

What Bultmann means, and does not mean, by his distinction between the "*what*" and the "*that*" is made particularly clear by what he says in the interview with him in *Der Spiegel* (1966).

At issue, he says, is his controversial formulation according to which "what is decisive is the '*that*' of Jesus' having come [*das Entscheidende (ist) das Daß des Gekommenseins Jesu*], not the '*what*,' i.e., not the historically verifiable data concerning his life and work." But "it is undeniable that for Paul and the rest of the New Testament, except for the synoptic gospels, . . . only the '*that*,' not the '*what*,' plays a role. In assertion of the '*that*,' the paradox is asserted that a historical figure—the person Jesus of Nazareth—is at the same time the eschatological figure—the Lord Jesus Christ."

Therefore, even if stressing the "*that*" brings with it the danger that the figure of Jesus may evaporate into a mythical figure, "what is meant by the '*that*' is a historical person, whose historicity can be verified precisely by historical-critical research. Such research is necessary for Christian proclamation, among other reasons, so that Jesus is not misunderstood as a mythical figure. It is as a historical figure that he is the criterion of the proclamation that legitimates it [*Als historische Gestalt ist er das Kriterium der Verkündigung, das diese legitimiert.*]. This is also how the Gospel of John proceeds, which puts all the weight on Jesus's having come [*das Gekommen-sein Jesu*] and treats the historical tradition concerning his life and sayings with great freedom. But even the synoptic gospels proceed with similar freedom in dealing with the tradition concerning the life and sayings of the historical Jesus. For the synoptic evangelists write, not as historians, but place what they say about Jesus in the service of the kerygma, . . . and so, in their own way, they, too, make clear that paradox of the conjunction of the historical '*that*' and its eschatological point [*jene Paradoxie des Zugleich vom historischen Daß und seinem eschatologischen Sinn*]" (44).

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