimate biblical possibility, the reception of infused species does not provide the best lens for understanding the scriptural account of Jesus’s prophetic behavior.¹³ Jesus does, of course, report a vision of Satan’s fall (Luke 10:18), and one could perhaps imagine Jesus’s repeated language of “seeing” and “hearing” the Father in John (e.g.: 3:11, 32; 5:19) concretely on the order of ecstasy and locutions. That is hardly certain, however; and beatific knowledge is

¹² Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 11.29.

¹³ Aquinas addresses the question of whether Christ’s prophetic knowledge came though the (transient, therefore imperfect) gift of prophecy or directly through his infused science, ultimately arguing that Jesus indeed had the charismatic gift, though in a stable manner; see: *De veritate* q. 20, a. 6; *ST* II-II, q. 174, a. 5; ad 3; III, q. 7, a. 8.

the better way to understand this broad motif, in my view. In any case, John breaks the mold and Jesus is not presented as a seer according to the classic recipe. As much as texts like 1 Enoch and Daniel do marvelously illuminate Jesus's historical context, a great gap separates the Lord from the protagonists of these books.

This does not simply throw us back upon sociological categories, however, though historical-Jesus scholars have favored such an approach. Distinguishing oracular and leadership prophets is certainly a helpful move, and there is no doubt that Jesus corresponded to real social patterns and expectations set by previous prophets. The Lord was certainly judged in this light by his contemporaries in different ways. None of this is quite the analysis we are seeking, however.

The Hellenistic figure of the so-called *theios aner* is perhaps more immediately helpful (if also perhaps a complete scholarly fiction). Apollonius of Tyana, whose *bios* is so often (and so tenuously) compared to the Gospels, profiles the persona. In Philostratus's report, Apollonius's boundless, superhuman knowledge is a constant theme.

"I know every one of the barbarian languages [said Apollonius]. . . . I know them all, and have learned none." The man from Ninos was amazed, but Apollonius said, "Do not be surprised if I know all human languages: I also know [οἶδα] all that humans keep unspeaken." (1.19)¹⁴

If texts like the Infancy Gospel of Thomas (not unlike the *tertia pars* of Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* [ST]) transmit a Christ figure endowed with hypertrophic gifts of infused knowledge on this same order—the child Jesus knows the Greek letters (and their mystic meaning) without being taught, to the befuddlement of his would-be tutor (6:1–4)—we are very distant here from the presentation of the canonical Jesus.¹⁵ This para-bib-

¹⁴ Translation from the Jones Loeb edition.

¹⁵ "Pour nombreux interprètes modernes, saint Thomas surdéterminé la plénitude de la science du Christ. Certes, la perfection de sa connaissance surnaturelle des mystères révélés répond à la fin de l'Incarnation rédemptrice, mais l'entendue et le mode infus du savoir du Christ apparaissent toujours comme le résultat audacieux d'une construction complexe éloignée des évangiles [For many modern interpreters, St. Thomas overdetermined the knowledge of Christ. Admittedly, the perfection of his supernatural knowledge of the revealed mysteries of salvation corresponds to the redemptive end of the Incarnation; still, the extent and mode of Christ's knowledge always seem like the audacious result of a complex construction far distant from the Gospels]" (Margelidon, "La science infuse," 404; translation mine).

lical Christ has nevertheless enjoyed quite a career in dogmatic theology. On the other hand, there are—and theologians hasten to highlight them—repeated cases where the canonical Lord displays some penetrating insight into the thoughts of others: “Jesus knew what they were thinking” (εἰδὼς δὲ τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν; Matt 12:25).

This does, admittedly, look a bit more like what so amazed the man from Ninos and the verb *to know* lands us precisely where we wish to be. We must, all the same, be careful in evaluating such knowledge. First of all, although the gift of reading hearts is a form of prophecy of *present* realities, as both St. Paul and St. Thomas aver (1 Cor 14:24–25; *ST* II-II, q. 171 a. 3), and while it is a very real charism attested in ecclesial life, it is not always obvious that the Gospel scenes in question unambiguously reveal more than Jesus’s keen attunement to the psychology of those around him, as commentators have often observed.¹⁶ This is not simply a rationalistic lack of piety, but often sound critical judgment.¹⁷ Indeed, in some cases, taken within the narrative context (or read in synoptic parallel), Jesus’s knows what his opponents are thinking after they speak their thoughts aloud (as in Matt 12:24).¹⁸ An itemized inventory is not my objective here, but generally, if a careful exegesis of the relevant texts is undertaken, we must chasten too widespread and transparent an

¹⁶ See, e.g.: Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke*, Anchor Bible 28A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 584; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes* (London: Macmillan, 1959), 196. See also Brown, “How Much Did Jesus Know?” 319–42.

¹⁷ One may ask, for instance, whether Jesus’s perfectly apt response to the “amazement” (ἐθαύμασεν) of his Pharisee host at the fact that the Lord did not wash his hands before eating inevitably implies some sort of supernatural mindreading, or whether the host’s amazement was simply not well hidden (Luke 11:38–39; cf. Matt 15:2).

