

Jesus and the Apocalyptic-Visionary Challenge

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Abstract

This article offers a plausible metaphysical framework to address the Apocalyptic-Visionary Challenge stemming from the work of Bart Ehrman and Dale Allison. Their research suggests Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet whose specific predictions seemingly failed and whose resurrection appearances parallel common apparitional experiences. These findings challenge traditional Christian beliefs regarding Jesus' divine nature and the objective reality of his resurrection appearances. To address this dual challenge, the article presents a model involving hypertime and hyperspace. While theoretical, this model aims to provide a coherent and plausible account, moving beyond mere logical possibility, to affirm Jesus' divinity and the objective nature of his resurrection appearances within a philosophically informed, historical-critical context.

Keywords: Apocalyptic-Visionary Challenge, Historical Jesus, Resurrection, Space and Time, Hypertime, Hyperspace.

[JESUS E O DESAFIO APOCALÍPTICO-VISIONÁRIO]

Resumo

Este artigo oferece uma estrutura metafísica plausível para abordar o Desafio Apocalíptico-Visionário decorrente do trabalho de Bart Ehrman e Dale Allison. A pesquisa deles sugere que Jesus era um profeta apocalíptico cujas previsões específicas aparentemente falharam e cujas aparições após a ressurreição são semelhantes a experiências comuns de aparições. Essas descobertas desafiam as crenças cristãs tradicionais sobre a natureza divina de Jesus e a realidade objetiva de suas aparições após a ressurreição. Para abordar esse duplo desafio, o artigo apresenta um modelo envolvendo hipertempo e hiperespaço. Embora especulativo, esse modelo visa fornecer uma explicação coerente e plausível, indo além da mera possibilidade lógica, para afirmar a divindade de Jesus e a natureza objetiva de suas aparições após a ressurreição dentro de um contexto filosoficamente informado e histórico-crítico.

Palavras-chave: Desafio Apocalíptico-Visionário, Jesus Histórico, Ressurreição, Espaço e Tempo, Hipertempo, Hiperespaço.

1. Introduction

Recent historical-critical scholarship has presented significant challenges to traditional Christian belief in the divinity of Jesus and the objective reality of his resurrection. This article addresses what we term the Apocalyptic-Visionary Challenge (AVC): the dual problem arising from Bart Ehrman's portrayal of Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet whose predictions apparently failed, and Dale Allison's demonstration of striking parallels between Jesus' resurrection appearances and cross-cultural apparitional experiences. The central thesis of this article is that a bi-conceptual metaphysical framework—a 'hyper-ontology' composed of hypertime and hyperspace—can provide a coherent and plausible solution to the AVC. Specifically, I argue that Jesus' apocalyptic predictions were genuinely fulfilled through a metaphysical transformation occurring in hypertime at the coordinate corresponding to ~33 AD, and that his resurrection appearances were objective encounters grounded in four-dimensional space that necessarily manifested in apparitional forms to three-dimensional human consciousness. This framework aims to demonstrate that one can maintain Jesus' divine nature and the objective reality of his resurrection appearances while remaining consistent with historical-critical research. The solution moves beyond mere logical possibility to offer a substantive, philosophically informed hypothesis that addresses the coherence challenges raised by contemporary scholarship.

2. The Apocalyptic-Visionary Challenge

The Apocalyptic-Visionary Challenge emerges from the convergence of two significant scholarly developments in historical Jesus studies. Understanding this challenge requires examining both components in detail.

2.1 *The Apocalyptic Jesus (Ehrman's Challenge)*

In focusing first on the historical position furthered by Ehrman (1999), we can construe this position succinctly as follows:

- (1) (Historical Jesus) Jesus was a Jewish apocalyptic prophet who proclaimed the imminent end of the current age and God's dramatic intervention to establish his kingdom on earth, thus ushering in a new age of peace and justice.

Within the field of 'historical Jesus studies'—which is a sub-field of New Testament historical-critical studies—a particularly influential position concerning the historical Jesus has been Ehrman's (1999) portrayal of Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet—a view that builds upon, and refines, Albert Schweitzer's seminal work. In contrast to other modern interpretations, such as John Dominic Crossan's (1993) view of Jesus as a social revolutionary, or Marcus Borg's (1987) understanding of Jesus as a wisdom teacher, Ehrman (1999) emphasises Jesus's fundamentally apocalyptic worldview and message. This interpretation sees Jesus as firmly embedded within Jewish apocalyptic traditions, proclaiming the imminent end of the current age and God's dramatic intervention in history.

Now, to properly understand Ehrman's (1999) position, we must examine the apocalyptic framework of first-century Judaism that shaped Jesus's ministry. This is that, Ehrman (1999) notes that many Jews of this period believed history was divided into two ages: the present evil age, dominated by forces of evil, and the coming age, when God would reassert control. This apocalyptic perspective saw the current world as corrupted by demonic powers, with humanity suffering under their influence. The expectation was that God would soon intervene dramatically, sending a cosmic figure – the 'Son of Man' – to bring judgment upon evil forces and establish God's kingdom on earth. This framework helps explain why various apocalyptic prophets and movements emerged during this period, including John the Baptist, Theudas, and the Egyptian prophet mentioned by Josephus. These figures consistently proclaimed God's imminent intervention and called for urgent preparation. And so, during his public ministry Jesus, in Ehrman's (1999) thought, positioned himself within this apocalyptic tradition, proclaiming that God's kingdom was imminent and would arrive within his generation. His message thus emphasised urgent repentance in preparation for this coming judgment. Jesus's teachings about the kingdom were not metaphorical but referred to God's literal reign on earth, which would bring an end to all evil, suffering, and injustice. This kingdom would involve actual eating and drinking, with disciples sitting on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And Jesus' ethical teachings, far from being timeless moral wisdom, were 'interim ethics' meant to prepare people for this imminent cosmic transformation. A crucial aspect of Jesus's message, as Ehrman (1999) notes, was thus the complete reversal of fortune that would accompany God's kingdom. Those who were first would be last, and the last first. The wealthy and powerful would be brought low, while the poor and oppressed would be exalted. This explains Jesus's special concern for society's marginalised – women, children, tax collectors, and sinners. And his followers were called to demonstrate their readiness through radical lifestyle changes: giving up possessions, leaving family behind, and living as though the kingdom had already begun. These demands weren't meant to create a better society but to prepare for its imminent supernatural transformation.

