

Why does Bultmann argue that "sin" is *not* "a mythological concept"?

To allow that "sin" *is* a mythological concept is to imply that "Christian understanding of being without Christ" is possible in fact as well as in principle. But just as faith, although an ontological possibility in principle, is nowhere an ontic possibility in fact except under certain specific historical conditions—as faith *in* Jesus Christ—so sin, although likewise an ontological possibility in principle, is everywhere an ontic actuality in fact except under the same specific historical conditions—where there is faith in Jesus Christ. This means that even the authentic existence for which the existentialist resolves in her or his readiness for anxiety is sin, in much the same way in which, in Paul's view, the righteousness that Jews seek is not "the righteousness of God," but "their own righteousness," and therefore itself an expression of the very human attitude from which they want to escape, namely, the attitude of wanting to live out of themselves instead of out of God.

In short, just as "faith in Jesus Christ" is not an unnecessary mythological interpretation of the ontological possibility of authentic existence, so "sin" is not such an interpretation of the ontological possibility of inauthentic existence. Both "faith" and "sin" properly designate certain specific historical conditions beyond the scope of ontological analysis.

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