¹⁸ Luke 5:21 seems to advance this explanation in interpreting Mark 2:6 (cf. Matt 9:3), for example, since Luke drops Mark’s ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν (“in their hearts”) from the description of scribes questioning and omits the Markan phrase τῷ πνεύματι (“in his spirit”; 2:8) to qualify Jesus’s knowledge. At the same time, curiously, Luke 6:8 adds ἤδει τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς αὐτῶν (“he knew their thoughts”) to Mark 3:3. Yet, even when the text says explicitly that Jesus “knew their inner thoughts” (εἰδὼς τὸν διαλογισμόν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν) in Luke 9:47, the triggering event can hardly be imagined as Jesus eavesdropping on a telepathic argument among the disciples about who was the greatest (Luke 9:46), and the force here *may* indeed simply be that Jesus saw through their words the deeper dispositions of the disciples. On the other hand, Luke does not have Jesus openly ask his disciples what they were discussing, as Matthew and Mark both do (Matt 18:1–2; Mark 9:33–34)—a data point that could be taken in two different directions.

accounting of this phenomenon.¹⁹

That being said and despite some curious counter-indications, the motif of reading thoughts is indeed there in the Tradition and particularly present and amplified in Luke. The characteristic Lukan syntagm of οἶδα + διαλογισμός is quite suggestive (e.g. Luke, 5:22; 6:8; 9:47; cf. Luke 11:17 [εἰδὼς αὐτῶν διανοήματα]), and it may well play upon Simeon's oracle in 2:34–35 about Jesus revealing the thoughts (διαλογισμοί) of many hearts.²⁰ If some extraordinary form of knowledge beyond mere keen awareness is indeed at play, as it seems to be, major questions nevertheless still remain. In a very recent dissertation Collin Blake Bullard has, in fact, argued that, when we read it against its closest parallels, we should see not *prophetic* but *divine* knowledge in this Lukan motif. Jesus is depicted as “the knower of hearts” in a way that is proper to God alone (ὁ καρδιογνώστης θεός [Acts 15:8]), as the Lord often appears for instance in the Psalms, Isaiah, and indeed in much Second Temple literature (e.g., Ps 138[139]; 4Q185 1–3 III, 10–14; Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.413; Philo, *De cherubim* 16–18; 2 Bar 83:1–3; Sir 42:18–21).²¹

To this I would just add as a point of form-critical interest that in the Gospels' mind-reading narratives, which are nearly always controversy stories, the reactions of others never manifest any special astonishment at Jesus revealing the secrets of their hearts. Astonishment is reserved, rather, for the unexpected ways the Lord speaks and acts despite what he knows (in whatever way) that others are thinking, such as provocatively healing a man on the Sabbath or audaciously absolving a woman's sins (e.g.: Mark 2:1–12; Luke 7:50). “My thoughts are not your thoughts” (Isa 55:8) seems to be the general provocation of these *chriae*.

The Fourth Gospel's story of Jesus's dialogue with the Samaritan

¹⁹ It is a healthy warning in gauging the significance of the “mind-reading” language that Codex Bezae (D5) records at Luke 3:15 that *John the Baptist* “knowing their thoughts” (ἐπιγνους τα διανοήματα αὐτῶν)—i.e., that the people were wondering “in their hearts” if he were the Christ—responded in answer to their misapprehension. Is John here depicted as a being moved by some special mystic knowledge, or is this simply a compact Lukan variant of the rather straightforward dialogue paralleled in John 1:19–28?

²⁰ Cf. Matt 12:25 (εἰδὼς δὲ τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν; “knowing their thoughts”); 9:4 (ἰδὼν τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν; “knowing their thoughts”); Mark 12:15 (εἰδὼς αὐτῶν τὴν ὑπόκρισιν; “knowing their hypocrisy”); and *GEger* [Gospel of Egerton / Papyrus Egerton] 2r, II.9–10, ὁ δὲ Ἰη εἰδὼς [τὴν δι]άνοιαν [αὐτ]ῶν.

²¹ Collin Blake Bullard, *Jesus and the Thoughts of Many Hearts: Implicit Christology and Jesus' Knowledge in the Gospel of Luke* Library of New Testament Studies / Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement series 530 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

woman at the well is one obvious case where controversy is not in play and a different perspective may be gained. Here the Lord inexplicably reveals the secrets of his interlocutor's past life and she responds directly to him, "Sir I see that you are a prophet" (John 4:19), and to the people of her village: "Come and see a man who told me everything I have done. He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" (John 4:29).

As the Fourth Gospel reveals it, Jesus's gift of present prophecy thus functions like a miraculous sign and is ordered toward his own messianic self-revelation. Read through a Johannine lens, ambiguity accordingly clings to prophetic portents like other *semeia*, just as for all the evangelists the title "prophet" is finally inadequate as a full confession of faith in Christ. Openly readings hearts is a risky game that Jesus rarely played. Were the Lord to have acted too frequently as a mere mind reader, the profound depth of his true identity would have inevitably been obscured.

Jesus's knowledge of *past* and *present* realities to which he had no normal or natural access obviously operated with convicting power upon those to whom it was revealed. The Samaritan woman does not hesitate to recognize Jesus as a figure of God-ordained authority, however inadequate her lofty estimate of his person remains. It is a different matter with the revelation of *future* realities, however. These cannot be immediately confirmed (or invalidated). Who is to judge whether the prophecy will come to pass while it still remains in the future?

In point of fact, Jesus's revelation of future knowledge has an entirely different effect from his other acts of prophetic insight. It reconfigures the invited act of faith in his person around entirely different epistemological dynamics. Rather than prompting confessions or confounding opponents by a manifest show of power, future prophecy works as an opaque revelation that leaves Jesus's hearers in a state of bewildered miscomprehension. "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands.' But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was concealed from them, so that they could not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying" (Luke 9:44–45; cf. 18:31–34).

In the Gospels, Jesus's prophetic knowledge of *future* contingents is strikingly concentrated around two great events: the destruction of the temple and the Paschal mystery. The Lord does not dabble in incidental prognostications. Even Jesus's odd and seemingly superfluous foreknowledge of the coin in the fish's mouth in Matthew 17—an almost isolated case of such minute clairvoyance in the Gospels—is closely bound to Jesus's anticipation of the temple's end and his own coming passion. The former prophecy belongs, of course, within a familiar line of Second

Temple prophetic discourse, including the famous case of Jesus ben Ananias recorded by Josephus (*Jewish War* 6.5.3). Craig Evans has exhaustively catalogued the parallels.²²

A few examples, more or less contemporaneous with Jesus, will give the flavor: one from the Dead Sea Scrolls, one from a first century text called *The Lives of the Prophets*, and one attributed by a later rabbinic source (however uncertainly) to an important Tannaitic leader, Johannan ben Zakkai (c. 30–90 AD). All three prophecies, interestingly, are forms of scriptural interpretation—a point to bear in mind in thinking about Jesus as a first-century Jew.