The specific evidence for Jesus's apocalyptic outlook, as noted by Ehrman (1999), appears consistently in our earliest sources (i.e., Mark, Q) and only becomes muted in later traditions (i.e., John, Thomas) – which suggests its historical authenticity. More specifically, the historical authenticity of Jesus's apocalyptic message is supported by multiple lines of evidence: first, it appears consistently in our earliest sources. Second, some sayings about the Son of Man suggest Jesus saw this figure as distinct from himself – unlike later Christian views. Third, Jesus's ministry began with John the Baptist (an apocalyptic prophet) and produced an apocalyptic early Christian movement – suggesting apocalypticism was central throughout. Moreover, his predictions about the temple's destruction and calls for urgent preparation align with other known Jewish apocalyptic prophets of the period. It is important to note, however, that Ehrman (1999) argues that Jesus did believe the kingdom was present in a limited way through his ministry – seen in his healings, exorcisms, and gathering of followers. However, these were merely foretastes of the dramatic cosmic intervention he expected imminently. This is that, his parables of seeds growing into large plants or leaven permeating dough illustrated how the kingdom's small beginnings would lead to dramatic transformation. When this intervention didn't occur as expected, according to Ehrman (1999), later Christian traditions began modifying or minimising these apocalyptic elements, leading to the less apocalyptic portrayals in later sources like John and Thomas.

2.2 *The Visionary Jesus (Allison's Challenge)*

This transformation of early Christian thought thus provides essential context for understanding how Jesus's followers interpreted and experienced his post-resurrection appearances. This is that, in a similar manner to Ehrman (1999), Allison (2021) works within the scholarly tradition that views Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet who anticipated God's imminent intervention in history. So, in building on this understanding of early Christian experiences, Allison (2021) conducts a comprehensive comparative study of apparitional experiences to illuminate the New Testament accounts of Jesus's resurrection, the results of which we can state succinctly as follows:

- (2) (Resurrection Appearances) The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus were visionary encounters that combined features common to apparitional experiences of the deceased across cultures with a unique revelatory significance that convinced his followers of his bodily resurrection and divine vindication.

Central to Allison's (2021) analysis is the contention that many features of the post-resurrection narratives find striking parallels in the phenomenology of visionary encounters with the recently deceased, reported across cultures and history. Allison notes such apparitions are common, especially in bereavement contexts. These visions frequently involve the realistic appearance of the deceased individual, sometimes accompanied by verbal communication or physical interaction. Intriguingly, apparitions may be perceived by multiple witnesses simultaneously, and can even leave apparently objective traces, such as a sense of presence detectable by others or the impression of footprints. And so, in surveying a broad selection of case studies and first-hand testimonies, Allison (2021) highlights numerous points of contact with the gospel traditions. Like the risen Jesus, apparitional figures are often described as suddenly appearing and vanishing, passing through physical barriers, and exhibiting a paradoxical combination of familiarity and strangeness. Percipients may initially fail to recognise the identity of the apparition, or mistake it for an ordinary person, only later grasping its true significance. Conversations, where they occur, are typically brief and enigmatic, rarely extending beyond a few phrases or simple instructions. Allison (2021) is particularly interested in cases where apparitions of the deceased are perceived as physically solid and interactive, capable of being touched, heard, and even seen to consume food. He draws parallels between these accounts and the gospel narratives that emphasise the tangible reality of the risen Jesus, such as his eating with the disciples or inviting Thomas to touch his wounds. While recognising the theological and apologetic dimensions of these stories, Allison (2021) suggests that they may also reflect authentic visionary experiences that convinced the disciples of Jesus' bodily resurrection.

Now, an important aspect of Allison's (2021) approach is the recognition that apparitional experiences can be both 'objective' and 'subjective' in character. This is that, Allison (2021) cites numerous examples of visions that seem to involve a genuine external reality, such as those collectively perceived by multiple witnesses or leaving tangible traces like footprints. At the same time, Allison (2021) acknowledges the role of psychological and cultural factors in shaping the interpretation and significance of these encounters. Importantly, Allison himself is sympathetic to the reality of paranormal phenomena and argues that these parallels enhance, rather than diminish, the historical credibility of the appearance narratives, suggesting they fit known patterns of human experience with the anomalous. While Allison resists purely naturalistic reductions and emphasizes the unique revelatory claims of the Easter kerygma, his comparative study highlights phenomenological similarities that require explanation.

One key insight from Allison's (2021) analysis is the inherent polyvalence of visionary phenomena. Similar experiences can be construed differently depending on the percipient's worldview, challenging notions of visions as self-interpreting. The same apparition might be dismissed as a trick of the mind in one context or hailed as transformative in another. This hermeneutical flexibility reminds us that an event's significance is shaped by the framework within which it's received. Regarding apparitional phenomena causation, Allison maintains a cautious approach, surveying explanations from naturalistic to supernatural without endorsing any single model. While acknowledging historical inquiry's limits, he suggests the evidence questions reductionistic accounts. For Allison, understanding resurrection appearances requires holistic engagement with theological and existential claims. The work of Ehrman (1999) and Allison (2021) challenges traditional Christian understandings of Jesus' divine nature and his resurrection appearances by situating Jesus within Jewish apocalypticism and comparing New Testament accounts to cross-cultural apparitional experiences. By situating Jesus within the context of Jewish apocalypticism and comparing the New Testament accounts to cross-cultural reports of apparitional experiences, their research calls into question two fundamental tenets of Christian faith: the belief in Jesus' divinity and the claim that his post-resurrection appearances were objective, historical events — this is what we have termed the Apocalyptic-Visionary Challenge (hereafter, AVC). This is that, Ehrman's portrayal of Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet expecting imminent divine intervention raises doubts about his divine status, as if Jesus was mistaken about this significant matter, it's difficult to reconcile with claims of divine knowledge. And the challenge from Allison's work isn't that he views appearances as merely subjective, but that the observed parallels demand a framework explaining how potentially objective events could manifest congruently with common apparitional phenomenology. In light of the AVC, traditional Christian claims must be re-examined alongside this comparative data.

The AVC thus presents a serious consistency dilemma for Christians who value historical study. On the one hand, intellectual honesty requires them to engage seriously with historical evidence suggesting Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet who made failed predictions, and that his resurrection appearances share notable features with cross-cultural apparitional experiences. However, on the other hand, these same Christians seek to maintain their faith in Jesus's divine nature and the objective reality of his resurrection. And thus for those who seek to maintain a rational world view, the challenge cannot be simply dismissed, as it emerges from careful historical scholarship rather than mere scepticism. Hence, any thoughtful Christian response must wrestle with how to reconcile these historical findings with traditional doctrinal claims about Jesus's divine knowledge and the unique, objective character of the resurrection appearances, whether through specific Christological adjustments or metaphysical frameworks like the one proposed here. This thus demands developing a solution that can meaningfully integrate both historical criticism and religious faith, rather than sacrificing one for the other. Within a philosophical context, addressing this challenge requires constructing a *coherent and plausible narrative* that demonstrates a way to reconcile the apparent contradictions — namely, the tension between Jesus' apocalyptic predictions and their apparent non-fulfilment, and the paradoxical nature of his resurrection appearances as both visionary and objective. While acknowledging the theoretical nature inherent in metaphysical models dealing with historical events, the goal is to offer more than just a demonstration of logical possibility. We aim for a *plausible framework* that integrates the historical data with theological commitments in a conceptually robust manner. By constructing a model illustrating how Jesus' predictions could plausibly relate to a real metaphysical transformation and how his appearances could be both visionary and objective, we provide a philosophical basis for maintaining these core beliefs. The proposed hyper-ontology, therefore, serves not merely to show

bare possibility, but to offer a *substantive, albeit metaphysical, hypothesis* that addresses the coherence issues raised by the AVC, aiming for explanatory power and integration rather than simply avoiding logical contradiction. Now, this specific model will be constructed using a bi-conceptual framework – a ‘hyper-ontology’ – which is composed of the concepts of ‘hypertime’, as developed by Hud Hudson, and ‘hyperspace’, as also developed by Hudson, and further explicated by Ben Page. This all will provide a means for illustrating the genuine possibility that Jesus possessed a divine nature and that his resurrection appearances were objective in reality, thus allowing one to maintain these key theological commitments within a philosophically informed, historical-critical context.

