

Why does Bultmann say that Jesus' proclamation is simply "pure Judaism, pure prophetism," and, therefore, nothing other than "proclamation of the law"?

He says this because Judaism as preaching of the law is also preaching of grace. For Judaism "faith" is the confidence in God's gracious forgiveness that is based in repentance and that brings the sinner back to the way of the law that he or she has abandoned by his or her transgressions. Thus the movement of the will that is contained in "faith" is the attitude of repentance that turns away from transgressions, the self-condemnation of one's old life as a life spotted by transgressions. In this sense, Judaism is preaching of the law, the demand for repentance, and the promise of God's gracious forgiveness to all who repent.

In the case of the prophetic tradition in Judaism, the distinguishing feature of such preaching is that the law is interpreted, above all, in terms of justice and righteousness as over against a piety that sees the fulfilment of the law's demands in the cultus. Thus the demand for repentance becomes more or less exclusively the demand for repentance of injustice and unrighteousness, and the promise of forgiveness is extended to those who bring forth this kind of repentance.

By the time of Jesus, however, the prophets's preaching of the law has itself become an excuse for human disobedience, in that the law as they understood and preached it can be fulfilled without a person's really being obedient--insofar, namely, as one can fulfill the commandments formally without really submitting to God's demand for the whole person. Thus, while Jesus continues the prophetic preaching by interpreting the law as demanding, above all, moral obedience as over against some merely religious or ceremonial or cultic obedience, he also radicalizes the prophetic preaching along the lines indicated by the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount. God's demand is

not exhausted by the demand for justice but demands "radical obedience" of the whole person. By this same token, the demand for repentance as Jesus issues it is radicalized as is the promise of forgiveness, along the lines suggested by the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. In face of the radical demand of God's will, the only appropriate response is the kind of radical self-condemnation voiced by the publican and the kind of radical promise expressed by Jesus in the words, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other" (Lk 13:14).

But for all of its radicalism, Jesus' proclamation is simply "pure Judaism, pure prophetism," because it is "proclamation of the law" and as such also proclamation of grace.

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