

What is the logic of Christian belief?

1. The immediate ground and object of Christian belief is the Christian witness of faith to Jesus as the Christ.

2. Thus it is because a Christian believes on the ground of this witness in what this witness attests that the Christian believes whatever she or he believes—namely, that Jesus is the Christ, and hence that the ultimate truth about our existence as human beings is the truth as it is in Jesus.

3. It follows, then, that belief in Jesus' resurrection is the ground for Christian belief in the resurrection of human beings generally. Because Christians believe that God confirms the truth of the Christian witness to Jesus, they believe that this witness is true; and because this witness witnesses to a love of God that embraces even our death, Christians believe that they, too, shall be raised, even as Jesus himself was raised. Thus Paul argues, "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Th 4:14).

4. Of course, it is also true, as Paul argues elsewhere, that "if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised" (1 Cor 15:13, 16). That is, unless the truth of human existence is as the Christian witness to Jesus discloses it to be—unless our lives as human beings really are ended, not in death, but in God's boundless love—Jesus is not and cannot be that truth. But the ground and object of Christian faith is not such beliefs as Christians may have about the human future independently of Jesus Christ, not even true beliefs about our future (although they may certainly serve to express Christian faith), but rather the other way around: Jesus Christ is the object of Christian faith even as the Christian witness to him as such is its ground.

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