

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE MYSTERY OF THE FAITH

The mystery of the Faith (1 Tim. 3:9 cf. Rom. 16:25-26) where all believers have access to the same gospel as the basic truth and with all the doctrines of biblical Truths or the whole counsel of God that together make our great Salvation attainable and practicable through Christ (Acts 20:20-27; Rom. 1:4, 5, 8; Gal. 3:14-16, 26, 27; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 Thess. 1:5-10; 2 Tim. 3:15; Phm. 1:6; Heb. 2:3, 4). Thus, our faith is based on the truths about God and all His revealed salvific mysteries (Deut. 29:29; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2; 1 Tim. 3:15), especially as spelt out in the mystery of the gospel (Rom. 10:6-10, 16-17; 16:25-27; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4) to publicly validate Christ as the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:5; 5:5) and in the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 1:1-4). It is revealed as the mystery where Jesus Christ becomes the author of our faith (Acts 3:16; Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:22, 26; Eph. 3:12; Phil. 3:9; Heb. 12:2) and which being directly embedded into the mystery of God - of the Father and of Christ - is together also now fully revealed for our salvation (Act 2:32-36; Col. 2:2, 3; 4:3). So “the mystery of the faith”, to distinguish it from “the Jewish faith” or Judaism in New Testament times, is the sum total of the faith obtained from the gospel through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Acts 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jd. 1:3).

Thus, **“the mystery of the faith”**, the Christian faith, which may be distinguished from any other faiths, **is the sum total of the doctrine as the only belief system dependent on the gospel with salvific mysteries and the active presence of the Holy Spirit for generating common or mutual or holy faith in God for common salvation obtained through our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ** (Acts 6:7; 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 16:5; 24:24; Rom. 1:5; 11-17; 3:3; 4:11; 6:17; 14:1; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 1:23; 2:16, 20; Eph. 3:12; 4:13; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:23; 2:7; 2 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 11:1, 6; 2 Pet. 1:1; Tit. 1:4; 3:15; Js. 2:1; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; Jd. 1:3, 20; Rev. 13:10; 14:12).

The mystery of the faith begins with the gospel - the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as the message of first importance around which everything else that is mystery revealed derives (Lk. 24:44-49; Rom. 1:11-17; 16:25-27; 1 Cor. 1:18-24; 2:1-5; 4:1-20; 15:1-28 vv.3-4; 2 Cor. 13:3-5; Col. 1:3-6). It is a summary of the foundational truths about the Lord Jesus Christ that enable us to gain faith towards God with victory over sin and death in eternal judgment (Heb. 6:1-2); it serves as the only doctrine delivered to us through Christ and the gospel (Rom. 6:1-23 v. 17). It comes about and becomes effective through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ our Lord as the only begotten Son of God (Jn. 17:3; 1 Jn. 3:21-25; 2 Jn. 1:3, 9).

It is that faith which leads to the eternal union of the saints to Christ in His vicarious death after the granting of repentance and forgiveness of sins by the risen Lord (Acts 2:38-39; 3:14-21; 5:29-32; Rom. 1:11, 12; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13). Scripture reads; “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” (Rom. 6:4). And because the resurrection of Jesus was by glory of the Father (Rom. 6:4), the faith guarantees our communion with Him and with other believers, and the resurrection of the dead in Christ unto eternal glory (1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Col. 1:3-6, 23; 2 Tim. 1:3-7; Tit. 1:1-4; Heb. 6:1, 2; 2 Pet. 1:1-4; Jd. 1:3).

Thus, the drama of His redemptive plan and purposes (Eph. 1:9-11) can be sound apostolic doctrine received as the commanded word of the Lord (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:14-36; etc) and preached or taught to the Church (Acts 2:42; 10:36, 37; 20:21, 27; 1 Thess. 2:8-13; 2 Thess. 2:13-15; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 6:1-3; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21; 3:16). The apostolic doctrine beginning with the gospel (Acts 2:22-36; 10:33-44) was and still is such that eternal life and everything in the kingdom of God become attainable right after believing (Acts 16:31; Rom. 5:12, 15-19; 6:23; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Pet. 1:2-11). Such believing which then produces saving faith is our confession of Christ as Lord and is totally dependent on the gospel or the words of faith (Rom. 10:6-10, 17; 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 1:13; 1 Jn. 4:2, 3; 5:1-5, 18-21). The message of the (Christian) faith with its Christo-centric gospel, Jesus and Him crucified as the central theme, is thus the same everywhere, in every age (Acts 2:22-36; 3:19-26; 10:34-43; etc; Rom. 1:1-5; 16:25-27; 1 Cor. 2:1-5; 15:3-8; Col. 1:3-6, 23; Tit. 1:1, 4, 2 Pet. 1:1; Jd. 1:3).

This message of the faith is capable of producing all the three stages of Salvation through the gospel and the preaching of Christ – *Saved* (Justification and Positional Sanctification), *Being Saved* (Progressive Sanctification) and *Shall be Saved* (Ultimate Sanctification or Glorification) (Rom. 8:29-30). It is sourced from the same God kind of faith (Mk. 11:22-25; Heb. 11:6) which originates and is dependent on the faith of Jesus Himself (Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:20, 26; 3:22; Phil. 3:10; 1 Tim. 3:13; Js. 2:1). Through divine action on “the faith” or “basic beliefs”, all believers obtain the “*same faith*” which is faith that comes to us from the righteousness of God and Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20; 2 Pet. 1:1). This is the embodiment of the God-kind of faith working through believers (Mk. 11:22-26). All other kinds of biblical faith or God-ward faith are available to the believer (Acts 20:21; Heb. 6:1, 2; 11:6).

The faith, like its core element, the gospel, however, is made effectual through the intermarriage of *grace* and *faith* which come together to us at the cross (Col. 2:11-15) and effected after the resurrection in the gospel as redemptive plan and processes (Eph. 1:3-

19) of the triune Godhead (Acts 17:29-31; Rom. 1:16-20; Col. 2:1-9 see Rom. 4:13-25 v. 16; 5:1, 2; 10:1-17; 2 Cor. 5:14-21).

Faith is clearly one of the most important concepts in the whole New Testament. Everywhere, and for everything including salvation and the receiving of the Holy Spirit, it is required (Acts 15:6-11; Gal. 3:2, 5, 11-17); and its importance insisted upon (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 3:11, 18; 4:1-13; 6:1, 2; 10:38; 11:6). Faith means abandoning all trust in one's own resources. Faith means casting oneself unreservedly on the mercy of God. Faith means laying hold on the promises of God in Christ, relying entirely on the finished work of Christ for salvation, and on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God for daily strength. Faith implies complete reliance on God and full obedience to God.

Perception of the faith through faith

The faith is a mystery which is fully grasped as explained in the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:9, 16); and which together are dependent on the mystery of the gospel as the message of first importance for obedience of faith to all nations (1 Cor. 15:1-11 vv. 3, 4; see Rom. 16:25-27; Eph. 6:18-20). The grasp of the mysteries of God granted to the Church (1 Cor. 4:1, 2; Eph. 1:3-14; 3:1-12 v. 5), especially the mystery of the faith, Trinity, the gospel, godliness, the Church, etc for the early Church and for most founding fathers of Bible-believing Evangelical, classical Pentecostal, etc., Churches at the time was primarily through the gospel as the message of first importance about Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-28 vv. 3, 4).

However, all mysteries revealed were and are understood only after His bodily resurrection (Jn. 20:17-23; 1 Cor. 15:45-49) and thereafter with Christ's glorification for baptizing His people with the Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:37-39; 14:1-26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-15; Acts 5:28-32; 1 Pet. 1:10-12) as promised (Acts 1:1-11 v. 4-8). This is when the triune God, Trinity becomes comprehensible and meaningful to faith perception through the divine Revelatory presence and power from God, through the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 11:6; see Acts 2:1-4, 12, 16-21, 27-39 v. 33; 1 Cor. 2:1-16). There was little or no room for theological debates about knowing the triune God, because they knew (*gnosko* meaning knowing by revelation from above not mere *eido* knowing by human intuition for sensing) God by divine revelation and power of the Father (Matt. 11:25-27; 16:16-18; Acts 5:29-32; 1 Cor. 2:1-13, 15-16; Gal. 1:15, 16; 1 Pet. 1:1-12 v. 8; 1 Jn. 4:12-16; 5:6-10).

Only Jesus the Son of God can know *eido* God because He is from Him as the only begotten Son.

Jn. 1:18; "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, that One declares *Him* (LITV).

Jn. 8:55; “And you have not known *gnosko* Him; but I know *eido* Him, And if I say that I do not know *eido* Him, I shall be like you, a liar. But I know *eido* Him, and I keep His Word” (LITV).

1 Cor. 2:1, 2; “And when I came to you, brothers, I did not come with excellency of word or wisdom, declaring to you the Testimony of God. For I decided not to know *eido* anything among you except Jesus Christ, and Him having been crucified.” (LITV).

Similarly, only the Holy Spirit can know *eido* God because He is God or from Him as the Spirit of God; and thus, believers can know *gnosko* or *eido* God or the things of God through the revelation of the Spirit of God.