[*Qumran*]

For a lion went to enter in, a lion cub (Nah 2:12). The explanation concerns Demetrius king of Yawan who sought to enter Jerusalem on the counsel of those who seek smooth things. But he did not enter, for from Antiochus until the rising of the commanders of the Kittim God did not deliver it into the hands of the kings of Yawan. But afterward it will be trampled under foot by the Kittim. (4Q169 [pescher to Nahum] 1.1–3; translation mine).

[*Lives of the Prophets*]

And concerning the end of the temple he [Habbakuk] predicted, By a western national it will happen. At that time, he said, the curtain of the Dabeir will be torn into small peices, and the capitals of the two pillars will be taken away and no one will know where they are ; and they will be carried away by angels into the wilderness, where the Tent of Witness was set up in the beginning (Lives of the Prophets 12 :11; translation mine).

[*Johannan ben Zakkai*]

[When Vespasian objected to Yohannan ben Zakkai's greeting, *Vive domine Imperator*, Yohannan explained] If you are not the king, you will be eventually, because the temple will only be destroyed by a king's hand, as it says, *And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one* (Isa 10:34) (Rabbah Lamentations 1:5, no. 31 ; translation mine).

²² Craig Evans, "Predictions of the Destruction of the Herodian Temple in the Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Scrolls, and Related Texts," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 10 (1992): 89–147.

In light of such material, the basic historical plausibility of Jesus's prophecy, at least in some form, is thus very difficult to impugn, as most scholars agree. Exaggerated insistence that the Gospels record a *vaticinium ex eventu* is accordingly misplaced, however much later redactional touches may be freely recognized in the evangelists' reports, whether to clarify or develop some motif. At the same time, this same wide presence during the Second Temple period of an aggressive anti-temple-establishment sentiment (which is different from being anti-temple) and the ample premonitions of coming judgment considerably reduce the singular impression of Jesus's warning. Far from revealing his unparalleled powers of augury, Jesus's bold certainty that "not one stone will be left here upon another" (Mark 13:2) inserts him within a recognizable tradition.

What the Jewish parallels conceal, however—and this is the all-important difference—is the profound inner relation of Jesus's temple prophecy to the foreseen drama of *his own fate*. In John, the merging of these two events is made quite explicit. The Synoptics are less clear about the identification, but the confused presence of the saying as a charge in Jesus's trial before the Sanhedrin indicates that his condemnation and death was bound up with reports of this prediction. In my estimation, John, in fact, is responding to Mark, who confusingly tells of discordant "false" witnesses who testify: "We heard him saying, 'I will destroy this Temple made by hands and in three days I will build another not made by hands'" (Mark 14:58; cf. 14:56–59 and Matt 26:55–61). With his very different version, John evidently means to clarify and reinterpret this "false witness," which attributes to Jesus a statement that comes entirely out of the blue for readers of Mark, who have never previously heard any such saying. (The prediction of the temple's destruction in Mark 13 was not spoken publicly and made no mention of three days or a new building.) Jesus, John assures, did indeed previously say *something* of this sort, as he was cleansing the temple. "He was speaking about the Temple of his body" (John 2:21).

Luke, by contrast, famously drops the confusing Markan charge altogether. It must not be imagined that Luke is unaware of Jesus's prophecy about the temple, however (see Acts 6:14). Nonetheless—and the point is important—Luke's emphasis has shifted from the destruction of the *sanc-tuary* to wasting of the *whole city*. The Third Evangelist thus preserves two unique lament oracles referring to Jerusalem's fall, plotted as mile-markers along Jesus's journey to the holy place. In both cases, the prophecies about Jerusalem are intertwined with prophecies about Jesus himself. Thus, in Luke 13:35, the evangelist reproduces the minatory saying "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, city that murders the prophets . . . behold, your house is abandoned" (cf. Matt 23:38 and Jer 22:5), appending this logion after another

fateful saying about the city referring to Jesus's coming death: "It is impossible that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem" (Luke 13:33). In so doing, Luke at once ties the destiny of the temple to Jesus's own coming passion and situates this future within the long and tragic history of the rebellious nation. Jesus must suffer the fate of all the prophets; and Jerusalem must suffer the consequence of its murderous deeds. In the oracle of Luke 19:41–44, Jesus again weeps over the city, saying that Jerusalem's enemies "will not leave a stone upon a stone [λίθον ἐπὶ λίθον] within you, since you did not know the time of your visitation [ἐπισκοπῆς]" (Luke 19:44). The moment of visitation is, of course, a reference to Jesus himself and the Lord's visitation of Israel in and through his person (see: Luke 1:78; 7:16). Jesus has thus once more oriented his prophecy about the nation's doom directly around the rejection of his own mission.

Jesus's prophetic woe oracles against Chorazin and the fishing villages of Bethsaida and Capharnaum should also be mentioned here. They represent a fragment of Galilean provenance, formulaic but likely preserved in something very close to the original form, and they offer a convincing sign that Jesus comported himself in the guise of an oracular prophet at least to some degree. While almost embarrassingly provincial, these stereotyped forecasts of doom extend the scope of Israel's devastation to the northern reaches of the Land and fit the same self-oriented pattern already seen (Matt 11:20–24; Luke 10:13–15; cf. Isa 14:13–15). Failure to recognize and respond to Jesus's ministry invites judgment and apocalyptic cataclysm.

