

Why can't the kerygma ever simply take Jesus' place?

1. The kerygma can never simply take Jesus' place because, as Bultmann puts it, "the first witnesses [*sic*] are not guarantors on the basis of whose faith we, too, can believe; rather, we have to take the risk of faith in the same way that they took it."

2. Therefore, when Marxsen says that, faced with the question, "Jesus or the kerygma? Bultmann's answer is: the kerygma" (*Der Exeget als Theologe*: 255), he misrepresents Bultmann's answer. Bultmann's answer is really, Jesus, albeit Jesus in his meaning for us here and now in the present, as distinct from Jesus in his being in himself then and there in the past. In the meaning for us that belongs to him, Jesus is the decisive revelation of God, the decisive re-presentation of faith working through love as our own possibility of authentic existence. Thus, in the meaning for us that belongs to him, Jesus has created a new historic situation; and the kerygma that proclaims him as the decisive revelation of God asks its hearer whether she or he is willing to appropriate this meaning. Or, as Bultmann can put it in talking about Paul, "one is asked by Paul whether one is willing to understand God's act in Christ as the event that has decided and now decides with respect both to the world and to us" (*Exegetica*: 229).

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