Thus, the plan is as follows: in section 3 (‘The Nature of the Ontological Framework’), our hyper-ontology will be explicated, analysing the concepts of hypertime and hyperspace. Section 4 (‘The Hyper-Ontology and the Apocalyptic Jesus’) will apply hypertime to the first aspect of the AVC, demonstrating how Jesus’ apocalyptic predictions were fulfilled through a metaphysical transformation. Section 5 (‘The Hyper-Ontology and the Resurrection Appearances’) will apply hyperspace to the second aspect, showing how the resurrection appearances could be objective encounters grounded in hyperspace while taking apparitional forms. This framework will illustrate that, contra the AVC, one can maintain Jesus’ divine nature and the objectivity of his resurrection within a historical-critical context. Finally, the concluding section (‘Conclusion’) will summarise these results and conclude the article.

3. The Nature of the Ontological Framework

The central concepts of our hyper-ontology: hypertime and hyperspace, focus on the temporal and spatial structure of reality, and can be stated succinctly as follows:

(3) (Hypertime)

An entity *x* is hypertime if it is a quasi-temporal dimension that exists outside of regular time and accounts for its change and expansion.

(4) (Hyperspace)

An entity *x* is hyperspace if it is a spatial dimension(s) that encompasses, and extends beyond, the three common spatial dimensions.

Focusing first on the notion of hypertime, one can utilise various temporal ontologies to conceptualise this notion; however, for our specific task, we can focus on the temporal ontology termed the ‘Growing Block Theory’. According to Hudson (2014), the Growing Block Theory (hereafter, the GBT) presents a view of the universe in which the volume of spacetime ‘expands’ over time. This is that, at any specific point in time, only one moment is distinguished – the moment aligned with the hyperplane at the front of the expanding block – which we can term the ‘leading edge’ of the block. This leading edge, as noted by Hudson (2014), is the newest addition to the block – in that it did not exist just before, and though it will continue to exist, it will not be the leading edge for long. Thus, in its fleeting moment of prominence – that is, before it becomes deeply embedded in the block’s core – its array of facts and events are considered present. However, as a moment passes, this combination of facts and events will be relegated to the past and become permanently set within the block. As Peter van Inwagen (2012) notes, why the GBT is termed as such is because this theory conceptualises reality as a growing block – where it is a ‘block’ because the ‘B-relations’ (once established) between its elements are permanent and unchangeable, and it is described as ‘growing’ because, if one considers the temporal axis as a dimension, then reality expands along this temporal dimension: at any point in time, it timelessly includes all the parts it had at previous times, along with additional parts. Now, as noted by Hudson (2014), according to some assessments,

the GBT is seen as a theory that integrates the strongest aspects of its main competitors. That is, on the one hand, similar to Presentism, it asserts the singularity of the present, acknowledges objective and unchangeable temporal characteristics, values tense, and supports the real flow of time. However, on the other hand, like Eternalism, it offers justifications for past truths, establishes connections for relationships across time, and accepts the reality of numerous entities that aren't currently observable. Thus, there seem to be good reasons for adopting this temporal ontology as a working theory for conceptualising the further notion of hypertime. And thus, in conceiving of this notion within this ontology, some philosophers, according to van Inwagen (2012), have taken it to be the case that in conceiving of reality as a growing block, then one should also posit a 'second sort of time' for this growth to occur. That is, a common reason for proposing the existence of hypertime, as noted by Hudson (2014), is that for one to understand the nature of change in this context, it is necessary to introduce a 'quasi-temporal dimension' that lies outside regular time, which allows for time itself to undergo changes. This 'second sort of time' or 'quasi-temporal dimension'—hypertime—is used to explain the GBT more clearly such that the block of spacetime is a certain size at one point in hypertime (hypertime₀) and expands to a larger size at another (hypertime₁). Hence, the amount of time this growth takes is measured in units of 'hypertime', and it is during this hypertime that time itself expands. Thus, as noted by Samuel Lebens and Tyron Goldschmidt (2017) in hypertime, one can use 'hypertenses' to describe temporal states—where what 'hyper-was' is equivalent to conditions at earlier hypertime-points; what 'hyper-is' corresponds to the current hypertime; what 'hyper-will-be' describes future conditions in hypertime. And thus these 'hypertenses' help one articulate how time can change, which in turn clarifies the GBT, where now one can understand that the GBT posits that spacetime expands over hypertime. Within this framework, as Lebens and Goldschmidt (2017) note, the past consists of the internal portions of the spacetime block, while the present is the outermost hyperplane where growth occurs. And thus this setup necessitates a quasi-temporal dimension—hypertime—to logically account for the change and expansion of time. And to describe this growth rate, one can say, according to Hudson (2014), that the block enlarges by a set number of standard events per second and 'hypergrows' by a number of 'ticktocks' per hypertime second—with 'ticktock' being a variable interval in hypertime analogous to a second in regular time. Another way to visualise this, according to van Inwagen (2014), is to imagine an immaterial rational entity, the 'Intelligence', existing outside our conventional time, experiencing events sequentially as they occur in hyper-time. This Intelligence could observe physical reality becoming temporally longer as hyper-time progresses, similar to how humans might see a railway extending with new tracks. Hence, Reality not only grows as time passes (measured by a certain number of standard events per second) but also 'hyper-grows' as hyper-time advances, measured by a certain number of 'ticktocks' per hypertime second.