At the canonical level, the confusing Markan memory thus radiates out in two different directions, taking on a clarified shape along distinct Lukan and Johannine axes. These two axes, furthermore, represent the two sides of Jesus's self-identification, revealed in this remarkable fusion of the temple and passion prophecies. In a vertical direction, Jesus identifies himself as the temple, namely, the living presence of YHWH in the midst of his people: a provocation and high theological claim in the Johannine mode. Simultaneously, on the horizontal Lukan plane, Jesus melds his personal history with the history of the people and the city, a sort of deep solidarity making Israel's national story both a prequel and a sequel to his own. A Chalcedonian, two-natured harmony thus contours the Christology of Jesus's temple prophecy in its canonical form.

Of course, Jesus's prophecy of his own passion also has a self-standing expression. Two contrary tendencies are observable, moreover, in the interpretation the thrice-repeated prediction. On the one hand, these texts are conventionally dismissed as post-Paschal fictions manufactured by some pre-Markan tradition. On the other hand, the miraculous element in

Jesus's supposed foreknowledge of his passion is frequently minimized, with the argument that any sensible person might have seen a violent death coming. Certainly the murder of John would already suggest, at the very start of Jesus's ministry, the danger of taking up the Baptist's ministerial torch. Growing conflict with the religious leaders, whatever historical form this took, could have then only added to the impression.

There is no doubt something reasonable in this minimalistic line. Aquinas speaks of a kind of natural prophecy, based on experience and a person's powers of imagination and understanding (*ST* II-II, q. 172, a. 1). If something more is still required to secure and elevate the character of this premonition, the old dogmatic manuals speak of a science infused *per accidens*, namely an extraordinary comprehension of things that might be learned in an ordinary way, similar to the knowledge granted to Adam and Eve (see *ST* III, q. 1, a. 2; qq. 8–12; q. 15, a. 2). Abraham Lincoln reportedly knew that he was in danger and had dream warnings of his death (which he did not believe). It is certainly possible to think of Jesus's prophetic knowledge of his suffering along such lines. At its outer limit, however, knowledge of future contingents is not merely a miracle *praeter naturam*, a supernatural path to natural effects, like knowing things a good detective could know, but without employing the detective's methods. It is *super naturam*, a supernatural *effect*, not obtainable by any natural means.

One may thus go a step further. A huge number of Gospel traditions remember Jesus as anticipating and freely accepting his own execution (Matt 10:38 || Luke 14:27; Mark 8:34; Matt 10:39 || Luke 17:33; Mark 8:35; John 12:25; Mark 8:31–33; 9:31; 10:33–34; Mark 10:45; Mark 14:17–65; Mark 15:1–15; Matt 26:51–54; Luke 13:31–33; Luke 23:6–12; John 10:11–18; John 12:23–27; John 15:12–13; John 16:5–10; John 18:10–12)—too many to simply be ignored.²³ What stands behind this massive impression made on the tradition of Jesus's extraordinary confidence in the face of death? If account is taken of Jesus's own experience of divine power in his working of miracles, notably in raising the dead (Mark 5:22–43; Luke 7:11–17; John 11:1–44), one must inevitably extend the scope of his natural prophetic insight to include not only the certainty of his death, but also the anticipation of his own resurrection. "I lay down my life, that I may take it up again. . . . I have power to lay it down of my

²³ Brown rightly remarks: "Modern criticism would cast doubt on a foreknowledge of the details, but we should not undervalue the general agreement of the Gospel tradition that Jesus was convinced beforehand that, while his life would be taken from him, God would ultimately vindicate him" ("How Much did Jesus Know?" 323).

own accord, and I have power to take it up again" (John 10:17–18). The intervention here of God's supernatural activity obviously reconfigures the entire calculation in a substantial way. It must not be ignored, in this regard, however, that Jesus had access not only to his own circumscribed human experience of divine intervention—and the inferences that might be drawn from that. He also had human access to the deposit of religious experience of all Israel, including all the prior prophecies about the messiah that were revealed and handed down in the Scriptures. I would gesture here to the deep grammar of the death-and-resurrection of the beloved son that the Jewish scholar Jon Levenson has detected as underwriting the length and breadth of the Old Testament tradition.²⁴

A more theologically satisfying path than mere "natural prophecy" thus opens up for analyzing Jesus's certain foreknowledge of his Paschal mystery, precisely at the moment when we acknowledge miraculous activity and the revelatory role of Israel's Scriptures. Indeed, it bears saying that to foresee one's death is one thing; to foresee one's resurrection after three days is quite another. The apologetic appeal of a low-bar modesty must thus yield before more telling factors. Foretelling a miracle *super naturam* is itself *super naturam* and the minimalistic approach simply breaks down at this point.²⁵

How then shall we proceed? Following Aquinas, who allows that prophecy might be split between the representation and the judgment of things (*ST* II-II, q. 173, a. 2), we might, I suggest, conjecture that the modality of Jesus's prophetic knowledge—at least as it is presented in the Gospels—excelled principally on the (more excellent) judgmental, interpretative order (see *ST* II-II, q. 174, aa. 2–3). This need not exclude the divine presentation of interior sensible forms, of course, or experiences of mystical rapture (*abstractio a sensibus*). One should note, moreover, that both *nubes* and *vox exterius formata* are forms of prophecy according to Thomas (*ST* II-II, q. 174, a. 1, ad 3), so that the baptism and Transfiguration must be collocated among the varieties of Jesus's prophetic experience (Mark 1:9–11; 9:2–8). Still, we might prefer to think generally of a more mundane external apperception through the senses (*mediante sensu exterius*), as when Daniel saw the writing on the wall (Dan 5:25). Daniel, it

