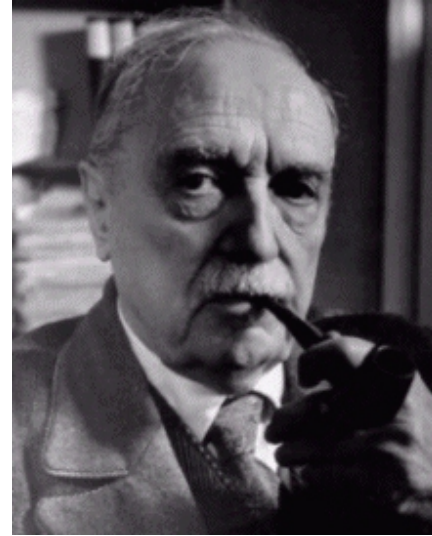


## Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976)

- Made a clear distinction between "the Jesus of history" and "the Christ of faith"
- Argues that the gospels are infused with the "mythology" of the time in which they were written.



## Kerygma and Myth

The modern person is much less inclined to subscribe to the ancient mythological world-view in which heaven is above and hell below. Modern people don't tend to believe in miracles, or angels and demons. However, the gospels were written at a time when such a world-view was believed, so include such ideas.

Bultmann makes a distinction between "kerygma" which is the eternal truth of the gospels and Jesus, and "myth". He says that modern Christians can disbelieve the "myth" but still retain the "kerygma".

# Demythologising

Bultmann's big project was therefore to strip away the ancient mythology from the gospels to reveal the kerygma beneath. Some have likened this to peeling an onion.

Let's try it ourselves!

Heaven and hell = psychological states

Demon possession = mental illness

Miracles = symbolic stories

## The Criterion of Double Dissimilarity

Another way of discovering elements of the gospels that are authentic to Jesus is Bultmann's "criterion of double dissimilarity".

The idea here is that something in the gospels is likely to be authentic Jesus if it's unlike anything else. That is:

- It's not like anything found in the Judaism of the time
- It's not like anything in early Christianity either

Basically, if something doesn't fit with everything else then it's pretty likely to be genuine!

eg. Matthew 8:22 Jesus says "Let the dead bury the dead".

## Pros and cons of Bultmann

**Pros:** Makes the Bible more acceptable to modern people. Fits with existentialist ways of looking at the world.

**Cons:** How do we know our modern world-view is better than the ancient one? It's rather skeptical about the gospels' reliability.