

It's simply false to say that, for Bultmann, there is Christian faith only since Easter.

On the contrary, Bultmann says expressly that the Easter decision of the apostles was by way of reaffirming, or making anew in face of the scandal of the crucifixion, the same decision they had already made earlier to accept Jesus' having been sent from God by "following" him. But this can only mean that the same faith of which the Easter decision is the expression had to have been present already before Good Friday, being expressed precisely in the apostles' decision to "follow" Jesus.

But, then, it's also false to say that Bultmann regards the question of the legitimacy of the kerygma as forbidden (*Der Exeget als Theologe*: 160). A glance at Bultmann's essay, "Jesus und Paulus," is sufficient to make clear that he himself raises this very question, insisting that it cannot be suppressed, and even allowing that one might very well give up Christianity were it to prove incompatible with Jesus!

All that Bultmann regards as forbidden is any attempt to justify the *truth* of the kerygma empirical-historically, as well as any attempt to legitimate its Christianness by exhibiting its continuity with the empirical-historical Jesus. The kerygma is legitimate because or insofar as it agrees with the earliest kerygma—or, alternatively, more or less adequately explicates the faith that Jesus' having come was itself the decisive event through which God has summoned his eschatological congregation, just that being, as Bultmann says, the real content of the Easter faith that God has made Jesus the Messiah. This faith, for Bultmann as much as for Marxsen, was a *pre-*, not merely a *post-*Easter faith. In other words, what Bultmann recognizes, rightly, is that one may speak of Christian faith only as and when one may speak of a faith that (1) by its very nature, is a response (immediate or mediate) to Jesus; and (2) ^{only} becomes fully explicit ~~only~~ christologically, as in the Christ-kerygma, with its proclamation of the cross and resurrection as saving event.

Bultmann leaves no doubt that the earliest kerygma itself was implicitly, not explicitly, christological. This is most certainly true insofar as the meaning of the cross—as Paul, say, explicitly sets it forth—was at best implicit, not explicit, in the kerygma of the earliest community. But even christology more generally was present only implicitly in their kerygma.

So far as Bultmann talks about the “*that*” being decisive for the earliest community, it’s the “*that*” of *Jesus’ word*—of his having spoken it and of their having been addressed by it—that was decisive for the earliest community.

But, then, what reason is there, really, for any hypothesis about the Christian faith’s having “two roots”? There is only the one root of the “*that*” of Jesus’ proclamation being responded to by the community’s decision of faith as God’s decisive act of salvation—whether this root be the decision of the apostles *before* Good Friday and Easter to accept Jesus’ having been sent by God by “following” him, or whether it be the *remaking* of that decision in face of the cross, *after* Good Friday on the basis of the experiences of Easter.

The significant thing about the Jesus-kerygma, one may suggest, is not only that it’s *kerygma*, rather than empirical-historical reportage, but also that it’s precisely *Jesus-kerygma*—kerygma whose content is precisely Jesus himself, even if without (explicit) christological qualifications. Even the Jesus-kerygma does not merely repeat the “*what*” of the empirical-historical Jesus’ preaching concerning the coming reign of God, the imminence of God’s rule, etc., but rather has as its content Jesus himself in his decisive significance as saving event.