We can illustrate the concept of hypertime in relation to the Growing Block Theory (GBT) as shown conceptually in Figure 1 (Here, 'Time Block' represents the accumulation of spacetime moments (past and present). Hypertime is depicted as a dimension external to this block, along which the block itself grows or changes. Note that for accurate representation, hypertime should be considered orthogonal (perpendicular) to the time dimension within the block, a relationship difficult to fully capture in a 2D diagram. The arrow from 'Hypertime' indicates its conceptual role in governing the progression or existence of the spacetime block):

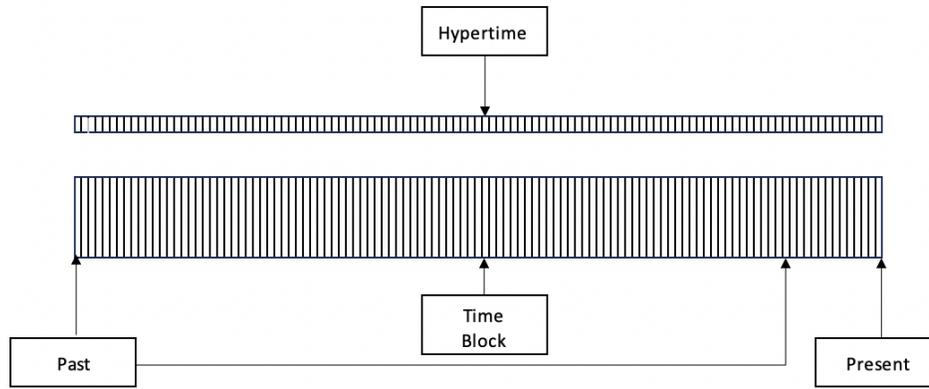


Figure 1. Hypertime

Now, importantly for our task, the configuration of the spacetime block at any hypertime point determines what is past and present but does not restrict its future states—each configuration is contingent and could potentially be different at another hypertime. This is that, theoretically, as noted by Hudson (2014), anything from a completely absent block to various rearrangements or modifications of the block’s structure is possible as hypertime progresses—where this could happen either by design or by random changes, affecting either the block’s edge or the entire block itself.

Now, focusing on the notion of hyperspace, this concept expresses the existence of spatial dimensions beyond the familiar three. In this framework, objects in 1-space exist in one dimension (x), in 2-space in two dimensions (x, y), in 3-space in three dimensions (x, y, z), and in 4-space in four dimensions (x, y, z, q). Moreover, according to Hudson (2005), it is intricately linked with historical and theoretical developments in physics and philosophy. More precisely, it originates from the work of Theodor Kaluza, a mathematician from Königsberg, who, in 1919, proposed an innovative theory to unify Einstein’s theory of gravity with Maxwell’s electromagnetic theory. Kaluza’s crucial insight, as noted by Hudson (2005), involved the introduction of an additional spatial dimension. This notion of an extra dimension afforded an elegance to his theory, leading Kaluza to believe that his work possessed a remarkable formal unity, suggesting it was more than a mere coincidence or accident. Albert Einstein, impressed by Kaluza’s ideas, helped in getting the paper published in 1921. However, despite initial interest, as Hudson notes, Kaluza’s theory was soon eclipsed by the burgeoning field of quantum mechanics. However, about half a century later, the concept of higher dimensions resurfaced in the physics community, as noted by Brian Greene (2000), in the ‘Modern Kaluza-Klein Theory’, which posits that the physical understanding of the universe requires considering additional spatial dimensions beyond the known three to account for all forces, including the newly discovered strong and weak forces. By the 1970s, as Greene notes, theories had advanced to include numerous tiny, extra dimensions, possibly curled up into complex shapes, to accommodate these forces and the requirements of supersymmetry. However, these theories faced challenges until the introduction of string theory in 1984, which required additional spatial dimensions for its mathematical consistency, particularly to resolve the negative probabilities that emerge from quantum mechanics. String theory, according to Greene (2000), suggests our universe has nine space dimensions and one time dimension, with the extra dimensions being imperceptible at our current level of technological capability. This theory has significant implications for the fundamental properties of the universe, as the geometry of these extra dimensions directly influences observable physical attributes like particle masses and charges.

Now, outside of the scientific evidence, Hudson takes it to be the case that there are philosophical grounds for positing the existence of more than three dimensions – specifically, these grounds being the philosophical puzzles it can address – notably the concepts of fine-tuning and incongruent counterparts. First, for the fine-tuning argument in relation to hyperspace, Hudson takes it to be based on the observation that the universe’s conditions seem extraordinarily well-calibrated for the existence of life. This remarkable fine-tuning raises the question of whether It’s merely a cosmic coincidence or indicative of something more profound – and it is the concept of hyperspace that offers one possible explanation. Why this is the case is because it posits a universe composed of multiple dimensions, which potentially explains the fine-tuning as a natural outcome of a vast and varied multiverse. That is, in such a multiverse, our universe, with its life-supporting conditions, might just be one among countless others with different physical laws and constants. This perspective suggests that our universe’s fine-tuning might not be as improbable as it seems when viewed in isolation, but rather an inevitable outcome in a vast landscape of varied multiple dimension universe. Second, the concept of incongruent counterparts further supports the concept of hyperspace. This philosophical concept, first noted by Immanuel Kant, revolves around objects that are mirror images of each other, such as left and right hands, which cannot be superimposed despite their similarities. The idea of higher dimensions, as proposed by Hudson (2005), offers a potential solution to this puzzle. By introducing an additional spatial dimension, it becomes theoretically possible to ‘rotate’ these incongruent counterparts in a higher-dimensional space, allowing them to align. This idea, while initially abstract, has gained traction with the advent of theories like string theory, which inherently rely on the existence of higher dimensions.

These lines of evidence thus illustrate how the notion of hyperspace, originating from a mathematical attempt to unify gravitational and electromagnetic forces, has grown into a rich field of theoretical inquiry, intersecting with both philosophy and advanced physics, beyond one’s immediate perception. One’s position concerning the reality of hyperspace is similar, as noted by Ben Page (2021), to the characters in Edwin A. Abbott’s ‘Flatland’, who are confined to 2-space – with humans typically experiencing 3-space. To better understand this, one can thus draw an analogy with Flatland. Imagine, as Page (2021) does, slicing a 3-dimensional space into multiple 2-dimensional sections, each resembling Flatland. Reassembling these slices recreates the 3-space. Similarly, we might inhabit a slice of a 4-dimensional space. Although visualising this is as challenging as a Flatlander imagining 3-space. However, one can indeed proceed forward with a particular model provided by Page (2021). This is that, in Page’s (2021) model, 4-space exists, but only certain 3-space objects participate in it. This is akin to the Flatland narrative, where a 3-dimensional character, while existing in 2-space, also engages with the third dimension, unavailable to Flatlanders. In this model, only specific entities engage with 4-space, which is envisioned as another dimension, while the rest of the world remains in 3-space. That is, there is thus a layered reality, where dimensions exist as a spectrum of spaces, each with its unique properties and inhabitants. In this layered framework, beings and objects are generally limited to interacting within the dimensions they are native to. However, there are exceptions of certain entities that can bridge these dimensional divides. Furthermore, Page’s model expresses the idea of interconnectedness across different levels of reality. Just as the entities in 4-space can impact or influence the 3-space, this model proposes a universe where dimensions are not isolated but are part of a cohesive, interconnected whole. This concept challenges one’s conventional understanding of space and invites further consideration of the possibilities of a much more complex and richly layered universe than what one’s immediate sensory experiences reveal. Moving to hyperspace, Figure 2 offers a conceptual visualization. The inner region represents our familiar 3-dimensional space, while the outer region represents a 4-dimensional space (hyperspace) that encompasses

it. This model suggests our 3D reality might be like a 'slice' or boundary within a larger 4D reality. Crucially, a true fourth spatial dimension would be orthogonal (perpendicular) to all three of our familiar dimensions (length, width, height). Depicting this accurately in a 2D or even 3D image is impossible; such diagrams must inherently suppress dimensions or use analogy. Here, the nesting of shapes serves as an analogy for 4-space containing 3-space. The model posits that while most interactions occur within 3-space, certain entities or phenomena might engage with or manifest from this embedding 4-space.