²⁴ Jon Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

²⁵ This is stronger than the position of Brown, who says: "Such a prediction should have come from his interpretation of the OT (e.g. of Is, and perhaps of Dn) and would not presuppose a superhuman knowledge. It could represent the unshakable conviction of a man who was sure that he knew God's plan" ("How Much Did Jesus Know?" 323).

should be recalled, perceived not the miraculous act of inscription itself (Dan 5:5–9), but simply the words already publically revealed by God. In the same way, the revelation of which Christ was the prophetic interpreter and judge was that word communicated already by God through the prophets and contained in Israel's sacred text (see Exod 31:18). In other words, Jesus possessed an extraordinary comprehension of what might theoretically be learned in an "ordinary" way *on the order of revelation/redemption*. Like that of Joseph, who could penetrate the meaning of prophetic dreams obscure to all the wise men of Egypt, Jesus's prophetic knowledge was eminently at work precisely in his penetrating comprehension of the Law and Prophets. Through his own singular human experience of Israel's election as God's Son (e.g., Mark 1:9–11; 9:2–8) Christ enjoyed an interpretative light that could lay open the otherwise sealed book of revelation. This special light of prophetic understanding in Jesus's human soul thus represents a seal, comprehending and completing God's prior acts of revelation through Israel's prophets (see Heb 1:1). It is the absolute apex of religious insight possible among the Jews.

This perspective is no speculative fantasy. Following the hint offered by Luke, who records Jesus aligning his fate with the fate of all the prophets—"It is impossible that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem"—it is quite possible to view the *passion predictions as exegetical acts*.²⁶ The Gospels, in other words, give us ample hints that Jesus foresaw his inevitable fate with calm clarity, not as a shrewd conclusion gathered from political analysis, but as a divinely ordained inevitability discernable from scriptural prophecy.

The plain starting point for this interpretation of Jesus's *scriptural* foreknowledge of his passion is his own post-Paschal explanation in Luke 24:25–27.

"Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary [δεῖ] that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

This portentous, famous δεῖ is not simply a construct of Luke's private theological lexicon and fancy. It has its roots in Jesus's first passion prediction in Mark 8:31.

²⁶ See Anthony Giambrone, "Scripture as *Scientia Christi*: Three Theses on Jesus' Self-Knowledge and the Future Course of New Testament Christology," *Pro Ecclesia* 25, no. 3 (2016): 274–90.

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must [δεῖ] undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

The precise force of this *necessity*, moreover, is its anchoring in the divine *mystery* or *raz*, made accessible in the last days through the writings of the prophets to those able to unlock their deepest secrets. “This plan is revealed in scripture,” Adela Yabro Collins says, “for those with the proper principles of interpretation, and is now being revealed by the Markan Jesus to his disciples.” Following Jesus’s word in Mark 14:49 (“let the scriptures be fulfilled”), Matthew, still more clearly, attests Jesus’s specifically scriptural apprehension of the *necessity* of his death, when he resigns himself to arrest in the garden (Matt 26:53–54).

Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way [ὅτι οὕτως δεῖ γενέσθαι]?

John, too, employs the same δεῖ language as a scriptural foreordination, when Jesus predicts his passion in John 3:14 on the typological logic of Numbers 21:8–9.

If the memory of him presented in the Gospels is any reliable guide, the pre-Paschal Jesus thus read his personal history explicitly through a scriptural lens.²⁷ Indeed, on at least four unique occasions just before his death Jesus himself speaks of the very specific need for the *Scriptures to be fulfilled* in the events of his passion: in his betrayal by Judas (John 13:18; cf. Ps 41:9; also John 6:70–71), in his being “counted among the lawless” like the suffering servant (“this scripture must [δεῖ] be fulfilled in me,” Luke 22:37; cf. Isa 53:12), in his arrest (Matt 26:54, 56; Mark 14:49), and in the scattering of the disciples, including Peter (Mark 14:27; Matt 26:31–35; cf. Zech 13:7). Of the central fact of the crucifixion, John’s Gospel depicts Jesus very clearly embracing in advance the scriptural antitypes of his fate: his exaltation upon the Cross will be like the raising up of Jacob’s ladder and like Moses’s lifting up of the serpent in the desert (John 1:51; 3:14–15; see also John 19:28; cf. Ps 69:3, 21 [?]).

Such prophetic insight into the details and significance of his passion

²⁷ See Giambrone, “*Scientia Christi*,” 278–85. I sympathize with Dale Allison’s basic perspective on the “Christology of Jesus” in his *Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011) 221–304.

contributes to the unmistakable impression that the entire coming drama lies within Jesus's perfectly free control. Additional hints of prophetic knowledge move in the same direction. Thus, in advance of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, for instance, Jesus mysteriously directs his disciples to find a certain colt, upon which no one has ever ridden (Mark 11:1–3), a sign that Matt 21:1–11 understands as fulfilling Isa 62:11 and Zech 9:9.

The impressive role of scriptural imagination in contouring and concretizing Jesus's predictions of his passion must be fitted within a larger framework. On the one hand, I think it absolutely correct to arrange the "Christology of Jesus" around his pronounced conviction that the Scriptures spoke about him (John 5:39) and his expansive identification with a full panoply of biblical agents, such as the anointed one of Isaiah 61, the star of the Psalms, and Daniel's son of man, to name a few. This self-identification—which some will reckon as form of psychosis or religious delusion²⁸—must, at the same time, be plotted within a much larger world-historical scenario within which Jesus understood himself to be moving. It is here that apocalyptic Judaism is of service.