From 1Co 2:7-12 we read; “But we speak *the* wisdom of God in a mystery, having been hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, ⁸which none of the rulers of this age has known *gnosko*. For if they had known *gnosko*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; ⁹according as it has been written, “Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard,” nor has it risen up into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love Him. *Isa. 64:4* ¹⁰ But God revealed *them* to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹For who among men knows *eido* the things of a man, except the spirit of a man within him? So also no one has known *eido* the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God” (LITV).

Believers’ Faith

Every human being exhibits some kind of faith. Even the unbeliever has faith in his traveling on the plane or sitting on a chair. Nobody will survive in earthly living without some kind of faith in something. This kind of faith may be classified as Natural faith. However, the **Bible talks of faith in a special sense for believers in Christ which is of a spiritual and supernatural origin.** From the Bible, biblical faith or believers’ faith is defined as ‘*the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*’ (Heb. 11:1). This is ***spiritual and supernatural faith***; the same as “have faith in God” or **the God-kind of faith** (Mk. 11:22). It is faith that is vested in Christ for believers (Acts 3:16; 24:24; Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:22-26; Eph. 2:8, 9; Phil. 1:27; 3:9; 2 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:2). It is faith that has substance with tangible evidence from a firm persuasion of the power, faithfulness, and love of God in Christ which does not fail hope since God cannot lie about eternal life (Heb. 11:1; see Rom. 8:23-25; Tit. 1:1-4; Heb. 6:17, 18). But believers’ faith is the faith which is received in the heart through the gospel or the Word and the active presence of the Holy Spirit (Mk. 11:22-26; Acts 11:12-14, 17-18; Rom. 1:16, 17; 10:6-10, 16-17; 1 Cor. 4:15; 15:11; 2 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 1:13-15; 3:16-19; 4:13; Col. 1:4-6, 23).

It originates and comes from believing in: **God** (Jn.14:1); **Christ** (Jn. 6:29; Acts 20:21; Rom. 10:6-8; 1 Tim. 1:14); **His Name** (Jn. 1:12; 2:23; 20:31; 1 Jn. 5:13); **the Scriptures as the sacred Writings of Moses** (Jn. 5:46; Acts 24:14); **the Scriptures as the sacred Writings of the prophets** (2Chr. 20:20; Acts 26:27); **the gospel** (Mk. 1:15; Rom. 1:16, 17; 1 Cor. 15:1, 3-4, 11, 14, 17, 20); **the Word of God or holy Scriptures in general** (Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:15); and also believing in **the Promises of God** (Rom. 4:16, 21; Heb. 11:13).

Faith lives and acts in Christ Jesus, for Christians are in union with him, and it proves it is real by 'working through love' (Gal. 5:6). It is through love that Christians serve one another. Faith is mentioned first, for without it there would be no Christian life (cf. Rom. 10:9). Both faith and love are based on hope (and these three graces are divinely linked as in Rom. 5:1-5; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:5-6; 1 Thes.1:3; 5:8). Faith here means 'the content of hope', 'the thing one hopes for' and though not physically seen has evidence in God and His Word (Heb. 11:1). We are commanded to have this (God kind of) faith to believe and do impossible things like Christ (Mk. 11:22-26 v. 22; 1 Jn. 3:16-24 v. 23).

Why this biblical command by Christ to the disciples (Mk. 11:22)? Because: a) It is impossible to please God without it (Heb. 11:6); b) Justification is by it, to be of grace (Rom. 4:16); c) It is essential to the profitable reception of the gospel (Heb. 4:2); d) Necessary in the Christian warfare (1 Tim. 1:18, 19; 6:12); e) The gospel is effectual in those who have it (1 Thess. 2:13); f) It excludes self-justification (Rom. 10:3, 4); g) It excludes boasting (Rom. 3:27); h) It works by love (Gal. 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:5; Phm. 1:5).

The **believer's faith** or **believers' faith** is evidenced then by what we hope for in God and through the conviction of the reality of God and His rewards though unseen naturally but exist (Jn. 1:11-18; 14:5-11; Rom. 1:11-17; Gal. 3:11-17; 4:4-7, 19-31; Col. 1:3-6; Tit. 1:1-4; Heb. 11:1, 6; 12:1, 2; 1 Pet. 1:1-12 v. 8; 1 Jn. 4:12-16) by two eternal immutable things, God's promise(s) on oath in His Son Jesus Christ (Jn. 6:26-29, 38-40; Heb. 6:9-20; 11:1, 6, 38-40; 12:1, 2; 1 Jn. 2:23-25). In the battle of life which is a wrestle with spiritual forces, the believer must always use the spiritual and supernatural shield, the shield of faith to quench fiery darts of the enemy (Eph. 6:10-20 v. 16). In taking the shield of faith to win or lay hold on eternal life in the good fight of faith (Eph. 6: 16; 1 Tim. 1:12-19 v. 18, 19; 6:11-21 v. 12, 19), believers must be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might (Eph. 6:10, 11; 2 Tim. 2:1-3).

We must through the Son and the abiding Holy Spirit know and believe God as Creator-Redeemer and Master of the universe (1 Jn. 4:12-21 vv. 13-16). Thus, the triune God, Lord GOD or the Sovereign Lord who exists by Himself as Master-God is our shield and rewarder just as with Abraham who believed and obeyed God (see Gen. 15:1-21 v. 1; Heb.

11:1-10 v. 6). Abraham by faith saw, believed and obeyed the invisible One, the God of glory (Acts 7:2-4; Heb. 11:27). It is the reason Abraham is called the father of the faithful, that is all them that believe to be heir of the promise of the righteousness of faith through Christ (Rom. 4:11-16). The **believer's faith** or **believers' faith** is faith that allows you to see, believe and obey the invisible God and the Word as a pattern of those the inherit eternal life (Rom. 1:16, 17, 20; 10:14-17; Col. 1:15, 16; 1 Tim. 1:16, 17).

It is also the reason why when we are threatened not to preach the full gospel or speak about the resurrection of Christ as the emphasis of the gospel of faith and hope it is about eternal life as kingdom, power and glory (Matt. 6:9-13; Acts 1:1-8; 1 Tim. 1:8-13). It is about the Church's survival and cutting edge for the furtherance of the gospel and the faith (Acts 4:7-22; see Phil. 1:12-30 vv. 12, 25). Under any such circumstances, believers must seek God as the Sovereign Lord of the Church (Acts 4:23-33 v. 24). We are possible losing the gospel preached with Holy Spirit power as kingdom mentality in the three-strands of abundance - mentality, holy-fire- mentality and Rapture-mentality (Acts 1:1-11; 5:20, 29-32; 1 Pet. 1:9-12).

Believers' faith that guarantees the same eternal salvation is dependent only on the same gospel preached with the same Holy Spirit sent from heaven (1 Pet. 1:7-12; Rev. 1:1-7, 9-11, 16-20). The crux of the matter of faith is to know and believe that God exists to be trusted, worshiped and pleased (Heb. 11:6). Interestingly, a different kind of faith operation is emphasized each time through out Hebrews Chapter 11 to tell how believers can express faith with God (Heb. 11:6; 12:1-14).

However, though the emphasis with reference to faith reveals what pleases God, the writer seeks to further suggest three better things of faith attainable only when the faith of believers in Christ operates under the New Covenant (Heb. 11:1-40 vv. 16, 35, 40). There is faith that seeks: a) *a better dwelling place in the heavenly city* (v. 16), b) *a better resurrection unto life* (v.35) and c) *a better thing in faith which only saints in Christ both living and dead will attain to be perfect in their whole being of spirit, soul and body at the Rapture* (v. 40) (Heb. 11:1-40).

Faith is realized by the term **word of faith** from what we believe to be able to speak silently in the heart or verbally in due course with the mouth (Rom. 10:6-8; 2 Cor. 4:13) and as the **spirit of faith** from what we speak after believing (Rom. 10:9, 10; 2 Cor. 4:13). Faith operates as the word of our testimony that comes after we are saved by the blood (1 Pet. 1:18-23) and by it we overcome the flesh (Gal. 2:16-21), world (1 Jn. 5:4, 5) and Satan (1 Jn. 2:13, 14; Rev. 12:10, 11). Believers' faith is thus about biblically believing and obeying the gospel (Rom. 10:14-17). Biblically believing the gospel is not mere mental assent but it is first believing with the heart before confessing same with the mouth (Rom. 10:6-10).

Similarly, biblically obeying the gospel is not mere mental assent but with commitment first spiritually from the heart to live its claims as obeying Christ while willfully, mentally and emotionally submitting to its demands towards eternal life (2 Thess. 1:3-12 v. 8; 1 Pet. 4:12-19 v. 16).

The just shall live by faith

There is a biblical foundation laid in Hab. 2:2-4 when the Lord threw light on the way of the wicked and the way of the just in an unalterable but answerable “vision” about faith in the immutability and faithfulness of the great and good God. God always distinguishes the just from the unjust. Hab. 2:4 says; “Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith”. Now, thrice in the New Testament, Scripture is written to explain aspects of Hab. 2:4: “The just shall live by his faith” in Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; and Heb. 10:38.

