

An insight that has occurred to me in connection with Marxsen's lectures and our discussions is that his assumption of two distinct early communities doesn't make all that much difference to the Bultmannian view, even though it may be as helpful as Marxsen believes it to be in accounting for the literary differences between the synoptic tradition, on the one hand, and the tradition represented by Paul and his school, on the other.

I say this assumption doesn't make all that much difference because, for the inner circle of Jesus's followers who accompanied him to Jerusalem and, after his crucifixion, were once again gathered together around the witness of Peter, Bultmann's hypothesis still holds just as firmly as it ever did. Even granting that explicit christology could and did arise in the one (Galilean, synoptic) tradition without any influence of Easter, simply in order to establish some control on the ambiguity of the tradition in its indefinite plurality, explicit christology also could and did arise in the other (Jerusalemian, Pauline) tradition in just the way in which Bultmann typically assumes it did. That is, some of those who, having made the decision to "follow" Jesus, thereby at least implicitly affirmed his having been sent by God, were faced with the same decision anew by his crucifixion, and then made this decision once again with the faith of Easter. Significantly, however, their statement that God has raised Jesus from the dead is parallel to the statement (at least implied by their original decision to "follow" Jesus) that God has sent Jesus as God's final word of grace and judgment before the end—or, in their own terms, Jesus is the Son of man.

This is all borne out by Marxsen's discussion of the way in which the statement, "God has raised Jesus from the dead," arose—namely, within the Jerusalem community, among those who belonged to the inner circle of disciples who had wandered with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem and, specifically, through Peter's having had a vision of Jesus after his death through which he was once again brought to faith. Clearly, this whole discussion either repeats what Bultmann himself says or implies, or else can be understood as a development of Bultmann's position with which he could very well have agreed.

At the same time, Marxsen's view allows one to understand how there could have been an independent line of christological development, in which Jesus' death and resurrection played no role. Thus, for example, that he came to be identified with the Son of man doesn't necessarily presuppose the influence of Easter, but only a development that would almost certainly have taken place in any event.