

Two comments on Marxsen's discussion in "The Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Beginning of Christology":

(1) By "the activity of Jesus," or "Jesus in action," which Marxsen uses as, in effect, a synonym for "the event of Jesus" (cf. 16, 27, 28), he evidently means something that is as distinct from Jesus' "deeds and behavior" (or "conduct") as it is from his "word(s)" (28, 29). Therefore, it would appear to be functionally equivalent to what Bultmann means by the "*that*" of Jesus (or of Jesus' word) or his "person," and which he, of course, takes to be decisive for understanding the origins of christology.—Interestingly, Marxsen makes what appears to be essentially the same distinction in "*Jesus hat viele Namen*," when he distinguishes "*das Auftreten Jesu*" from "*das Reden und Tun Jesu*," the first functioning equivalently to "the activity of Jesus" in this later essay.

(2) To talk, as Marxsen does, however, about "the *quality* of Jesus' activity" is open to serious misunderstanding, because it conduces to thinking that what is involved is the being of Jesus in himself, as distinct from the meaning of Jesus for us. To be sure, it may make perfectly good sense to say that the followers of Jesus, who so experienced his activity as to believe that it was the living of God toward them, thereupon "*qualified*" his activity, in some concepts and terms or other, as eschatologically significant. But if they "*qualified*" his activity in the way that Marxsen seems to indicate, they qualified its meaning for us, not its being (or quality) in itself.

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