Romans which is *the first* of these three references links the text to the effects of the gospel as the means of becoming “the just” or “the righteous” or “the true believer”, and the fact that only the just can live by faith (Rom. 1:16-17 v. 17; cf. Hab. 2:1-4 v. 4). Furthermore, a line of distinction is immediately drawn between the righteous (the just) and the unrighteous (the unjust) by comparing the gospel believers of Rom. 1:16-17 who gain righteousness with the unbelieving of Rom. 1:18f who continue in unrighteousness. This is what happens when the gospel is believed as it is also exemplified in 1 Cor. 6:9-11 to illustrate how we are saved after believing and by that same faith translated from outside out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God, washed, sanctified and justified in the Name of Jesus and by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11).

Through the gospel the believer gains access to both grace and faith that come from Jesus Christ to be saved (Acts 15:6-11; Rom. 4:16; 5:1, 2; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 Tim. 1:14) and adopted as a child of God (Jn. 1:12, 13; 3:3, 5; Rom. 8:9-11, 14-16; Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:3-14 vv. 5, 6). The *second reference* in the New Testament on “the just shall live by faith” from Galatians teaches that believer becomes conscious of the Work and Person of the Holy Spirit in the walk of faith by grace (Gal. 3:6-14 v. 11). The Christian walk is a journey of faith, hope and love (1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Thess. 1:3); but evidently rooted in faith (2 Cor. 5:7). Walking and living by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-18, 24-26) is neither a blind leap nor the legalistic observance of the law but a daily life of faith (Gal. 2:20; 3:1-29 vv. 2-5, 11, 20-26). In the *third reference*, the writer of Hebrews reviews the need of faith that perseveres and in the perseverance in faith even in times of intense persecution throughout the entire journey from earth to glory (Heb. 10:32-39 v. 38). The just must never forget that his faith will be tried in many ways – afflictions, tribulations, sufferings, etc (2 Cor. 8:2; 1 Pet. 1:6-9 v. 7; 4:12).

Bible kind of faith

There are various kinds of faith mentioned in the Bible and we may classify faith then as **Natural faith** for all human beings and **Believers' faith** which also falls in **five types of Bible kind of faith or biblical faith**. Believers' faith as noted above is from Christ in the **word of faith** (Rom. 10:6-8) that can be believed with the heart and spoken with the mouth or confessed as the **spirit of faith** (2 Cor. 4:13). The bible clearly teaches us these various kinds of believers' faith and how they work together as the components of vision or truth for the just (Rom. 1:16, 17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38; cf. Hab. 2:1-4). We discover from the Scriptures various elements of **biblical faith**, namely:

- 1) *saving faith* (Eph. 2:8-10),
- 2) *faith to live by* (1 Cor. 5:7),
- 3) *faith as fruit called faithfulness* (Gal. 5:22, 23),
- 4) *the gift of faith as one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit* (1 Cor. 12:9) and
- 5) *the faith* (Acts 6:7; 14:22; Rom. 1:11, 12; Eph. 4:5, 13; Col. 1:23; 1 Tim. 3:9; 5:8; 2 Pet. 1:1-5; Jd. 1:3) *as what we have known and believed to be the Truth of the gospel* (Gal. 2:1-5 v. 5, 14; Eph. 1:13, 14; Col. 1:3-8 v. 5), *especially the truth revealed about Christ and kingdom of God* (1 Tim. 4:3; 1 Jn. 4:16).

The kinds of believers' faith in detail (Heb. 11:6)

The various elements of biblical faith are the same as the kinds of believers' faith:

- 1) **SAVING FAITH: Saving faith** is that faith which enables believers to receive Salvation by grace (Eph. 2:8, 9). Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the Christ, the Son of God; *what* He has done and continues to do, the *Saviour* and *Lord* of life. Such faith is from Christ Himself and grace but bears righteousness in Christ as fruit of repentance as one believes the gospel (Acts 20:21; Rom. 1:16, 17; Eph. 4:23, 24).
 - a. In Romans "the just," is what it means to be justified (declared righteous by God) and to live a righteous life thereafter on the merits of Christ through the gospel (Rom. 1:16, 17; 2:13; 3:21-26; 5:1, 2, 6-11, 19; 7:4-25; 10:6-17). It is not the legalist (who claims to be doing his best, and yet his best falls short of God's justice towards sin) or the man of sinful indulgence, but only the just who lives by faith. Such people have received and believed the gospel as the word of God (Acts 10:36-44; 1 Thess. 2:12, 13) and confessed Christ as Lord (Rom. 10:9, 10). Such have received the faith that is inherent in the gospel first as saving faith to be saved and then as faith to live by through the imputed and imparted righteousness from Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:16, 17; 3:21-26; 4:11, 16, 22-24; 5:17; Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:1-4, 10).
 - b. There is an excellent biblical picture of *saving faith*, of the kind of faith that really saves a person in Jn. 2:23, 24. "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the

passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men," (Jn. 2:23, 24 KJV). In Jn. 2:23, 24, therefore, the word "believed" (*pisteuo*) in verse 23 is the very same word "commit" (*pisteuo*) in verse 24. The occurrence presupposes the true nature of saving faith:

- ii. **What saving faith is not:** Saving faith is not dependent on mere head and intellectual knowledge; for it is not just a mental conviction and a intellectual assent. It is not even just *believing the fact* of the history that Jesus Christ is indeed the Savior of the world who lived upon earth. It is not also just *believing the words* and claims of Jesus in the same way that one would believe the words of a man.
- iii. **What saving faith truly is:** Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the Son of God, the *Savior* and *Lord* of life. It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Saving faith hence involves commitment

This is the commitment of a man's total being and life to the Lord Jesus Christ; where such *commitment* is a personal commitment to the truth, the gospel or Jesus Christ Himself (Jn. 14:1-11 v. 6; 18:37, 38; Eph. 1:13, 14; 1 Jn. 2:3-11, 20-27; 3:18-24). The believer with saving faith trusts Jesus to take care of his all, *the past* (sins and trespasses), *his present* (welfare and life of victory over sin, the world and the devil), *and his future* (destiny of total victory in death, over death and an eternal home in heaven). He entrusts his everything - whole life, being and possessions into Jesus' hands; fully believing, trusting and confiding in Him and His Word about his daily needs and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life (Jn. 4:50). He follows Jesus as a new (*kainos* qualitatively new) creation in union with Christ through a changed, repentant heart and mind the indwelling Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 4:16; 5:17). The believer grows in grace by gaining kingdom precepts and principles from the Bible in every area and in every detail of life (1 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:17, 18). He seeks Him and His kingdom first in commitment of whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus and leaves his welfare entirely up to Him (Matt. 6:33) while seeking to obey Him wholeheartedly through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 16:25-27; see Heb. 5:5-10 v. 9; 1 Jn. 3:23, 24).

- c. **Steps to saving faith:** Saving faith (and any form of faith), therefore, has three steps very intricately involved and interwoven; and these steps are clearly seen or taught in the Scriptures, notably the passage of John. It reads; "*Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed* (Gk:

pisteuo) in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit (Gk: *pisteuo*) himself unto them, because he knew all men" (Jn. 2:23, 24). Here the words **believed** and **commit** are the same Greek word *pisteuo*. We also observe that in the Bible the Greek word for faith *pistis* can be translated into many English words, like belief, trust, and of course faith (Gen. 15:6; Ps. 25:2; 57:1; Jn. 3:16; 20:31; Acts 3:16; 6:7; 11:24; 15:9; 20:21; Rom. 4:3, 16; 10:6, 8, 17; 1 Jn. 3:23). The three steps of faith according to the Reformers may then be summed up to be (1 Cor. 15:1-28): 1) Knowing (*notitia*) that includes knowing and understanding of facts; 2) Knowing (*assensus*) that includes mental assent that the claims are true; and 3) Knowing (*fudicia*) that includes the exercise of personal trust to commit yourself to Christ making our lives consistent with the claims we agree with, that is to save me from my sins and granted life eternal. As with any faith these are the steps to saving faith; namely:

- 1) There is the first step of knowing (*notitia*) in three ways either **hearing** the gospel or the word and gaining faith to be saved (Rom. 10:16, 17; 1 Cor. 15:1-4, 11) or **seeing** true miracles or revelations (Jn. 2:23; Acts 2:5-12; 10:1-3) that later leads to acceptance of the gospel (Acts 2:22-41; 10:33-44) or **having a genuine spiritual encounter** with the risen Lord and believing (1 Cor. 15:3-8; see Acts 1:12-15; 9:1-9). Any person must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, as the revelation of truth or revelation of Christ to and within him or her and believe with the heart (Matt. 16:16, 17; Acts 10:34-44; Rom. 10:6-10; Gal. 1:15, 16; cf. Acts 22:14-15).

This is what biblical seeing (Gk: *eido*) entails that connotes seeing with a sense of knowing or understanding (Gk: *eido*) so as to believe (Gk: *pisteuo*) what is seen (Jn. 6:30; 20:8, 20). It goes beyond mere seeing (Gk: *blepo*) or (Gk: *theoleo*) or (Gk: *horao*) at sight (Jn. 2:23; 6:36; Heb. 11:1) to what is seen though spiritual but becomes known with conviction and commitment (Jn. 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 11:1, 6).