In the apt phrase of Joel Marcus the scenario runs thus: "The Temple will be destroyed and the cosmos will be drawn into its downfall."²⁹ Two major scriptural points of reference, moreover, structure this apocalyptic storm, which the synoptic Gospels record Jesus as painting (Mark 13:1–37): (1) the abomination of desolation, described in Daniel (9:27; 11:31; 12:11); and (2) the coming on the clouds of the one like a son of man, prophesied in the same book (7:13–14). That the desecration of the temple and the fate of the "Son of Man" should be linked in Jesus's view causes no surprise by this point. This is fully consistent with the pattern that has been seen. What is new is the reversal of the ordering, so that the temple's destruction now triggers an end-time drama surrounding Jesus as escha-

²⁸ See, e.g. Evan D. Murray, Miles G. Cunningham, and Bruce H. Price, "The Role of Psychotic Disorders in Religious History Considered," *The Journal of Neuropsychiatry Clinical Neurosciences* 24 (2012): 410–26, at 414–15: "The New Testament (NT) recalls Jesus as having experienced and shown behavior closely resembling the DSM-IV-TR-defined phenomena of AHs, VHs, delusions, referential thinking (see Figure 3), paranoid-type (PS subtype) thought content, and hyperreligiosity. . . . Jesus' experiences can be potentially conceptualized within the framework of PS or psychosis NOS. Other reasonable possibilities might include bipolar and schizoaffective disorders. . . . There is a potential parallel of Jesus' beliefs and behavior leading up to his death to that of one who premeditates a form of suicide-by-proxy."

²⁹ Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, Anchor Bible 27A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 874.

tological judge. The millenarian mood that enters into the picture at this point charges Jesus's views of prophetic/scriptural actualization with an uncomfortably, at times seemingly incoherent, fanatical character. Efforts to sort through the evidence have not proven universally convincing, to say the least.

Here we confront the true scandal of Jesus's so-called prophetic "knowledge" and an all-important point of decision. Dale Allison, that brilliant and eclectic Pyrrhonian heir of Albert Schweitzer, is crushingly clear:

He does not come to us as one unknown. We know him well enough. Jesus is the millenarian prophet. . . . Jesus' generation, however, passed away. They all tasted death. And it is not the kingdom of God that has come but the scoffers who ask, Where is the promise of his coming? For all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. Jesus the millenarian prophet, like all millenarian prophets, was wrong: reality has taken no notice of his imagination.³⁰

The best model for Jesus in Allison's comparative religions perspective is the long line of failed messiahs, from Bar Kochba to David Alroy to Rabbi Schneerson and David Koresh.

Aside from Gamaliel's counsel in Acts 5:39, it is not obvious how best to engage this perspective, whether on historical-critical or theological grounds. Is Jesus's prediction of the end, in fact, the true *scandalon* of foolishness, the invitation to a purified faith? "Once, long ago, Christ crucified was foolishness, the great rock of offense," Allison preaches: "Today it is Jesus' status as a millenarian prophet that causes those who believe to stumble." Aquinas remarks that "since the prophet's mind is a defective instrument, . . . even true prophets know not all that the Holy Ghost means by the things they see, speak or even do" (*ST* II-II, q. 173, a. 4). Is it possible to imagine within the bounds of orthodox belief that the Holy Spirit also withheld secrets from the Word in his human condition? Could Christ's nescience extend so far as to allow some positive misapprehension? Or have we not yet rightly understood what the Lord was saying? "In a little while you will see me no more, then after a little while you will see me" (John 16:16). What is this "little while"? Jesus did, after all, promptly return in glory, in his resurrection. Did he understand a sequence of successive fulfillments? Did time simply collapse in the vision he had of his entry out

³⁰ Dale Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998), 218.

of time and into eternal life? Did Jesus distinguish a near catastrophe from a more distant expectation, as conservative commentators like to contend in the case of Mark 13 and Matthew 24?³¹ Was his cataclysmic imagery of universal judgment only a way of speaking about the historical destruction of Jerusalem, not a literal end of time at all? Or was all the talk of the imminent end perhaps only prophetic “denunciation,” contingent doom rhetoric ordered to a repentant change in behavior: *prophetia comminationis* rather than *prophetia praedestinationis*, to take a distinction from Aquinas (*ST* II-II, q. 174, a. 1)?

Without adverting to this classical language, the recent argument of Christopher Hays and his fellows in the Oxford Post-Doctoral Colloquium in their interesting collaborative volume *When the Son of Man Did not Come* play with Aquinas’s precise distinction.³² Specifically, they mount an argument that Jesus’s prophecies of the eschaton should be read in the light of a conditional, so-called “Jeremianic,” hortatory tradition of prophecy, which must be contrasted with so-called “Mosaic” tradition of predestinatory prediction. While the truth of the latter is judged by whether a prophecy comes to pass, the former is subject to revision and postponement. There is indeed a broad ancient Near Eastern conception that a god had the right to change his mind, without undermining the essential truth of prophecies; and the Scriptures, too, are replete with the record of such seeming divine indecision. Accordingly, the delay of the Parousia fits within a long history of the Lord’s mysterious reversals and redirections of his prophesied plans, which Hays and company contend is ultimately a repentance motif.

Clever and welcome as the work of these openly confessing scholars is, applying this paradigm to Jesus’s end-time oracles faces certain difficulties. I see at least two significant issues that incline me in a slightly different direction.

(1) First, this approach plays directly into the hands of the comparative-religion critique. I will not belabor the point but simply observe that appealing to a “deferred” prophecy was already mocked in the Greco-Ro-

³¹ See, e.g.: W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974) 474; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 541–43.

³² See Christopher M. Hayes, in collaboration with Brandon Gallagher, Julia S. Konstantinovskiy, Richard J. Ounsworth, O.P., and C. A. Strine, *When the Son of Man Didn't Come: A Constructive Proposal on the Delay of the Parousia* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2016). See also Simon Gaine, “The Veracity of Prophecy and Christ’s Knowledge,” *New Blackfriars* 98 (2017): 44–62.

man period and is hardly an unproblematic way to defend a prophecy as true. Reinterpretation and recalculation, in fact, are precisely the documented characteristics of failed millenarian sects. How, then, shall the New Testament data be distinguished from this embarrassing corpus of parallel material?