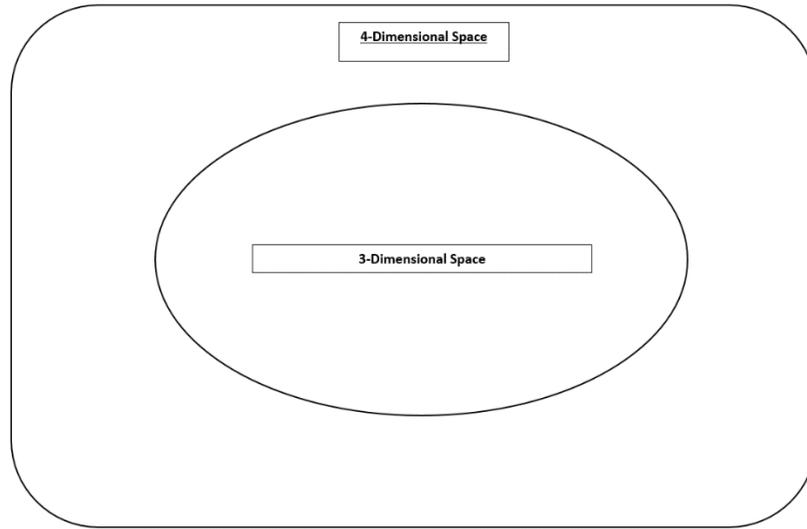


Figure 2. Hyperspace

One can thus see here how 4-space (the outer sphere) encompasses objects from 3-space (the inner sphere). In this model, the 4-space is not just a higher dimension; rather, it is a framework that contains the 3-dimensional space one experiences. That is, the inner figure, which one perceives as an independent three-dimensional object, is actually encompassed by a larger 4-space object. One's perception is thus limited – as one only sees its three-dimensional aspect, much like a shadow or a slice of the full form. The outer spherical above, however, represents the 4-space that extends beyond the limits of one's perception, suggesting there's more to physical reality than one can see or understand from their 3-space perspective. This fourth dimension, represented by the outer cube, is a larger spatial reality that contains and transcends mundane reality. This model posits that while one exists and interacts within the 3-space environment, certain objects or entities – also engage with the 4-space, having properties and relationships not visible or comprehensible within the confines of three-dimensional space.

Taking both of these concepts of our hyper-ontology into account, we can now focus our attention on applying them to the issue at hand of addressing the AVC.

4. The Hyper-Ontology and the Apocalyptic Jesus

In addressing the first part of the AVC, we can utilise the concept of hypertime to elucidate how Jesus' apocalyptic predictions could have been fulfilled in a manner that preserves his divine nature. The proposed solution using the concept of hypertime is presented as a plausible metaphysical model demonstrating how Jesus' apocalyptic predictions could be understood as fulfilled in a way that preserves his divine nature. While acknowledging its theoretical elements, the model aims for coherence and

explanatory power concerning the historical data and theological claims. We can state the nature of this solution as follows:

- (5) (Historical Jesus*) Jesus was a Jewish apocalyptic prophet who, with perfect knowledge, proclaimed a metaphysical transformation at the hypertime coordinate corresponding to ~33 AD, where God would replace the old block of reality with a new one representing his kingdom, though this transformation's manifestation in human experience would unfold gradually over time.

In unpacking this solution, one can understand that it centres on the understanding that at the moment in hypertime corresponding to the events of 33 AD in our timeline (where 33 AD is usually taken, in historical-critical studies, to be the year Jesus died and purportedly resurrected), the momentous events of Jesus' death and resurrection initiated a metaphysical transformation that actually fulfilled his apocalyptic predictions, though not in the way his contemporaries expected or understood. In conceptualising how this could be the case, let us consider that at this critical juncture *in hypertime*, correlated with Jesus' death and resurrection (~33 AD), God executed an intervention that fundamentally altered the metaphysical structure of reality. This is that, when Jesus proclaimed the imminent arrival of God's kingdom and the end of the current age, he was speaking with perfect divine knowledge about a metaphysical transformation that would indeed occur through his own death and resurrection. That is, at the *hypertime coordinate corresponding to ~33 AD*, God removed the existing 'block' of reality—the old age dominated by evil powers that Jesus had prophesied would end—and replaced it with a new block representing the promised new age of the kingdom. This dramatic intervention accomplished precisely what Jesus had predicted: the end of one age and the inauguration of another.

The apparent 'failure' of Jesus' predictions dissolves when we understand that the kingdom's arrival occurred as a *metaphysical replacement of the spacetime block within hypertime*, an event whose effects manifest progressively within the experiential timeline of creatures embedded within that block, rather than as an instantaneously perceptible alteration of their immediate reality. Thus, just as God is an omnipotent being who can bring about any logically possible event, the replacement of one reality block with another *in hypertime* constituted the actual, albeit metaphysical, fulfilment of Jesus' prophecies about God's dramatic intervention in history. The old age, characterised by the dominion of evil powers and separation from God, was literally replaced by a new age—the kingdom age that Jesus had proclaimed was coming. This metaphysical transformation thus explains why Jesus could speak with divine authority and perfect knowledge about events that seemed, from a purely historical perspective, not to have occurred as predicted. The kingdom did come with power, but its arrival took place at the level of hypertime and metaphysical reality rather than in the way his contemporaries expected. The replacement of the old block with the new one constituted nothing less than the cosmic transformation Jesus had foretold, though its experiential unfolding within ordinary historical time would be gradual. Moreover, this understanding illuminates why Jesus could speak of the kingdom as both present and future in his teachings. As at the level of hypertime, the kingdom's arrival was absolutely decisive and complete *at the hypertime coordinate* linked to 33 AD. However, the manifestation of this new metaphysical reality within ordinary human experience and history would necessarily be progressive, akin to a gradual awakening or adaptation to the new underlying structure of reality. The apparent tension between Jesus' predictions of an imminent cosmic transformation and the continuing presence of evil and suffering in the world is thus resolved not by denying the change, but by

distinguishing the instantaneous metaphysical shift *in hypertime* from its gradual perceptual and historical manifestation *in time*.