John helps us in his Gospel to understand seeing (Gk: *eido*) which conveys the idea of knowing from the context of Jesus' explanation of knowing on not knowing God. "*Then they said to Him, Where is your father? Jesus answered, You neither know (Gk: eido) Me, nor My Father. If you had known (Gk: eido) Me, then you also would have known (Gk: eido) My Father.*" (Jn. 8:19 NLT). Later Jesus uses knowing (Gk: *ginosko* meaning to really know in a true beginning or completed sense) and seeing (Gk: *eido*), interchangeably. He says, "*And you have not known (Gk: ginosko) Him; but*

I know (Gk: eido) Him, And if I say that I do not know (Gk: eido) Him, I shall be like you, a liar. But I know (Gk: eido) Him, and I keep His Word” (Jn. 8:55 NLT).

In such seeing (and hearing) Christ will grant repentance and forgiveness of sins and with the Holy Spirit who through conviction helps to generate repentance from dead works and faith towards God in the new believer’s renewed mind and good conscience (Jn. 16:7-11; Acts 2:37-38; 3:19; 5:29-32; 11:18; 15:6-11; 20:21; Tit. 1:15; Heb. 6:1; 9:14; 10:22). This is why the true believer must keep or abstain from all appearance (Gk: *eidos*) of evil (1 Thess. 5:22) and keep away from sin and idols Gk: *eidolon*) (Acts 15:20, 29; 2 Cor. 6:16-18; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10; 1 Jn. 5:18-21; Rev. 9:20, 21) by relying on God’s power because he or she is now clothed with the righteousness of the gospel and walks by faith and not by sight (Rom. 1:16, 17; 2 Cor. 5:7).

- 2) There is the next step of knowing (*assensus*) by *mental assent*. A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere mental agreement to truths does not lead to faith action (See the action of devils – Js. 2:19, 20). Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behavior to match his knowledge. Biblical faith is the other side of the coin to biblical repentance (Acts 2:38; 20:21). A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about. Biblical faith requires first believing and followed by a confession of commitment to what is believed (Rom. 10:8-10).
- 3) There is the final third step of knowing (*fudicia*) through *commitment*. All New Testament biblical faith, notably *saving faith* speaks of *commitment*, a *personal commitment* to the truth to warrant conviction and conversion as evidence of true repentance by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:3, 5; 16:7-11; Acts 2:22-38; 1 Pet. 1:2-5). A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and repents turning 180 degrees towards Christ to do something about former state. He commits and yields his life to the truth, Christ. God honors that commitment and the truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behavior and life (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

- d. **The Trinity, saving faith and the doctrine of baptisms:** Jesus and the Holy Spirit are co-equal Persons of the Trinity who work distinctively but together and always with the Father as one (Lk. 3:22) in all matters of our salvation

(Matt. 28:19; Jn. 14:20-23; 16:7-15; Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 19, 20; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Pet. 1:2). We need to emphasize that Jesus remains the giver of eternal life or salvation after the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-23 vv. 3, 4; cf. Jn. 5:19-29; 1 Cor. 15:45-49; 1 Jn. 5:1, 10-13, 18-20). Thereafter, the Father sends the Holy Spirit in His Name (Jn. 14:26); simply put Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11, 12; Acts 1:5; 2:33, 38, 39) as He releases the Holy Spirit to fall on or come upon the believer (Jn. 14:15-17; Acts 2:16-21; Acts 8:14-17; 11:15; 19: 5, 6).

If Jesus, the Son of God needed the Holy Spirit to begin ministry (Lk. 4:18, 19; Jn. 1:29-34; 3:34) and the early Church equally needed the Holy Spirit (Lk. 2:44-49; Acts 1:4-8), who are we to play down the need for Holy Spirit, the “another” Comforter in this wicked generation? Indeed, without Him, believers in every generation and locality will remain orphans (Jn. 14:12-18, 20-26; 16:7-15) and without the (*dunamis*) power for spiritual worship, understanding, vision, holiness and purity of hearts, gospel preaching, harvest of souls, faith and love for devotion, praying, fellowship, breaking of bread, and authentic discipleship (Acts 1:4-8; 2:16-19, 22-47).

To grasp a clearer meaning, we need to investigate the processing of **saving faith** as rooted in the **saving truth** of the knowledge of God, the Father and the Son (Jn. 17:3; 1 Jn. 2:23-25; 2 Jn. 1:3, 4, 9). To be saved, Trinity has jointly worked out the plan of salvation in the revealed mysteries of God through Christ by the gospel and with the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:30-32; Rom. 1:11-17; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2, 15-17, 20; 1 Thess. 1:3-6; 2:8-14). The processing of saving faith towards salvation is clearly explained in the Scriptures and even shows the distinguishing of the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the repeated cum continual nature of the two aspects of the believer’s filling of the Holy Spirit by grace and faith (Acts 2:38, 39; 15:6-11; 19:17; see Gal. 3:1-17). Scripture also amply teaches on adoption and mature sonship for becoming heirs with Christ who are not under tutors or tossed to and flow with every wind of doctrine (Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 4:1-7; Eph. 1:3-19; 3:4-6, 14-19; 4:1-16).

- e. **The essential nature of saving faith:** Saving faith is therefore the faith inherent in the gospel that enables us to believe God; accept His Word beginning with the gospel without changing or diluting it; and obeying or acting on it without delay (Acts 10:34-44; 13:26-39; Rom. 10:6-12, 16, 17; 1 Pet. 1:1-25 vv. 5, 7, 9, 21). Saving faith is that which believes what is seen and heard, especially as factual about Christ and the gospel (Jn. 2:23, 24; 20:8, 20;

Rom. 1:16, 17; 10:6-10, 16, 17). It generates immediate and continued obedience to Christ and the faith (Rom. 1:4, 5; 16:25-27; 2 Cor. 6:16, 17; Heb. 5:9; 1 Jn. 2:23-25; 3:23, 24). Thus, saving faith involves belief, repentance, confession, being born again to receive the promise of eternal life (1 Jn. 2:23-25) and with readiness to undergo water baptism (Acts 22:14-16). It therefore even includes the desire to act in obedience and receive all the promises of God, such as the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 39; 3:19-21). This is the way to abide or remain in Him after receiving the promise of eternal life (1 Jn. 2:23-29; 3:21-24; 4:12-16; 5:1-13, 18-20). Saving faith acts as a progression from belief to commitment where (Jn. 2:23, 24; Rom. 10:6-10):

1. Belief is faith changing your mind, mental attitude or thought pattern about Trinity regarding salvation through Jesus Christ by the gospel or a miraculous sign from Him (Jn. 2:23; Acts 2:6-11, 37; 4:10-12; 8:26-37).
2. Repentance is faith changing your mind and heart about Trinity regarding salvation and towards sin (Acts 3:38; 3:19; 20:21).
3. Confession is faith changing your speech based on your changed heart about Trinity regarding salvation through Jesus Christ by faith after hearing the Word (Mk. 7:1-9; Rom. 10:6-10, 16, 17). Belief, repentance and confession from conviction lead to being born again, regeneration (Rom. 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 2:8, 9; Tit. 2:11-14; 3:5-7).
4. Being born again or re-birth or regeneration is faith changing your spiritual position and condition from death into life or from darkness into light with the concurrent gaining of inheritance by adoption (Acts 20:21-32; 26:18-21). The Scriptures picture the new birth as the occasion for being spiritually baptized into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). There is a spiritual baptism that must be followed immediately by Water Baptism as instituted and commanded by the Lord (Acts 8:36-38). This is the real ministry of the minister of the gospel, to get people receive eternal life through the preaching and teaching of the gospel (Acts 20:24-27; Rom. 1:9-17; 2 Tim. 1:8-14).
5. Water Baptism is faith changing your conscience regarding your spiritual position and condition in Christ and His Church towards obedience to the faith and commitment to love the Lord and believers as a new believer with the rights of adoption and inheritance (Matt. 28:19; Jn. 2:23, 24; Acts 2:38-41; Rom. 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Pet. 3:20, 21; 1 Jn. 3:23, 24).
6. Holy Spirit Baptism is faith changing your overall understanding about Trinity regarding salvation first through Jesus Christ by the gospel and secondary through the receiving of the promised Holy Spirit not only for adoption as sons but for full-grown inheritance as heir with sealing and power (Eph. 1:13, 14 see Rom. 8:14-17, 23, 28-32; Eph. 1:3-14; 3:4-12,

15-19). This is guarantee for the effectual sanctifying power of God unto final redemption (1 Thess. 5:23, 24). The Holy Spirit, the third Person of Trinity coming on the day of Pentecost, assumes multi-functions, which include the permanent indwelling at re-birth (Jn. 3:3-7; Rom. 8:9-11) and visible filling with laying on of hands (Acts 8:12-18; 9:17; 19:6); and subsequent re-filling for action (Acts 4:8, 31; 13:9) or fullness for character (Acts 6:5; 7:55; 11:24; 13:52; Eph. 3:19; 5:18).

7. Commitment and continuance in the faith is faith changing your mission towards Trinity in worship and towards life to be minister of the grace of God with power (Jn. 15:26, 27; Acts 1:8; 5:30-32; 20:24; 1 Thess. 1:1-6). This is a chain of discipleship continuum, to birth new converts and other converts (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 4:15-17, 20; 2 Tim. 2:2) who are ready to suffer for Christ's sake in a kind of baptism of suffering (Acts 1:8; 5:30-32; Phil. 1:27-30; 1 Pet. 4:12-16).

