

The Christian confession implies the assertion classically formulated as “Jesus is the Christ.” Accordingly, Christian faith is the faith for which Jesus is (implicitly or explicitly) the *object* of faith, as distinct from being a, or even the, *subject* thereof. Otherwise put: Christian faith is the faith for which Jesus is not merely one religious authority among others, not even the primary religious authority, but is rather the *primal source* of authority. More exactly, he is the explicit, primal, *ontic* source of authority, the primary such authority being the apostolic witness of faith originating in the apostles’ experience of Jesus as (implicitly or explicitly) the Christ, which experience is itself the explicit, primal, *noetic* source of religious authority.

Another term for “explicit, primal, ontic source of authority” is “decisive re-presentation.” Because or insofar as Jesus is the *explicit*, primal, ontic source of authority, he is a *re*-presentation. Because or insofar as Jesus is the explicit, *primal*, ontic source of authority (as distinct from any mere authority, even the primary such), he is *decisive*.

But what about the distinction between a primal source of authority and the primary authority of which it is the source? It is clearly a very different distinction from that between a secondary authority and the primary authority by which it is in turn authorized. Whereas a secondary authority and a primary authority are *temporally* distinct, a primary authority and its authorizing source are *semantically* distinct—i.e., as a text is distinct from the thing (*res*) it is about.

From the beginning of the Christian movement onward, Jesus is the thing that all Christian texts, primary and secondary, are about. He is re-presented in all of them as himself decisively re-presenting God’s own gift and demand of eschatological existence—of existence *in* and *for* the freedom of which God’s unconditional acceptance is the ground.

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