(2) The second difficulty with the view is on the rhetorical order, for there is a gap separating the prophetic discourse of the Gospels from the "Jeremianic" tradition to which it is compared. The *conditional* character of the parallel prophetic material and its ordering toward repentance is quite explicit. Jeremiah 18 is an excellent example:

At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. (Jer 18:7–10)

Nothing so obvious as this condition and prophetic escape hatch appears in the future (or alternatively "apocalyptic") Son of Man sayings.³³ Conventional repentance tropes are likewise ostentatiously missing.

If there is thus little to suggest contingent oracles of denunciation, there is, nevertheless, a certain hortatory character to Jesus's apocalyptic discourse in the appeal to be watchful. One suggestive remark also exists, which hints that a ray of mercy (if only a ray) might intervene to adjust the timescale: "Pray that it might not happen in winter" (Mark 13:18; cf. μηδὲ σαββάτῳ ["nor on the Sabbath"] in Matt 24:20). This distressingly concrete counsel—which can hardly be the creation of the early Church—sounds like the word of a man who is thinking not in centuries or millenia, but in months. Even so, and small as it is, it represents an all-important wedge in the door. The hour is not foreordained. It is subject to adjustment through prayer.

The implication is far-reaching. If it is indeed the case that not even the Son knows the day or hour, as he explicitly insists (Mark 13:32), he may well entertain his own suspicions, yet still leave the moment to be

³³ See, e.g., Adela Yabro Collins, "The Apocalyptic Son of Man Sayings," in *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester*, ed. B. A. Pearson (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991) 220–28.

decided by the Father in his just mercy—and in response to the prayers of his elect. Perhaps I am simplistic, but Jesus's openly professed nescience on this point, which is again no imaginable ecclesial fabrication, coupled with the cluster of sayings insisting that the disciples too cannot know the time, which will come like a thief (see: Matt 24:42–44 || Luke 12:39–40; Matt 24:50 || Luke 12:46; Matt 25:13), appears to me to be a solid revealed datum of monumental import that has somehow failed to register as it should. *Naberwartung* (an *imminent* expectation) is only *Erwartung* (simply an expectation). What Jesus prophetically *knew* did not extend to the time of his return. We may be uncomfortable or scandalized with the thought of this sudden blank in Jesus's knowledge, and calling his thoughts on the matter private opinion may put too fine a point upon it. Yet according to the Gospels, it is undeniably here that we must draw a line. *Jesus never predicted when he would return*, however much he implied his own expectant readiness. And you cannot be wrong about what you admit you do not know.³⁴

If I must risk drawing an analogy from the Church's long experience of prophetic *charismata*, St. Vincent Ferrer's remarkable letter to Benedict XIII concerning the end of the world I find to be enormously instructive in thinking about Jesus's situation.³⁵ Here is a man with charismatic gifts of extraordinary magnitude, including prophecy, who found his preaching confirmed by miracles and the receptive response of a culture apocalyptically predisposed, a man who somehow identified himself with a mysterious figure foretold in the Scriptures and who is commonly presumed to have falsely predicted the end of the world—but who did not in fact commit himself to such a claim and who in the most sober way exposed his text-based, exegetical reasoning for preaching what? “*The coming of Antichrist and the end of the world are near.*” That is all. Vincent clearly further personally believed, on the basis of supposed revelations made to acquaintances, that he trusted, that the Antichrist had in fact already been born in his day—yet he carefully added that this was “not sufficiently proven” that he felt free to preach it. Publically, he made bold to say no more than that “in an exceedingly short time” the end of the world will come. Then he subjected even this message to the Holy Father's correction. The saint's

³⁴ One thus evades *Lamentabili* §33, condemning the following proposition: “Every-one who is not led by preconceived opinions can readily see that either Jesus professed an error concerning the immediate Messianic coming or the greater part of His doctrine as contained in the Gospels is destitute of authenticity.”

³⁵ For the text of the letter, see the appendix to Père Fages, *Histoire de Saint Vincent Ferrier* (Paris, 1894).

threshold of hesitation, in the midst of near certain conviction and manifest kerygmatic boldness, I find to be tremendously suggestive.

At an important level, the "Angel of the Judgment" fits Jesus's circumstance rather well, I submit: fervent persuasion and deep personal investment with a self-chastening admission of final ignorance on a critical point. Obviously, only a great deal of close exegesis can ultimately secure this model as the right one, and I recognize the divergence of any number of my assumptions from the norm. Still, in part precisely on account of such divergence, I believe that as a paradigm this lens correctly reorients our research and shows the right theological and exegetical direction to pursue. At the very least, it parries the thrust of Allison, boldly owning Christ's nescience and in return supplanting the figure of the failed millenarian with a more appropriate and nuanced analogue.

The upstanding Oxford Post-Doctoral Colloquium confesses that "good exegesis and responsible history" must recognize that Jesus possessed "a prophetic and immediate eschatological expectation." Perhaps I am simply too impressed by Plato's divided line, but I wonder whether I would express the matter in just this way. Jesus did not stand in double ignorance about the eschaton; he knew a great deal about the end, but he also knew quite distinctly where his prophetic knowledge stopped. This is not the privative, error-ridden, and groping ignorance that results from sin. I thus ask myself whether, in discussing *the knowledge of Christ*, we must not "concoct some intellectual equivalent of Maximus's *gnomic will*" to speak with more confidence about the precise mode of his *nescience* and about Christ's two intellects (human and divine).³⁶ Here the "apparent" or "pedagogic" ignorance, which gained momentum in anti-Arian writings and for centuries dominated commentary on Mark 13:32, though not derisible and obviously built upon a sound theological foundation, has hardly covered orthodox interpreters in glory.³⁷ It is an evasive maneuver and simply not a solution that privileges "good exegesis and responsible history"—far from the balance of speculative and historical reason we seek. Gregory's *in ipsa, non ex ipsa* in his letter against the Agnoetes is indeed *subtilius*, "more subtle," and the risk of Nestorianism that he detects is real (Epistle to Eulogius [*Sicut aqua frigida*]; DS, nos. 474–76). One may, nevertheless, dwell historically on this *non ex natura humanitatis* without automatically confessing two sons.