- f. **The outcome of saving faith:** Saving faith will naturally lead to living faith or faith to live by (Rom. 1:16, 17; 2 Cor. 5:7); it will also produce faithfulness as fruit of faith (Gal. 5:22, 23) and occasionally release the gift of faith or faith as gift from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7-11 v. 9). So, the gospel must be believed to produce saving faith, but it also must be obeyed and defended to keep us in the faith (Rom. 1:4-5, 11-17; 16:25-27; Phil. 1:7, 17, 27) and to present us saved on the day of His appearing (Jn. 3:16-18; 5:24-29; 1 Thess. 1:1-10; 2:8-14; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). Saving faith from the gospel believes and confesses Christ as Lord (Rom. 10:6-10, 16, 17).

Saving faith from the gospel releases or produces righteousness as authority base or the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16, 17); that immediately distinguishes believers as just from unbelievers as the unjust or people who attract the wrath of God due to ungodliness and unrighteousness (Rom. 1:16-23 vv. 17, 18). Saving faith at the end produces redemption and the granting of the Spirit of Christ as adoption of sons through the concerted work of God, Trinity – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:3-14).

Faulty doctrine of Trinity therefore places serious limitations on the four baptisms that seem to converge in the one water baptism (Eph. 4:4-6 see Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13; Gal. 3:25-29). Unless one believes, loves and totally obeys the Crucified, Buried, Risen, Ascended and Exalted, and Glorified Lord (Phil. 2:5-11), who is the Son of the living God now with the Father in heaven to dispense the faith and righteousness of the gospel (Rom. 1:11-17;

6:1-7, 17; Gal. 2:20, 21; Phil. 1:27; Col. 2:11, 12; 3:1-4), everything about belief falls to the ground (1 Jn. 2:1-8, 20-29; 2 Jn. 1:1-11).

- 2) **FAITH TO LIVE BY** – 2 Cor 5:7: *Faith to live by* keeps us in faith with the Lord, simply trusting Jesus every day.
- a. In Rom. 1:16, 17 the just receives saving faith from the gospel to be saved and then faith to live by through the Word with power from Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:4, 5, 16, 17; 8:1-4, 9-11, 14-17; 10:6-10, 16-17; 2 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 3:16, 17; 2 Tim. 1:5-7). This is the victory that overcomes the world; and it is our faith in Christ as the Son of God (1 Jn. 5:1-5 v. 4). This faith received at salvation from Christ teaches us to say no to sin and yes to righteousness or godliness (Tit. 2:11-15 v. 12). By it we see ourselves dead to sin as crucified and yet alive in Christ as we gain power in the inner man to deal with sin inherent in the flesh (Rom. 6:1-7, 11-18; 7:4-6, 14-8:5). The new law of the Spirit of life in Christ makes me now obey God's law and overpowers the old law of sin and death in the flesh (Rom. 7:18-23, 25; 8:2-4). We begin to see daily the old man crucified with Christ but the new man alive through Christ in us (Gal. 2:20-23 v. 20; 5:16, 17, 24, 25; 6:14-17).
 - b. In Gal. 3:11, Scripture defines the rule or principle by which the just lives; it is by the principle of faith, not by the principle of works. The person declared *just* by faith shall live apart from works. The believer is saved by faith, and the believer lives the Christian life by faith (Col. 2:6, 7; Gal. 3:6-14 v. 11).
 - c. In Heb. 10:38, Scripture determines the power by which the just lives; it the power that is given us by God because of faith. The Christian believes God, believes in the promises God has made and perseveres in faith, even in times of trials. He does this by power of faith from God's promises that *energizes* him to live a just life; not more self-effort (Heb. 10:35-39 v. 38).

Without this continuing faith, you will not be able to please God (Heb. 11:6) and continue in the faith (Acts. 14:22; Col. 1:23). You will end up being a reprobate because Christ can only dwell in you by faith (2 Cor. 13:5-7; Eph. 3:17) after being saved through faith (Eph. 2:8, 9). Furthermore, without such faith you will not be able to do good works in Christ (Eph. 2:10; 1 Thess. 1:3) and your good works will become reprobate (Tit. 1:15, 16).

- 3) **THE FRUIT OF FAITH OR FAITHFULNESS** – Gal 5:22, 23: *The fruit of faith or faithfulness* as one of the 9-fold clusters of fruit of the Holy Spirit is the faith. It enables the believer to become faithful in dealing with God and others. This fruit of *faith* or faithfulness (*pistis*) means to be faithful and trustworthy; to be loyal and steadfast, very dependable always doing the right things and doing things right in

devotion and allegiance to God and one another in the body of Christ. It means to be constant, staunch, and enduring; giving support for perseverance in the things of God. A faithful person denies and sacrifices himself - all he is and has and will ever be or have - and trusts God. He believes God and knows that God will work all things out for good (Rom. 8:28-32). He knows that God through Christ will perform His promise on oath (Heb. 6:9-21). Therefore, he casts himself totally upon God and becomes faithful to God. Since its fruit must be nurtured to grow and mature constantly with other fruit. Those who bear this fruit:

- i. Do not doubt God - not the greatness and goodness as the Almighty God, not His salvation, provision, or strength to save, help and keep.
- ii. Do not walk with God then give in to the lusts of the flesh but rely or count on His faithfulness to present us blameless on that day (1 Thess. 5:23, 24; Heb. 13:20, 21).
- iii. Can be trusted by others; and without it there is no true reliability, anywhere.

Believers are to be faithful in everything because:

- i. Faithfulness always begins and continues with God; whose attribute is faithfulness. God is faithful (Deut. 7:9; 1 Kgs. 8:56; Ps. 89:1; 1 Cor. 1:9; 5:23, 24; 1 Pet. 4:19; 1 Jn. 1:9).
 - ii. Faithfulness must continue on and on among believers; it never slackens or surrenders as fruit within the main fruit of love (Gal. 5:22, 23; see 1 Cor. 13:4-7). This because: a) *God desires faithfulness* (Ex. 19:5); b) *God rewards faithfulness* (Matt. 25:21; Lk. 19:17); c) *God requires faithfulness* (1 Cor. 4:2) and d) *God admires faithfulness* (Heb. 3:5).
 - iii. Hence, both in daily living and in ministry all believers are called to be faithful (1 Cor. 4:1, 2). We see this by biblical precedence in the New Testament Church: a) *life* (Acts 16:15; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:25; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2; 4:9; 1 Tim. 3:11; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 1:6; 1 Pet. 5:12; Rev. 2:10, 13; 17:14), and b) *ministry* (1 Cor. 4:2; Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:7; 4:7, 9; 1 Tim. 1:12; 3:11; 2 Tim. 2:2).
- 4) **THE GIFT OF FAITH** – 1 Cor 12:8: *The gift of faith* as one of the manifestation gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 7-11 v. 8). It is supernatural faith for working divine acts at a point in time released by the Holy Spirit at the point of need, especially for the benefit of evangelism and Church life. But even though this is a manifestation or gift, it is important that every believer lives within confines of their measure of faith (Rom. 12:3). This in turn is for articulating the faith of God (Mk. 11:22) through the measure of the gift of Christ (Eph. 4:7) through the distribution of the Spirit as the promised gift of God in their lives as children of God (Acts 2:38-39; Heb. 2:3, 4) in receiving answers to their prayers (Mark 11:22-26).

- 5) **THE FAITH** - Act 6:7; 14:22; 24:24; Rom. 1:5, 12; Gal. 1:23; Col. 1:5, 6, 23; 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:5-14; Tit. 1:4; Jd. 1:3 as is biblically known to the Church. The body of truth handed down to believers as doctrine or statement of faith (Eph. 4:5, 13). It is the Tenets of our common faith which in its simplest form must give credence to the gospel (1 Cor. 15:3, 4) that also presents the elementary teachings about Christ (Heb. 6:1, 2). Such preaching and teaching is what was captioned among some present-day believers as the four-square or five-fold multi-purpose Christo-Centric Message of the book of Acts – **Jesus is the Saviour, Healer, Baptizer in Power, Apostle and High Priest (Advocate, Builder, Sanctifier, Intercessor, Supplier and Defender of the Church with the Father) and Soon coming King.**

Believers are called to become obedient to “the faith” (Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5). For this reason, “the faith” is called:

- a) the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:23),
- b) the faith grounded in the hope of the gospel (Col. 1:23),
- c) the common or mutual faith (Rom. 1:12; Tit. 1:4),
- d) the faith which was once delivered to all saints (Jd. 1:3),
- e) the faith of Jesus Himself (Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:20, 26; 3:22; Phil. 3:10; 1 Tim. 3:13; Js. 2:1),
- f) the faith of God or “have faith of God”, the God kind of faith (Mk. 11:22LITV).

