

Yesterday I gave one reason for thinking that Jesus considered himself the future messiah: he almost certainly told his twelve disciples that they would be future rulers in the coming kingdom. It is hard to imagine how they could be twelve rulers in a kingdom if he himself was not the one over them, as the ultimate ruler, the king. Jesus understood the coming kingdom in an apocalyptic sense: it would be brought in by a cataclysmic act of God in which the forces of evil were destroyed prior to the utopian rulership appeared. And Jesus would be the king. In *that* sense, he was to be the future messiah.

I'll give a second reason for thinking this in my next post. For now I want to show how this understanding of Jesus' view of himself makes sense of one other very puzzling datum, the betrayal of Judas.

I don't think there can be much doubt that Jesus really was handed over to the authorities by one of his own followers, Judas Iscariot. Some people have argued that Judas was an invented figure who is meant to represent "the Jew" (because of the close similarities of the names Judas/Jew). In theory that's possible of course - since then the story would have been invented by Christians to cast yet further aspersions on Jews for their rejection of Jesus. But I don't think this view is ultimately persuasive.

For one thing ...

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