This solution also helps us understand why Jesus could speak with such urgency about preparation for the kingdom's arrival while also teaching about its gradual manifestation through parables of seeds and leaven (Matthew 13:20-21; 31-33). He knew with divine certainty that *at a specific point in hypertime* (corresponding to ~33 AD)... a decisive metaphysical transformation would occur through his death and resurrection. The urgency of his message stemmed from perfect knowledge of this impending cosmic event, while his teachings about gradual growth reflected his understanding of how this metaphysical reality would progressively manifest in human experience. The hypertime framework thus preserves both Jesus' divine nature and the truthfulness of his apocalyptic predictions by showing how they were fulfilled at a metaphysical level through his death and resurrection. Rather than being mistaken about the timing or nature of God's intervention, Jesus spoke with perfect divine knowledge about a transformation that would indeed occur exactly as he predicted, though its manifestation in ordinary human experience would unfold over time. This understanding allows us to maintain that Jesus possessed divine knowledge while explaining why the kingdom's arrival appeared different from what his contemporaries expected. Therefore, the apparent tension between Jesus' apocalyptic predictions and their seeming non-fulfilment is able to be fully addressed when viewed through the lens of hypertime. Jesus' divine nature, and thus perfect knowledge, are preserved because his predictions were actually fulfilled through a metaphysical transformation that occurred precisely when and how he knew it would. The fact that this transformation's manifestation in ordinary human experience has been gradual does not negate the decisive nature of what occurred *in hypertime at the point correlating with 33 AD*. Instead, it reflects the complex relationship between metaphysical reality and human perception, between the kingdom's definitive arrival in hypertime and its progressive manifestation in historical time.

Figure 3 below thus illustrates the proposed hypertime solution. It depicts two states of the spacetime block existing at different moments *in hypertime*. The first block represents reality *up to* the hypertime moment correlated with 33 AD. The second, 'New Block', represents reality *after* that hypertime moment, having metaphysically replaced the old one. Note: This diagram conceptualizes a change *across* hypertime, where different spacetime blocks exist at different hypertime coordinates. The hypertime coordinate *corresponding* to the 33 AD event-complex marks the transition point *in hypertime*. The depiction shows the *entire* new block existing from its beginning point in time at the subsequent hypertime moment; it does not imply a temporal 'gap' within our standard timeline, but rather a substitution of realities occurring *within* the hypertime dimension. Again, the orthogonality of hypertime to our time must be conceptually understood beyond the diagram's limitations.

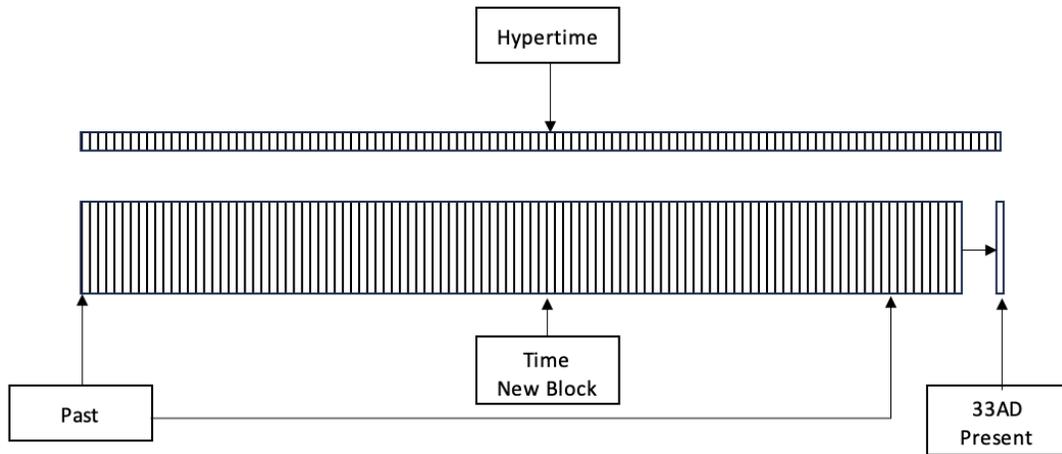


Figure 3. Hypertime Solution

In adopting our hyper-ontology to address the first part of the AVC, it is thus essential to differentiate between historical and hyperhistorical claims regarding Jesus' apocalyptic message. Historically, Jesus proclaimed the imminent arrival of God's kingdom, was crucified, and was resurrected—events for which there is substantial scholarly defense regarding their historical reality. Contemporary historians and philosophers such as N.T. Wright (2003), Richard Swinburne (2003), Michael Licona (2010), and William Lane Craig (2008) have provided extensive arguments for the historical credibility of Jesus' resurrection based on criteria of historical authenticity, multiple independent attestation, and the explanatory power of the resurrection hypothesis for early Christian origins. These scholars argue that the resurrection, while certainly extraordinary, meets standard historical criteria for determining the authenticity of ancient events. And hyperhistorically, these same events can be perceived as a metaphysical transformation in the structure of reality itself, fulfilling his apocalyptic predictions. Now, just as individuals often adjust slowly to major societal changes even after they have officially occurred, humanity might not immediately perceive the radical transformation brought about by Jesus' death and resurrection—the old age has ended in their refreshed historical context, but they hyper-experience its effects. However, the present slice of the block includes individuals who have memories of living under the old age, who might still experience the effects of evil powers due to their present behavioural dispositions towards operating within that old framework, and thus, the perception of the old age's continuation can spread as a social contagion. In subsequent slices of time, this perceived legacy of the old age could persist in social behaviours and cultural narratives, even though ontologically, the dominion of evil powers has been eradicated with the old block.

Now, just as individuals often adjust slowly to major societal changes even after they have officially occurred, humanity might not immediately perceive the radical transformation brought about by Jesus' death and resurrection—the old age has ended in their refreshed historical context, but perception, behaviour, and social structures exhibit inertia, adapting slowly, analogous to how news and its effects propagate gradually across a vast region after a regime change. However, the present slice of the block includes individuals who have memories of living under the old age, who might still experience the effects of evil powers due to their present behavioural dispositions towards operating within that old framework, and thus, the perception of the old age's continuation can spread as a social contagion. In subsequent slices of time, this perceived

legacy of the old age could persist in social behaviours and cultural narratives, even though ontologically, the dominion of evil powers has been eradicated with the old block. This seemingly paradoxical situation can be understood further through the analogy of a vast empire that has fallen, but news travels slowly. Despite the change in power, remote provinces continue living under the old system due to lack of information. When messengers finally arrive proclaiming the new reality, scepticism and disbelief may arise, requiring time for acceptance and adaptation. This mirrors the early Christian task of spreading the gospel about the new age inaugurated by Jesus. Governance and social structures slowly change as the new reality sinks in, similar to individuals adapting to live as citizens of the new age. However, old habits and cultural lag persist, causing a disjoint between the new metaphysical reality and people's actions. Thus, humanity struggles to fully embrace the fulfilled implications of Jesus' message, continuing to live as if the old age persists despite its metaphysical defeat. That is, in this new reality established by Jesus' death and resurrection, the actual ontological state of the world is one where the old age has ended, and God's kingdom has been inaugurated; however, residual memories and entrenched social patterns may not reflect this change immediately. To recapitulate the core of what has been established here, ontologically, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ at the hypertime coordinate corresponding to ~33 AD fundamentally alters the structure of reality from a metaphysical perspective – as at this hyper-moment, God removes the existing 'block' of reality dominated by evil powers and their authority, replacing it with a new, transformed block where the promised kingdom age has begun. This change is profound and complete on a metaphysical level – it fulfils Jesus' apocalyptic predictions and inaugurates the new age through a transformation more radical than his contemporaries could have imagined.