THE INTERMARRIAGE OF GRACE AND FAITH IN THE FAITH

In true Christianity rooted in the faith, there is first the intermarriage of grace and faith (Acts 15:6-11). As soon as the intermarriage of grace and faith takes though the gospel preached and believed, there is also the respective intermarriage of: *grace and mercy* (Heb. 4:14-16); *true holiness and righteousness* (Eph. 4:23-24); *God’s Sovereignty and human responsibility* (Phil. 2:12-16); and *faith in the Lord and love for all the saints* (Eph. 1:13-15). It is only as true repentance and faith come together through the mercy of God or in Christ (2 Cor. 5:14-21; Tit. 3:4-7) that Christ grants us repentance and forgiveness of sins unto salvation as repentance unto life or faith towards God (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:30-31; 11:13-14, 18; 20:21; Heb. 6:1). It is in this way that the intermarriage of grace and faith becomes visible as God divinely witnesses to our salvation (v. 8) after giving us the Holy Spirit with public evidence based on grace (v. 9) and faith (v. 11) (Acts 15:6-11 vv. 8, 9, 11). Thus, through the gospel and the agency of the Holy Spirit the divine intermarriage of the **two main wheels, means, sources, bases, fountains, rails and pillars** that make eternal salvation possible in the believer are divinely put in place (Acts 15:6-11; Tit. 2:11-14).

First of all when the **wheels of grace and faith** work together we get saved, that is, to see, enter and inherit the kingdom of God through the gospel and the conviction of the Holy Spirit to gain eternal life; and thereby we even can also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:3, 5; 16:7-15; Acts 2:38, 39; 15:9, 11; Rom. 5:1, 2; 1 Cor. 4:15; Eph. 1:13, 14; 2:8, 9; Tit. 1:1-4; 2:11-13; 1 Pet. 1:1-12; 1 Jn. 5:1-13, 18-20; Jd. 1:20, 21). The **sources of grace and truth** from Christ through the gospel provide foundations and grounds for eternal life and godliness (Jn. 1:14-17; Col. 1:5-6; 1 Thess. 1:5-6; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; 1 Jn. 2:20-27). The **means of grace and mercy** are granted at the throne of grace on a divine platform created through the gospel (Heb. 4:14-16; see Eph. 2:1-7). Our salvation promised in Christ by the gospel provides the twin-interlocking **bases of true holiness and righteousness** received in Christ (Lk. 1:75; Rom. 1:16, 17; 6:19; Eph. 4:23, 24; Phil. 3:7-14); and also, with the **fountains of wisdom and prudence** provided for living in the world that now thrives on corrupted human wisdom (Matt. 11:25-27; Eph. 1:8). In the Bible, once the believer has the indwelling Holy Spirit from New Birth by grace and through faith (Eph. 2:1-9 see Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 4:15; 6:9-11, 17, 19, 20), he or she has the grace and faith for receiving the promised Holy Spirit to be continually filled (Acts 2:4; 9:17; Gal. 3:3, 5, 11-17; Eph. 1:13, 14; 5:18). Thereafter, the believer can learn to both live and walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26 v. 25) and to overcome all the enemies of our faith; namely: the flesh, the world and the Devil (2 Cor. 10:3-6). The twin-interlocking **rails of God's Sovereignty and human responsibility** are also developed (Jn. 3:13-18; Eph. 1:3-14; Phil. 2:12-16), while obeying God's commands as the **pillars of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and love towards all the saints** through the Holy Spirit become effectual (Eph. 1:15; Col. 1:4; 1 Jn. 3:23, 24).

The components of the faith are in the salvific mysteries of God

After the resurrection and coming of the Holy Spirit, where Christ grants repentance (with forgiveness of sins and faith) unto eternal life or salvation and the Holy Spirit gives proof to the faith (Acts 2:16-39; 5:29-32; 11:13-18; 20:21; Heb. 6:1, 2), the Church is now granted all the indispensable salvific mysteries of God as truths of the faith (1 Cor. 4:1, 2; 1 Tim. 3:15). These mysteries thrive on *the mystery of the gospel as primary message* (Rom. 16:25-27; Eph. 6:19, 20 see Rom. 1:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4) and on *the mystery of Christ as the unique Son of God, the promised Messiah* (Col. 4:3, 4). Jesus Christ is the essence of *the mystery of God* (Col. 2:2, 3) for once you meet Jesus you meet the Father also (Jn. 4:5-11; 17:1-5; 1 Jn. 1:1-3; 2:23-26) and automatically meet the Holy Spirit as the third Person who reveals Christ (Jn. 14:20, 21, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-15; 1 Jn. 4:12-16). It clearly means that Jesus Christ is not just the embodiment of all mysteries of God but as the Word of God the meaning and wisdom of all mysteries are in Him (1 Cor. 1:24, 30; 2:1-7; Col. 2:2, 3; 4:3, 4). Again Jesus Christ is the essence of the mystery of the faith (1 Tim. 3:9) for it is the faith in Him as the Word of God that defines the faith for the Church (Eph. 3:4-12; Col. 1:3-6). The *mystery of the gospel as stated in the Scriptures* (Rom. 16:25-27; Eph. 6:19, 20 see Rom. 1:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4) is hence equivalent to the *mystery of Christ as the unique Son of God*,

the promised Messiah to be Lord and Saviour of the world (Col. 4:3, 4 see Jn. 4:19-26, 41-42; Acts 2:36; 3:12-16; 4:7-12; 5:30-31; 1 Jn. 4:14).

Some of the other salvific mysteries are; namely: *the mystery of God for salvation as the most important truth for knowing God through Christ* (Col. 2:2, 3) with the *mystery of God for judgment on evil and sin* (Rev. 10:5-11 v. 7); *the mystery of the faith as the truths or doctrine of Christ and of the kingdom for salvation* (1 Tim. 3:9); *the mystery of godliness revealed in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ* (1 Tim. 3:16); *the mystery of His Will* (Eph. 1:9-11); *the mystery of His Wisdom* (1 Cor. 1:18, 24, 30; 2:6-13); *the mystery of Christ revealing God's universal love in forming the Church* (Eph. 3:4-6); *the mystery of Christ in you, the hope of glory* (Col. 1:26, 27); *the mystery of the spiritual kingdom of God on Earth* (Lk. 17:20, 21 cf. Matt. 6:10; 12:28; Lk. 2:11; Jn. 18:36; Acts 1:1-3; 28:30, 31; Rom. 14:7-17); *the mystery of evil on earth in the mystery of iniquity to the revealing of the Anti-Christ* (2 Thess. 2:1-12; see Rev. 13; 17; 18); *the mystery of Christ in the undisclosed time-line of the Church towards becoming the glorious Bride* (Acts 1:1-11 vv. 6-8; 2:16-21 v. 20; Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 1:1-20 v. 7, 18-20; 19:7-9) and *the mystery of the Rapture of the Church saints* (1 Cor. 15:50-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 1:7).

SOME TRUTHS ABOUT FAITH AND THE FAITH

The Bible is a book of faith in the triune God (Gen. 12:6; Rom. 4:16; Heb. 11:1, 6); and it begins and ends with the truths of the gospel with the Lord making it complete as the author and finisher (Jn. 20:30, 31; Rom. 1:16, 17; 10:16, 17; Heb. 4:11-13; 12:1, 2). So faith asks us to believe in God who we can know, in order to please Him (Heb. 11:1, 6). We can truly know and believe in God by believing in His Word and Son, in what He has revealed to us by His Word and Spirit (Jn. 4:42; 6:69; 17:8, 19-21; Acts 15:7; 1 Cor. 2:1-12; 1 Tim. 4:3; 1 Jn. 4:12-16 v. 16). This is why biblical revelation and power of God are important to our faith since the essential characteristics of faith always depend on the nature of God's revelation (Matt. 16:17-19; 1 Cor. 4:1-20; Eph. 3:4-12). The faith reveals that our faith knows and believes God that He exists and provides personal salvation to believers as individuals within the corporate body the Church (Eph. 2:8-10, 19-22; 3:14-21; Heb. 11:6; 1 Jn. 2:20-27). Biblical Faith requires that every aspect of faith beginning with saving faith knows or perceives or encounters God existentially and personally (Mk. 11:22-26; Rom. 5:1, 2; Eph. 2:8-18)!

State, stages and levels of Biblical faith

The state of the God-kind of faith operates in variety of states and levels in believers as we seek to do His Will and enhance His kingdom and glory on earth (Matt. 6:9-13; 17:1-21; Mk. 11:22-26). The Bible therefore talks of various conditions or stages and levels of faith expression:

- 1) Great faith – Matt. 8:10; 15:28
- 2) Little faith is faith that entertains doubt – Matt. 8:26; 14:31
- 3) Growing faith is from the gospel to generate living faith – Rom. 1:17
- 4) Not Weak in faith – Rom. 4:19
- 5) Strong in faith – Rom. 4:20
- 6) Weak in the faith – Rom. 14:1
- 7) Faith as the absence of unbelief – Matt. 17:20; Rom. 4:20
- 8) Faith without or nothing wavering – Matt. 10:23; Js. 1:6
- 9) Dead faith as faith without any good works – Js. 2:17, 20, 26
- 10) Faith is proven by its works done – Js. 2:22
- 11) Reprobate concerning the faith – 2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Tim. 3:8
- 12) War a good warfare of faith, holding faith and a good conscience to avoid making shipwreck – 1 Tim. 1:18, 19
- 13) Fight the good fight of faith to lay hold on eternal life while helping others to do same – 1 Tim. 6:12, 19.

We are to flee from sin, pursue faith and godly virtues to lay hold on eternal life and to keep which is commanded about the faith without spot until the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 6:11-21 vv. 12-14, 19). This requires that we look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith to deal with weights and besetting sins that easily entangle us in order to see God in life or in death (Heb. 12:1-14 vv. 1, 2).

