

There is a distinction between *Jesus-in-his-being-in-himself* and *Jesus-in-his-meaning-for-us*. What is meant by the first part of this distinction may be explicated more fully by speaking of Jesus in his being in himself then and there in the past; and by the second, by speaking of Jesus in his meaning for us here and now in the present. But with this fuller explication, this distinction may seem to be equivalent to the other distinction between *the empirical-historical Jesus* and *the existential-historical Jesus*.

The appearance to this effect, however, is only that. Although the two distinctions are certainly related, they're not equivalent and should be kept distinct. In fact, even the first distinction alone, in its more fully explicated form, may be misleading. *Jesus-in-his-being-in-himself* could be reasonably held to be as much a reality here and now in the present as it was then and there in the past. This must certainly be maintained by anyone believing in the resurrection of all things in God, or in more secular terms, the objective immortality of the past. On the other hand, one may talk about *Jesus-in-his-meaning-for-us* as this was objectified in the past, in the earliest stratum of Christian witness as well as in any later stratum, just as properly as one may talk about Jesus' meaning for us as persons here and now in the present.

In any case, the point of the first distinction between *Jesus-in-his-being-in-himself* and *Jesus-in-his-meaning-for-us* is that the actual Jesus, i.e., the human being Jesus bar Joseph, or Jesus of Nazareth, like any other human being, had a being in himself; he was what he was, and, assuming the objective immortality of everything actual, we may also say that he *is* what he was, whatever that may or may not have been, everlastingly. At the same time, this actual Jesus was experienced and re-presented as having a meaning for us, i.e., for any and all human beings, in that his being actual, in the meaning belonging to it, opened up a new historic situation for any and all who experience his actuality, mediately as well as immediately, in a certain way. Indeed, the re-presentation of the actual Jesus by those who immediately experienced him in that way functions to confront others with the decision of whether or not they, too, will live in this new historic situation by appropriating his meaning as also his meaning for them. To speak of Jesus in his being in himself, then, is to speak of the actual Jesus in the first way, even as to speak of Jesus in his meaning for us is to speak of the same actual Jesus

in the second way. One may also say, with Bultmann, that to speak of Jesus in his being in himself is to speak of the "*what*" of the actual Jesus, while to speak of Jesus in his meaning for us is to speak of the "*that*" of the actual Jesus as confronting others with a decision about the "*what*" of their own actuality.

So much for the first distinction. As regards the second, between the empirical-historical Jesus and the existential-historical Jesus, I mean: by the first, whatever could be known of the "*what*" of the actual Jesus by those who immediately experienced him or can still be inferred concerning it using their re-presentation of him as a primary empirical-historical source; and by the second, whatever could be said about the "*that*" of the actual Jesus by those who immediately experienced him and must still be said about it, accepting their re-presentation of him as a primary existential-historical authority.

Thus, whereas the first distinction between Jesus in his being in himself (\equiv the "*what*" of the actual Jesus) and Jesus in his meaning for us (\equiv the "*that*" of the actual Jesus) is exclusively ontic, having to do with someone or something prior to and independent of us, the second distinction between the empirical-historical Jesus and the existential-historical Jesus is noetic as well as ontic, having to do with someone or something prior to and independent of us from the different standpoints of someone else experiencing it accordingly.

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