³⁶ See Giambrone, "Scientia Christi," 288. Extending the logic of Maximus's dyothelete thought in this direction is an unfinished job. See *Opusculum theologicum et polemicum* (Paris: Cerf, 1998), 234, 245.

³⁷ On this theme, see Margelidon, "La science infuse," 412–13; and Madigan, "Christus Nesciens," 255–78.

However, at our own peril, we might make bold to imagine or explain the interplay of the divine *scientia* of the Eternal Word with the human nescience of the incarnate Son—perhaps like a language one knows but chooses for whatever reason not to speak (*scientia* vs. *operatio*)—we should be very cautious of a lurking Docetism. Some genuine human ignorance of that day ultimately left Jesus ample room to negotiate an orientation to the situation, as he both knew and did not know it. This implies no imperfection whatsoever in his integral humanity, and I personally would above all stress two things. First, the Lord's attitude of almost fanatic vigilance, his obsessive alacrity in the face of the pending judgment, responds to and fills in the space opened up by a divinely willed—and humanly co-willed—amoral void of knowledge and is a correlative watchfulness to what Jesus also urged upon his disciples. Second, this vital posture of readiness bears no essential noetic likeness to the Lord's burning prophetic certainty concerning one supreme, future fact: his Paschal fate as bearing the corporate fate of all God's elect.

Jesus knew in advance what was required that he might steadfastly accomplish his mission and engender supernatural faith in his disciples.³⁸ "I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe" (John 14:29; cf. 13:19 and 16:4). That through his exaltation the risen Son of Man would also send the Spirit and one day sit enthroned to judge the world did not remain hidden from him—or through him, from us. This all belonged to his messianic mission and was salutary for others to learn. But knowledge of the times and seasons established by the Father was evidently no more needful or beneficial for the pilgrimage of the earthly Jesus than it was or is for any of the sons of men.³⁹ On the

³⁸ Thomas allows the super-angelic and super-Adamic perfection of Christ's knowledge to trump its subordination to his redemptive mission, while simultaneously offering a soteriological argument for such perfection. See *De veritate*, q. 20, a. 4, obj. 11–12; cf. a. 4, ads 11–12. Nuanced as it is, the ability to accommodate comfortably the nescience of non-moral ignorance is a direct and significant causality of this view; see *De veritate*, a. 5, ad 6.

³⁹ Ambrose, *De fide* 5.16.209–11. Here I would plead for reversing Ambrose's "for you—not for me" argument: "Vnde alibi quoque ipse dominus interrogatus, ab apostolis inquam, qui utique non sicut Arrius intellegebant, sed filium dei futura scire credebant—nam nisi hoc credidissent, numquam interrogassent—interrogatus ergo, quando restitueret regnum Israel, non se nescire dixit, sed ait: Non est uestrum scire tempora et annos, quae pater posuit in sua potestate. Adtende, quid dixerit: Non est uestrum scire! Lege iterum: Non est uestrum dixit, non 'meum' [When the Lord himself was asked by the apostles, who (not as Arius thought) believed that the son of God would know the future—for if they did not believe this, they would never have asked—asking therefore, when the kingdom of Israel

contrary, with absolutely nothing to dread for himself from the coming "day of wrath," Jesus's impeccable ignorance of the hour was his economic entrance, his accommodation to and vicarious taste of that saving fear he was sent to communicate to others. Jesus could and did acutely fear *for* sinners. Even in his nescience the Lord reveals the way (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §474).⁴⁰

At the end of his discussion of Jesus's knowledge, which predictably does not finally move in my direction, Brown nevertheless laid down a trump card that I will happily pick up to close:

When all is said and done, the great objection that will be hurled again and again against any exegete (or theologian) who finds evidence that Jesus' knowledge was limited is the objection that in Jesus Christ there is only one person, a divine person. . . . Perhaps the best answer to this objection is to call upon Cyril of Alexandria, that Doctor of the Church to whom, more than to any other, we are indebted for the great truth of the oneness of the person of Christ. It was that ultra-orthodox archfoe of Nestorianism (two persons or powers in Christ) who said of Christ, 'We have admired his goodness in that for love of us he has not refused to descend to such a low position as to bear all that belongs to our nature, *included in which is ignorance*' [PG, 75:369].⁴¹

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would be restored, he did not say he did not know, but said: It is not for you to know the times and years that the father placed in his own power. Listen to what he says: It is not for you to know! Read it again: he says it is not yours, not 'mine']" (*De Fide* 5.17.212). I would add that the text of Acts 1:7 reveals the knowledge of the risen and ascending Christ, which cannot simply be equated with the knowledge he held in his freely chosen mortal state. This sort of pre- vs. post-Paschal distinction is quite different from the evacuation of supernatural phenomenon characteristic of certain "Jesus of history vs. Christ of faith" models.

⁴⁰ CCC §474 is a well-balanced statement that allows for two possible interpretations: either Jesus humanly knew and withheld what he was not sent to reveal, or Jesus humanly did not know and thus did not reveal what he was not sent to reveal. I prefer the less obtuse, latter position, adding that, in not revealing the day of judgment, Jesus *did reveal* the constant need to be on guard. Even in "concealing," Jesus is always the redemptive revealer.

⁴¹ Brown, "How Much Did Jesus Know?" 338–39.