

THE IDEA: The Kerygmata as presented by C.H.Dodd.

The principal analysis of the kerygmata of the early Christian community is associated with C.H.Dodd. He reconstructed the main teachings of the early church found in Paul's letters and then argued that these teachings could be found in the speeches in Acts of the Apostles. He identified six elements common to the speeches that he thought were genuine.

QUOTES

1. "The Gospel is not a statement of the general truths of religion, but an interpretation of that which once happened" (Dodd)
2. "To all unprejudiced persons it is manifest that Jesus had not the slightest intention of doing away with the Jewish religion and putting another in its place." (Reimarus)
3. "The New Testament writers draw a clear distinction between preaching and teaching." (Dodd)
4. "The kerygma is neither a vehicle for timeless ideas nor the mediator of historical information." (Bultmann)
5. "Paul himself at least believed that in essentials his Gospel was that of the primitive apostles." (Dodd)
6. "We have to enquire how far it is possible to discover the actual content of the Gospel preached or proclaimed by the apostles." (Dodd)

EXAMPLES

1. C.H. Dodd wrote about the Kerygma in his book "The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development" (1936)
2. Kerygma signifies not the activity but the content of apostolic preaching. Not the activity, but the message.
3. Dodd (1884 - 1973) was born in Denbighshire.
4. Kerygma is a Greek word meaning "proclamation" or "preaching".
5. Dodd is best known for promoting "realized eschatology", the belief that Jesus' references to the kingdom of God meant a present reality rather than a future apocalypse.
6. Dodd's reconstruction of the Kerygma was based on Paul's letters and argued that these teachings could be found in the speeches in the Acts of the Apostles.

7. The plural form of kerygma is kerygmata.
8. Dodd looked at Paul's writings as he considered the content of the Christian preaching as Paul was the earliest Christian writer.
9. Kerygma is a declaration of beliefs rather than moral exhortation or teaching.

Answer:

Kerygma is a Greek word meaning "proclamation" or "preaching" (Kerygmata is plural). Kerygma signifies not the activity but the content of apostolic preaching. Not the activity, but the message.

C.H. Dodd wrote about the Kerygma in his book "The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development" (1936). He noted that "The New Testament writers draw a clear distinction between preaching and teaching." He stated that his aim of the book –was "to enquire how far it is possible to discover the actual content of the Gospel preached or proclaimed by the apostles." He looked at Paul's writings as he considered the content of the Christian preaching, as Paul was the earliest Christian writer. As Dodd states, "Paul himself at least believed that in essentials his Gospel was that of the primitive apostles." Dodd tried to reconstruct the kerygma and argued that this Kerygma could also be found in the speeches in the Acts of the Apostles.

He identified six elements common to the speeches that he thought were genuine.

THE IDEA: Rudolf Bultmann's challenge to the kerygma.

Bultmann argued that the kerygma is clothed in a mythological dress. He argued that we need to search for the truth which the Kerygma embodies which is quite independent of its mythical setting.

The work of the process of demythologising is the method whereby we interpret the inner meaning of the mythological statements we find in the New Testament. In his essay in Kerygma and Myth, entitled 'New Testament and Mythology', Bultmann is at pains to emphasise that he is not jettisoning the message of the New Testament because he finds it unacceptable, but rather he is seeking to find out what is the real meaning of that message.

QUOTES

1. "Bultmann means that although in a myth a man appears to be describing the world, he is in fact really describing his own existence." (Henderson)
2. "...theology must undertake the task of stripping the kerygma from its mythical framework, of demythologising it." (Bultmann)
3. "Existence preceded essence." (Sartre)
4. "The kerygma is incredible to modern man, for he is convinced that the mythical view of the

world is obsolete." (Bultmann)

5. "...the importance of the New Testament mythology lies not in its imagery but in the understanding of existence which it enshrines." (Bultmann)

EXAMPLES

1. Bultmann does not demythologise in order to make the Christian faith easier or more acceptable to modern man.
2. For Bultmann, to believe in the cross of Christ is to make the cross of Christ our own, to undergo crucifixion with him.
3. According to Bultmann we know almost nothing about the historical Jesus, and we need to know almost nothing.
4. When Bultmann was first a professor at Marburg in the 1920's, his colleague in the department of philosophy was Martin Heidegger, one of the leading representatives of what has come to be known as existentialism.
5. The New Testament is to be interpreted existentially, by looking for the understanding of man which is expressed through the mythology.
6. For Bultmann, Christology is of no importance.
7. The kerygma is concerned not with matters of historical fact, but with conveying the necessity of a decision on the part of his hearers.