

If my understanding of the beginning of christology is correct, then, already in the case of the first disciples who made the decision to "follow" Jesus during his earthly ministry, the "*that*" of his proclamation, or summons to decision, as distinct from its "*what*" (i.e., his having spoken it and their having heard it, as distinct from its timeless content of ideas), or, as may also be said, his "person," as distinct from his "personality" (i.e., its being here and now, its event, its commission, its personal address, as distinct from his messianic consciousness, his heroism, or his faith), was understood to be the decisive saving act of God that already inaugurates the new age in the midst of the old.

The question, however, is whether the oldest Jesus-traditions, i.e., the Jesus-kerygma, can be reasonably interpreted as expressing such a decision and understanding—implicitly in its "*that*" as precisely kerygma, proclamation, or summons to decision, if not also explicitly in its "*what*," by means of explicit christological formulations. Is it reasonable to say, for example, that those who handed on a particular saying of Jesus—Mark 10:13-16, say—thereby expressed their own decision for and understanding of Jesus as the decisive act of God and summoned others to the same decision and understanding? That one may reasonably say this of the Gospel of Mark may be clear enough. But may one say it equally reasonably of the oldest of the individual traditions that Mark redacted?

Marxsen evidently thinks one can, for he nowhere so much as suggests that there is any *material* difference between the implicit christology of the Jesus-kerygma and the later christologies explicating it. On the contrary, he insists that, while a formulation such as 2 Cor 5:17, which undoubtedly presupposes Easter and the post-Easter Christ-kerygma, is *formally* different from the Jesus-kerygma, in its material meaning it simply explicates what already held good during the time of the earthly Jesus. Whoever opened oneself to Jesus, opened oneself through him to the inbreaking rule of God—and then lived "a new creation."

But even Bultmann may be said, in his way, to support the same interpretation. For (1) he is as clear as Marxsen is that Christian faith, as faith in God through Jesus Christ, originates before Good Friday and Easter—

namely, in the decision of the disciples, in face of Jesus' own implicit christology, to "follow" him, this decision itself also implying a christology; and (2) he allows as how there cannot be an operational, but only a theoretical, distinction between what Jesus himself thought, said, and did and what he is represented as as thinking, saying, and doing in the oldest stratum of the synoptic tradition, which is not at all reportage, but is precisely kerygma or proclamation—in effect, if not in so many words, "Jesus-kerygma."

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