However, despite this ontological reset, the persistent experiences of the old age's characteristics among humanity can be likened to the remnants of past perceptions that continue to influence behaviour and societal expectations. This disjunction between the new metaphysical order and the unchanged physical experience is key to addressing the AVC. The apparent non-fulfilment of Jesus' apocalyptic predictions does not necessarily refute their truth but highlights a lag in human perception and societal adaptation to the new metaphysical reality already established. More fully, the core of this issue lies in understanding that while a significant metaphysical change has occurred, fulfilling Jesus' apocalyptic message through his death and resurrection, the physical manifestations of these changes can lag significantly behind due to several factors: firstly, the metaphysical change, while absolute in its own domain, does not automatically alter the physical and social structures that have been established previously. These structures include deeply ingrained human behaviours, societal norms, and cultural narratives that have developed under the influence of the old age over millennia. And thus, just as it takes time for a society to change its laws and customs following a major political revolution, it similarly takes time for human civilisation to adjust to the new age that Jesus inaugurated. Secondly, there is a significant aspect of human perception and collective memory that continues to influence how new realities are accepted and integrated into daily life. People's beliefs and expectations, shaped by their past experiences, can create cognitive dissonance when faced with a reality that contradicts their long-held views of how the world works. This dissonance can prevent individuals from fully accepting or even recognising that Jesus' apocalyptic predictions have indeed been fulfilled, though not in the way they expected. That is, they may continue to feel and act as though the old age still reigns because their personal and collective consciousness has not yet aligned with the new metaphysical order. Moreover, the unchanged physical experience can be attributed to the persistence of residual effects of the old metaphysical realities. Even if the old age has been metaphysically ended and the kingdom age inaugurated, the consequences of past

actions and the remnants of previous structures might still play out in the physical world. This is similar to how echoes of an overthrown regime might linger long after its formal end. This disconnect necessitates a proactive approach to bridge the gap. It involves not only recognising the new metaphysical realities but also actively working to realign societal norms, behaviours, and perceptions to reflect this new state. Therefore, through this continued effort, the apparent tension between Jesus' apocalyptic message and its fulfilment can be resolved, and his divine nature and perfect knowledge can be maintained within our proposed framework.

5. The Hyper-Ontology and the Resurrection Appearances

In addressing the second part of the AVC, we can utilise the concept of hyperspace to provide a metaphysical grounding for how visionary experiences could be genuinely objective encounters with the risen Jesus. Similarly, the hyperspace explanation for the nature of the resurrection appearances is offered as a *plausible metaphysical model* providing a coherent account of these experiences. It aims to demonstrate how these encounters could be objectively real yet manifest in ways consistent with visionary phenomena, offering a framework that seeks plausibility beyond bare logical possibility. We can state this solution succinctly as follows:

- (6) (Resurrection Appearances*) The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus were objective encounters with him operating in four-dimensional space, which necessarily took on apparitional forms when perceived by three-dimensional human consciousness, thus providing grounds for how these experiences could be simultaneously visionary in nature yet grounded in physical reality.

In unpacking this part of our hyper-ontology, we must first understand, as noted before, that hyperspace is a framework where additional dimensions beyond our common three-dimensional experience exist, which can provide a coherent explanation for the apparitional yet objective nature of these encounters. According to the various accounts, as noted previously, the disciples experienced Jesus in ways that combined features of both apparitional phenomena and physical presence—appearing suddenly, being sometimes unrecognisable, yet also eating and allowing himself to be touched. Now, in placing these visionary experiences within a hyperspace framework, we can understand them as *genuine perceptions of Jesus operating in four-dimensional space*. That is, while the experiences took on apparitional forms due to the limitations of human three-dimensional perception, they were grounded in the objective reality of Jesus' presence in hyperspace. This explains why the encounters shared features with other apparitions while maintaining their unique character as objective revelatory events grounded in Jesus' actual presence in hyperspace. Hence, just as a three-dimensional being would appear mysterious and paradoxical to inhabitants of Flatland, Jesus' four-dimensional presence would necessarily manifest in ways that seemed apparitional to three-dimensional human perception. Understanding these as perceptions of a 4D reality interacting with 3D consciousness provides a framework where the *nature of this cross-dimensional interaction itself* could plausibly generate experiences sharing characteristics with other reported apparitions (like sudden appearances/disappearances, variable recognition, paradoxical tangibility), including phenomena such as bereavement visions, precisely *because* such interaction transcends normal 3D perception and spatial engagement.

Furthermore, Jesus' ability to be present to multiple groups of disciples through visionary experiences can be explained through his existence in hyperspace. If Jesus was occupying a slightly higher dimensional space, he could be simultaneously present to different groups in ways that would necessarily take on apparitional features when perceived from our three-dimensional perspective. The varying details in different witnesses' accounts could thus reflect different three-dimensional 'slices' of the same four-dimensional reality—just as different two-dimensional slices of a three-dimensional object can appear quite different while all being genuine representations of the same object. Moreover, the capability of these visions to convey genuine revelation and new understanding aligns perfectly with the hyperspace framework. Operating from four-dimensional space, Jesus could interface with an individual's human consciousness in ways that transcended normal three-dimensional limitations while remaining grounded in objective reality. This explains how these experiences could be simultaneously visionary in form yet objective in content—they were necessary translations of four-dimensional reality into terms comprehensible to three-dimensional beings—a good example of this are the resurrection appearances to Paul (in Acts 9:3-9; 22:6-11; 26:12-18), where his encounters with the risen Jesus took on dramatically visionary forms (being knocked to the ground, seeing a bright light, hearing a voice) while conveying objectively real content that transformed his understanding and mission.