Believers' Faith Level in Operation (Mk. 11:22-24; Eph. 2:8-10; Heb. 11:6)

1. Faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour, the Son of the true and living God leads to salvation (Matt. 16:16, 17; Jn. 20:31; Acts 2:36; 8:37; Rom. 10:6-10; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:19, 20; 1 Jn. 2:23-25; 5:1-13, 20). To this end, faith in His Word and with the direct and immediate voice of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14-16) leads to firm assurance and knowledge of salvation (1 Jn. 5:10-13).
2. Faith has to do with things 'hoped for'; because what He promised though not seen is but present in the eternal God – 2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:1.
3. Faith takes hold of the promises of God and confesses them or believes them or God as true reality towards righteousness – Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:16.
4. Faith therefore looks at the impossible and says it shall be done – Gal. 3:11
5. Faith receives the faith (that is God's revelation as absolute truth) – Jd. 1: 3
6. Faith is sourced in the Lord Jesus Christ – Heb. 12:2 and in His word or the gospel – Rom. 10:16, 17
7. Faith grows from faith to faith – Rom. 1:16, 17
8. Faith levels can be increased through – Matt. 6:12; 17:19; Mk. 9:29; 11:22-26
 - a. The intake of the word – Rom. 10:16, 17; see Rev. 1:3

- b. Prayer with fasting which must continue as a practice among believers while the Lord Jesus, the Bridegroom is absent – Matt. 9:15; 17:21; Mk. 9:29 see Acts 4:23-33; 10:9-20; 2 Cor. 11:27
 - c. Maintaining a forgiving spirit as attitude of recognition of God's forgiveness – Matt. 6:12; 18:21, 22; Mk. 11:22-26 v. 25, 26; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:7
 - d. Maintaining a forgiving attitude as way of life by acting or forgiving from grace which is the nature of God and the avenue for releasing faith and love through Christ – Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; 1 Tim. 1:14
 - e. Love, this is because biblical faith must always work by love – Gal. 5:6; see 1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Jn. 3:18-24.
9. Faith is most important; because:
- a. It releases or makes available God's righteousness – Rom. 1:17; 4:16-21
 - b. It releases saving grace and salvation – Eph. 2:8, 9
 - c. It releases working grace after salvation – Eph. 2:8-10 v. 10; see 1 Cor. 15:10, 11; Eph. 3:1-21 v. 2; Tit. 1:1-9; 2:11-14; 1 Pet. 4:7-11
 - d. It pleases God – Heb. 11:6
 - e. It makes hope and love work on earth as the unending trio of theological virtues of faith, hope and love (v. 3) among believers – 1 Thess. 1:3-6
 - f. It is the victory that overcomes the world – 1 Jn. 5:4, 5
 - g. It abides with and in God as a trio of faith, hope and love; where love is greatest, yet faith is the initial responder to grace for operating the three theological virtues (1 Cor. 13:13).

The measure of faith and of Christ in the believer

Interestingly, the measure of our faith is comparable to the measure of the *dorea* gift of Christ operating in the grace *charisma* gift of God (Rom. 12:3, 6-8; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 4:7). Besides, our faith level automatically births corresponding hope and love as the kingdom's primary confirmation virtues (1 Cor. 13:13; Eph. 1:15; 6:23; Col. 1:4; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:3, 4; 1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 1:13; Phm. 1:5; 1 Jn. 3:23, 24). Faith together with hope and love serve as the three essential theological virtues for evidence of kingdom of God or eternal life (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 14:17-19; 1 Cor. 4:14-20; Col. 1:3-8; 2 Thess. 1:3-12; 1 Thess. 1:3-6; 2 Tim. 1:3-7; 1 Pet. 1:1-12; 1 Jn. 2:3-11, 20-29; 5:1-5, 10-13, 18-20; Jd. 1:20, 21). The mysteries of the doctrine of faith termed the mystery of the faith and of godliness are to be held by all believers in the Church, especially servants of the Churches as deacons (1 Tim. 3:9, 15, 16). Deacons are to strong runners of the faith within the context of Church life with the Apostles and Elders (Acts 6:1-8; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13 vv. 8, 12-13); they are to profess faith, and to hold fast the profession of it and that **in a pure conscience** for the members (1 Tim. 3:9; 6:11-15). Such a conscience is sprinkled by the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14); and conscience void of offence both towards God and man (Acts 24:16). With it a suitable life and conversation; a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ, and by which

the doctrine of God is adorned (Tit. 2:10). This part of our character is necessary, to back the preaching of the gospel that the Church may be able to instruct and establish those who are weak in the faith, and oppose and refute the erroneous, and also recommend the gospel by their own Christ-like example in conduct and actions (Acts 24:1). With the revelation of the gospel and the faith, the law only now acts as a schoolmaster to our faith and love by showing us sin and helping us to accept Jesus as our sin bearer (Gal. 3:19-29 vv. 24, 25; 1 Tim. 1:5-14 v. 5).

The admonition of the term "continue in the faith" in Acts 14:22 probably means more than just *believing* in Jesus; it was probably referring to the *belief* and doctrines of the Christian faith. It is reasonable to write out clear Tenets for a Bible believing Church just as Paul most likely wrote out the basic beliefs for the churches he established. Paul certainly wrote out the doctrines for the Church in Colossae (Col. 1:3-8, 23) and that he refers to a creed or a set of doctrines when writing to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:8; 6:10, 12, 20, 21; 2 Tim. 2:15-21; 3:15-17; 4:7, 8). The term "the faith," that is, teaching the basic beliefs and doctrines of God's Word (Scripture), tells the minister his task: the minister is to exhort the church, exhort the believers, to continue, persevere, and be steadfast in the faith, in the basic beliefs of the faith in Christ (Rom. 1:11-17; Eph. 3:4-12; 4:11-13; Phil. 1:27; 3:9; Jd. 1:3, 20).

The possibility of being reprobate concerning the faith

The Scriptures teach about people being reprobate *adokimos* concerning the faith (2 Tim. 3:8) and often such people profess to know *eido* God but in works they deny Him; being disobedient, abominable and their good works are reprobate (Tit. 1:16). It is for this reason why Paul admonished the Corinthian believers to examine their faith (2 Cor. 13:5). The Greek word *adokimos* translated reprobate means *firstly* unapproved, unworthy, spurious, worthless (2 Cor. 13:5-7) and it's *secondly* usage means rejected, disapproved, cast away (1 Cor. 9:27; Heb. 6:8). The Greek word *adokimos* translated reprobate in its reference to the mental faculty means undiscerning, not distinguishing, void of judgment with the idea of reprobate abominable mind, a mind to be abhorred by God and man (Rom. 1:28).

In the concluding chapter of Second Corinthians, Paul tries to establish the fact that the true believer will not be reprobate because he or she has **Christ in Him as the embodiment of the faith** (2 Cor. 13:5). Paul out of concern for the perfecting of the saints in the chapter (v. 9, 11) lines up three verses that try to probe into faith being reprobate (2 Cor. 13:1-14). We read; ⁵*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?* ⁶*But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.* ⁷*Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though*

we be as reprobates." (2Cr. 13:5-7). The Church as the pillar and foundation of truth (1 Tim. 3:15) necessarily must then define the faith to embody all the salvific mysteries of God through Christ by the gospel as the starting point (1 Cor. 4:1, 2, 15). This is what underlies our striving for perfection in salvation (2 Cor. 13:9, 11). Indeed, the faith is mystery but understood as "Christ in us and we in Christ" (Jn. 14:20, 21; 1 Jn. 3:24). The true believer cannot, therefore, continue to live in sin; living in sin makes a believer's faith in the Lord for eternal life suspect and often reprobate (2 Cor. 13:1-5; see 1 Jn. 3:4-15; 5:16-21).

Figuratively, and even in the Old Testament, reprobate from the first Hebrew word *sug* referring to dross is spoken of what is waste, as dross from metals such as silver (Ps. 119:119; Prov. 25:4; Is. 1:22). Reprobate *sug* is symbolic of moral and religious corruption and apostasy (Is. 1:22, 25; Ezek. 22:18) and also describes impurity or a false covering hiding a wicked heart (Prov. 26:23). The secondly usage of reprobate is from another Hebrew word *maas* meaning to reject, to despise, to abhor, to refuse or treat as loathsome. The example of God's dealing with His people Israel is spelt out clearly in Jeremiah (Jer. 6:18-20; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11); Israel rejected God and became; "Reprobate *maas* silver shall *men* call them, because the LORD hath rejected *maas* them (v. 30)." (Jer. 6:13-30).

Scripture also speaks time and again of the Lord rejecting His people as reprobate (Hos. 4:6) and their worship also as (Amos 5:21) because of their rejection of Him. Reprobate people reject *maas* God through their actions in: *refusing to heed God, His Word or accept His authority* (1 Sam. 10:19; Jer. 8:9); and *esteeming God's commands lightly* (Lev. 26:15; Is. 30:12). However, reprobate people who do not *despise but true see God and spiritual condition in an act of true biblical repentance, but rather despising sin termed rebound from carnality* are accepted by God (Job 42:5, 6; 1 Cor. 11:27-33; 1 Jn. 1:5-2:2 v. 9).

