

Failed Apocalyptic Prophet Theory (Part 1)

- **Bart Ehrman's theory:** Jesus was a Jewish prophet who mistakenly expected the world to end within his lifetime. He saw himself as Israel's Messiah and future king, but not as pre-existent, nor as the Son of Man, nor as God.
- **Apocalypticism:** a worldview that emphasizes cosmic dualism, historical pessimism, ultimate vindication, and imminent expectation.
- **What does Ehrman say about Jesus?**
 - Jesus was born in Nazareth, not Bethlehem.
 - Jesus was a disciple of John the Baptist.
 - Jesus predicted the destruction of the Jewish Temple.
 - Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah, but not the Son of Man or God.
 - Jesus expected the Son of Man to come within a generation.
 - Crucified, but not buried in a known tomb. No empty tomb.
 - Disciples had hallucinations of Jesus risen.
 - Early Christian views about Jesus evolved, from prophet to preexistent angel to God.
- **Ehrman on the New Testament**

	<i>More historically reliable</i> ↔ <i>Less historically reliable</i>				
	Paul	Q	Mark	Matthew/Luke	John
<i>Apocalypticism</i>	Imminent (1 Cor. 7:29-31; 1 Thes. 4:15-17)	Imminent (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27)	Imminent (Mark 9:1; 13:30)	Less imminent (Luke 11:20; 17:20-21)	Not imminent (John 21:22-23)
<i>Christology</i>	Pre-existent angel (Gal. 4:14; Phil. 2:6-11)	Future king, but not Son of Man/divine (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30)	Adopted Son at baptism; not divine (Mark 1:10-11; 10:17-18)	Adopted Son at birth; semi-divine (Matt. 1:18; 19:16-17)	Preexistent, divine (John 1:1; 8:58; 10:30)

- **Gospel contradictions? Jesus' birth**

Matthew	Luke
Mary and Joseph already in Bethlehem	Travel to Bethlehem to register for census
Wise men from East follow star, visit house	Jesus born in a manger, no room in inn
Herod's slaughter of innocents	Shepherds attend birth
Flight to Egypt until Herod's death	Jesus circumcised, then dedicated at the Temple
Resettle in Nazareth	Return to Nazareth

- "It may be possible to reconcile these accounts if you work hard enough at it. I suppose you'd have to say that after Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth, as in Luke, they decided to move into a house in Bethlehem, as in Matthew, and a year or so later the wise men arrived, leading to the flight to Egypt, and a later decision, then, to relocate again to Nazareth. But if that is the way you choose to read the two accounts, you should realize that what you've done is create your own 'meta-narrative'—one not found in any of the Gospels. That is, you have decided to write a Gospel of your own!" (Ehrman, *Jesus*, p. 38)

- **Gospel contradictions: was Jesus crucified after or during Passover?**

After?	During?
"And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, 'Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?'" (Mark 14:12)	"Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He [Pilate] said to the Jews, 'Behold your King!'" (John 19:14)

- "How can these accounts be reconciled? Well, they probably can't be, even though people who refuse to think that the Bible can have any mistakes of any kind have tried for years. The fact is that John claims that Jesus was executed the afternoon when the Passover lambs were sacrificed in the temple, and Mark claims that he was executed the following morning, after the lambs had been eaten." (Ehrman, *Jesus*, p. 35)

- **Did Jesus think he was the Son of Man?**

<i>Present ministry</i>	<i>Future suffering</i>	<i>Cosmic judge</i>
Luke 7:33-34 / Matt. 11:18-19 Luke 9:58 / Matt. 8:20	Mark 8:31 / Luke 9:22 Matt. 12:40	Mark 8:38 Mark 14:62

- "Point one: in multiply attested traditions Jesus did use the phrase ["Son of Man"] to refer to a cosmic judge of the earth. Point two[:]... when he does so, he seems to be referring to someone other than himself. Moreover, these are sayings that Christians themselves would not have been likely to invent, since Jesus' later followers naturally assumed that he *was* the Son of Man. These particular Son of Man sayings, at least, have a good chance of going back to Jesus on the grounds of dissimilarity. The same is not true of the other kinds of Son of Man sayings, since they presuppose that Jesus, like his later followers, *did* use the term to refer to himself. That is, they can't be shown to have been said by Jesus on the grounds of dissimilarity." (Ehrman, *Jesus*, p. 146)
- "John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'" (Luke 7:33-34 / Matt. 11:18-19)
 - **Criterion of Embarrassment:** Jesus accused of sinful lifestyle
- "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." (Luke 9:58 / Matt. 8:20)
 - **Criterion of Embarrassment:** Jesus homeless, rejected

- **Did Jesus think he was God?**

- **He chose twelve disciples.**
 - Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19:28 / Luke 22:30)
- **He demanded total love and loyalty.**
 - "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." (Matt. 10:37 / Luke 14:26)
- **He claimed authority to forgive sins.**
 - "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." (Mark 2:10)
- **The "Johannine Thunderbolt" in Q**
 - All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (Matthew 11:27 / Luke 10:22)