Furthermore, this framework helps us understand why these experiences could be both collective and individual, both physical and apparitional. As, again, as a three-dimensional object passing through Flatland would appear differently to different two-dimensional observers while remaining the same object, Jesus' four-dimensional presence could manifest in various ways to different observers while maintaining its objective unity. The disciples could thus share in the same objective encounter while experiencing it through their individual perceptual frameworks. This hyperspace understanding also illuminates why the resurrection appearances occurred within a specific timeframe and to specific witnesses. The interface between four-dimensional and three-dimensional reality required certain conditions and preparation—again, in illustrating this through our helpful Flatland example, this is similar to how the Flatland narrator needed to prepare his two-dimensional audience for encounters with three-dimensional reality. And thus once these foundational encounters were complete, the mode of Jesus' presence could shift to one mediated through the Spirit and the church, while remaining grounded in the same objective four-dimensional reality. Therefore, by understanding the resurrection appearances through the lens of hyperspace, we can maintain both their visionary nature and their objective reality. The paradoxical features of these encounters—their combination of apparitional and physical characteristics, their varying yet consistent nature across different witnesses, their ability to convey genuine revelation—all find coherent explanation when understood as three-dimensional perceptual manifestations of a four-dimensional reality. This framework thus provides a metaphysical grounding for understanding how these experiences could be genuinely visionary in form while remaining objectively real in substance. We can thus illustrate in Figure 4. the position that has been detailed here concerning Jesus' presence (and freedom of movement) in four-dimensional space, and his interaction with individuals—namely, his disciples—in three-dimensional space (with the 'double headed' arrows representing movement into and out of three-dimensional space, the 'single headed' arrows representing movement within four-dimensional space and the 'dashed line' representing Jesus' constant presence with his disciples):

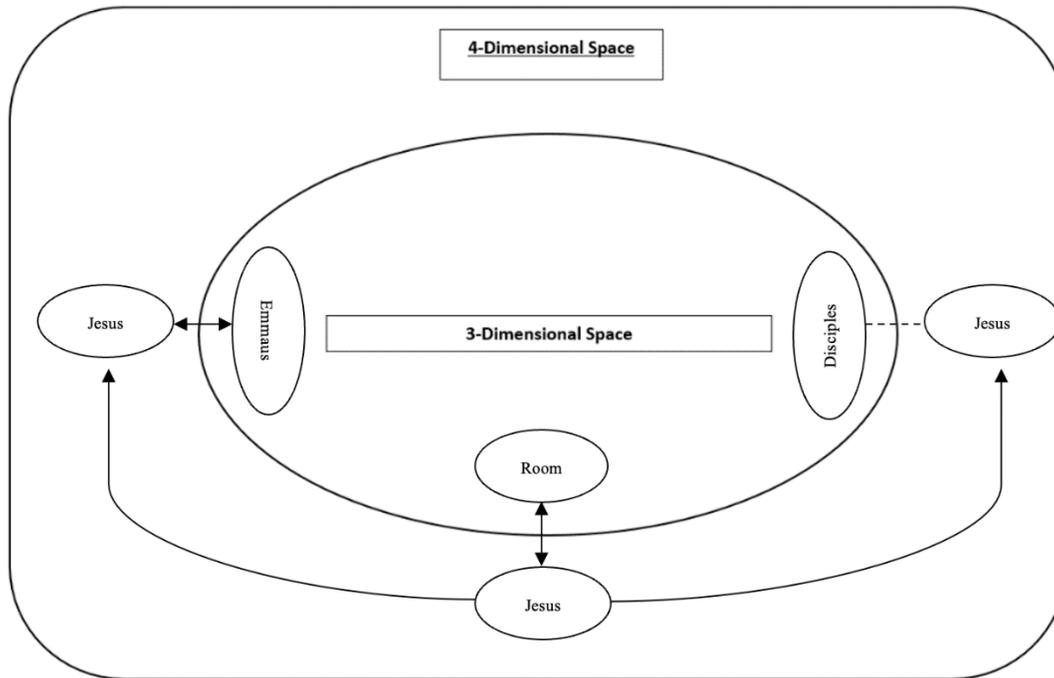


Figure 4. Hyperspace Solution

In adopting our hyper-ontology to address the second part of the AVC, one can consider, that, as just noted, the apparitional nature of the resurrection appearances could be explained by the disciples' perception of Jesus operating in hyperspace. These experiences, which combined features of both visionary and physical encounters, can be understood through the framework of four-dimensional interaction with a three-dimensional consciousness. From the perspective of observers in three-dimensional space, these encounters would necessarily take on apparitional features, but within the four-dimensional framework of hyperspace, they represent genuine objective encounters. The nature of this cross-dimensional interaction itself could plausibly generate experiences sharing characteristics with other reported apparitions, precisely because such interaction transcends normal 3D perception and spatial engagement, thus aligning with, rather than contradicting, the patterns Allison observed. Similarly, the paradoxical aspects of these appearances – being both collective and individual, both recognisable and strange – are also comprehended through this hyperspace framework. That is, the varying manifestations enable us to understand how multiple witnesses could share in the same objective encounter while experiencing it differently, as each person's three-dimensional consciousness interfaces with the same four-dimensional reality in slightly different ways. This explains how the appearances could align with known patterns of apparitional experiences while maintaining their unique character as objective revelatory events – even though, from our three-dimensional perspective, they seem purely visionary in nature. Moreover, this framework illuminates why these experiences included both apparitional features common to other visionary encounters and unique elements that set them apart. As, again, the interface between four-dimensional and three-dimensional reality would likely produce experiences combining familiar perceptual patterns (hence parallels to other visions) with transcendent elements reflecting their objective grounding in a higher-dimensional reality. One is thus also able to ward off the second part of the AVC within the proposed framework.

Taking all of these things into account, our ontology, which is grounded on the concepts of hypertime and hyperspace provides a uniquely comprehensive solution to both aspects of this challenge. As regarding Jesus' apocalyptic predictions, the hypertime framework demonstrates how his prophecies were genuinely fulfilled through a metaphysical transformation at the *hypertime coordinate corresponding to ~33 AD*, when God replaced the old block of reality with a new one, though this fulfilment manifests gradually in human experience and perception. Simultaneously, the hyperspace framework explains how the resurrection appearances could be genuinely objective encounters while taking on apparitional forms, as they represented three-dimensional perceptions of Jesus operating in four-dimensional space.

Together, these concepts provide a *coherent and plausible account* of how Jesus could be both divine (having perfect knowledge of the kingdom's coming, understood metaphysically) and truly risen (appearing in ways that seemed visionary yet were objectively real). The synergy between hypertime explaining the metaphysical transformation and hyperspace illuminating the mode of appearance offers a *substantive framework* for reconciling historical findings with theological claims. Thus, this bi-conceptual hyper-ontology enables one to affirm Jesus' divine nature and the reality of his resurrection appearances in a manner intended to be *philosophically plausible* and consistent with historical-critical research. The apparent tension between Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet and the visionary nature of his resurrection appearances thus dissolves when viewed through this comprehensive metaphysical framework—allowing these central Christian claims to be grounded on a philosophically robust and historically informed foundation.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this article has provided a metaphysical solution to the Apocalyptic-Visionary Challenge. Section 1 introduced the challenge from Ehrman and Allison's scholarship concerning Jesus' apocalyptic predictions and resurrection appearances. Section 2 unpacked our hyper-ontology through hypertime and hyperspace. Sections 3 and 4 applied these concepts to formulate our solution to the Apocalyptic-Visionary Challenge, which focused on formulating models aiming for plausibility that demonstrate how it could be the case that Jesus' apocalyptic predictions were fulfilled through transformation in hypertime, and how his resurrection appearances were objective events grounded in four-dimensional space. Thus, the proposed solution offers a coherent and potentially plausible philosophical framework for maintaining belief in Jesus' divine nature and the objectivity of his resurrection within a contemporary historical-critical context.

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