The faith is that to which the believer's or believers' faith is sourced in Christ; and is it the believers' faith that keeps us going into the eternal kingdom of God. "*When they had preached the good news (Gospel) to that town and made disciples of many of the people, they went back to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, Establishing and strengthening the souls and the hearts of the disciples, urging and warning and encouraging them to stand firm in the faith, and [telling them] that it is through many hardships and tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*" (Acts 14:21, 22 AMP).

There is not only the Scriptural truth exhorting or encouraging believers to "continue in the faith" in Acts 14:22 but also the expectation "if you continue in the faith" in Col. 1:23. Paul again writes; "*[And this He will do] provided that you continue to stay with and in the faith [in Christ], well-grounded and settled and steadfast, not shifting or moving away from the hope [which rests on and is inspired by] the glad tidings (the Gospel), which you heard*

and which has been preached [as being designed for and offered without restrictions] to every person under heaven, and of which [Gospel] I, Paul, became a minister.” (Col. 1:23 AMP).

So long as the believer sticks to the eternal demands and benefits of the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:23) there is divine fruit as evidence that the person is in Christ and Christ is in him through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit (Col. 1:4-8; 2 Tim. 1:5-14; 1 Jn. 3:23, 24). On the contrary, if anyone draws back or departs from the living God through the deceitfulness of sin, he suffers the consequences of losing the pleasure of God or falling into perdition through unbelief (Heb. 3:12-19; 10:38, 39). We must remind ourselves time and again that “righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34); and it is our faith and profession in Christ that overcomes the world (1 Jn. 5:4, 5). It important to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith; for in all matters of the faith, “the just shall live by faith” in order to reveal the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:16, 17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38; cf. Hab. 2:4).

THE TRINITY AND THE FAITH

The trinity is the central mystery to our most holy faith (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:33; Rom. 15:30; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2, cf. Col. 1:3-6; Tit. 1:4; Jd. 1:3, 20). The Father, Son, Holy Spirit each remains a distinct member of the Trinity but of the same essence (*homoousios*) in a unique interrelationship (mutual indwelling and fellowship) termed as *perichoresis* by theologians beginning with the Cappadocian fathers (Jn. 1:18; 10:38; 14:6-11, 20-23; 17:11, 21-24). In the Trinity, we see God as “One but also Three in One”; who we can represent as: *God above us, God among us, God within us*. So, Jesus, the Son came to the earth to reveal the Father to us (Lk. 10:21, 22; Jn. 14:6-11, 23) and to declare plainly the triune Godhead, the Trinity to us (Matt. 3:16, 17; 28:19; Jn. 14; 15; 16). The Holy Spirit has come into believers to bring us God and the resources of the Godhead, and thereafter, breaking sin (also called the flesh) in our nature, pleading in prayer, and exalting Jesus as Lord and Saviour. While we see the Father in majesty, the Son in suffering, we see the Holy Spirit as striving.

God though He gave hints, did not make clear the Truth of the Trinity in the Old Testament and yet not leave it as something to be deduced in the New Testament. In the wisdom of God, the knowledge of His essential Threeness could not be grasped without first laying deep in their minds (the minds of OT saints) a piercing conviction of His Oneness. Besides, without the full agency of the redemptive plan, the Holy Spirit could not reveal such truths (Jn. 14:12; 16:12-15; 17:21, 22; 1 Cor. 2:10-12; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27).

The Bible begins in monotheism (belief in one God as the triune Godhead), but soon after the Fall comes polytheism (belief in many gods) - which god is the real God. Not until belief in one God was laid deep in human consciousness through Judaism was God ready to reveal more clearly to mankind the sublime truth of the Trinity in the New Testament. Even then, to explain the mystery of the Trinity is not the province or capacity of any finite beings; ours is simply to conserve the mystery. So, those who call themselves Christians but yet do not hold tenaciously to the doctrine of the Trinity as mystery revealed through grace and faith will soon latch onto some other error. It is not a strange thing to observe it as a fact of the Christian life that when this Trinitarian truth is modified or pushed aside, it is as if the door is opened to the inrush of all kinds of absurd doctrines, teachings, ideas, bizarre theories, and half-truths.

Thus, it is necessary to understand that, any erroneous views about Trinity may subvert genuine Christian faith. Therefore, we declare basically that Trinity is "God is One but with three distinct Persons as centres of consciousness". This explains Trinity in classic Trinitarianism, "God is One, yet God is Three".

Trinitarians hold the view of:

- a) God as One (Godhead) and never three separate gods,
- b) Equality of the divine Persons and never regard them as being different in rank,
- c) God is triune Godhead not Unipersonal where the other two Persons in the Trinity are simply manifestations of the Being of the one God.

Wherever and whenever, the truth of the doctrine of God, the mystery of the Trinity is not well grasped everything else about the Christian faith falls apart. No proof of Jesus Christ as the Son of God would exist (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:5; 5:5). No proof and no power for witnessing to the resurrection of Christ will continue to exist in the Church Age (Acts 1:1-15, 21, 22; 2:16-21, 32-36; 5:29-32; 10:33-44; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; Rev. 1:1-20 vv. 4-6, 9-11, 18-20; 19:10; 22:17). It is the mystery of God, the Trinity that undergirds all other mysteries of God declared in the Bible. From it, the message of the gospel can also be well guarded and tailored such that all other mysteries of God become revealed truth in the Church (1 Cor. 4:1, 2, 15-20).

Proof of The Trinity in The Old Testament

The very first time God speaks in Scripture (and at other times), He uses the plural—Us and Our (Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8). God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..." (Gen. 1:26). In several places in the Old Testament, God addresses God (Ps. 2:7-12; 45:6-7; 110:1; Isa. 6:8).

In Psalm 45:6, the Father speaks to Jesus (also quoted in Heb. 1:8).

Your throne, O God, is forever... therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. (Ps. 45:6-7)

In Psalm 110:1, David wrote, *"The Lord says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'"* Jesus used David's words (Mt. 22:41-46) to help the Pharisees understand that He was the God-Man ... Because David referred to two distinct persons as Lord, therefore, as God. And only God could say to God, *"Sit at my right hand"*.

Proof of The Trinity in The New Testament

There are several New Testament examples of all three persons of the Godhead active or speaking at one event. During Jesus' baptism, the Spirit rested on Him and the Father spoke over Him (Mt. 3:16-17); and when Jesus commissioned His disciples He said: *"make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19)*

Jesus declared some facts that seemed to be very controversial things but were truths about himself: *"I and My Father are one." Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him...The Jews answered Him, "... For blasphemy, and because You...make Yourself God." (Jn. 10:30-33) The Jews sought all the more to kill Him because He...said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. (Jn. 5:18).*

Trinity Heroes and Heresy Wars

There were "trinity" heroes among the early fathers and the Church today must keep the faith. The doctrine of the Trinity is established by the deity of Jesus Christ in His Incarnation, the Out-pouring of the Holy Spirit and the plurality of the Godhead. These truths are great stumbling blocks and sources of conflict to the unbelieving but are essential to Christianity; they must hence be kept unadulterated (Acts 2:1-4, 33-39; 9:17-22; 15:6-11; Rom. 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 2:1-5; 15:1-11; Gal. 1:23; Col. 3-6; 1 Tim. 6:11-16; Tit. 1:3; Heb. 6:1, 2; 2 Jn. 1:7-11; Jd. 1:3).

The Arian heresy: Arius, Presbyter of Alexandria, taught that Jesus was created by the Father and was, therefore, not God. But the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) declared his doctrine to be a heresy. The Arian heresy still shines today... many speak of Jesus as a great prophet, who is empowered by God, but who is not the eternal God.

Athanasius (293-373 A.D.), Bishop of Alexandria, suffered great resistance and persecution defending the doctrines of the Trinity against Arian attacks.

The Athanasian Creed (about 500 A.D.) is the clearest statement of faith about the Trinity, explaining that each person of the Godhead is uncreated, limitless, eternal, almighty

(omnipotent), coeternal and equal: *"We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity; neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the essence. For there is one person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Spirit; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit, is all one; the glory equal; the majesty coeternal."*

Augustine (354-430 A.D.), Bishop of Hippo (present-day Algeria), whose teaching on the Trinity is the most influential in Church history.

The Creedal and Tenets Approach: The Church Councils of old settled on heresies in the Creedal Words – the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed. In any attempts to establish faith, Tenets must keep upholding the truths of the three Persons and the Works of the one triune Godhead as the basis of our PROFESSION (1 Tim. 6:12; Heb. 3:1; 4:14; 10:23) and CONFESSION (Rom. 10:9, 10; 1 Tim. 6:13; 1 John 4:15).

The Church must forever uphold the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ (Col. 2:2; 4:3); and then also the mystery of the Faith and godliness (the embodiment of all the mysteries of the Christian faith) (1Tim 3:9, 16), respectively in a clear conscience. This will always keep the central elements of the mystery of the gospel (Jesus and Him crucified – His death, burial and resurrection) on the cutting edge in fervent Holy Spirit power (Rom. 1:13-17; 16:25-27; 1 Cor. 2:1-5; 15:3-5; Eph. 6:18-20; 1 Thess. 1:5, 6).

The Church must thus forever uphold the divinity of Jesus Christ for it is He who links us to the triune God as the only way, truth and life (Matt. 11:27; Jn. 14:1-11; 17:1-3; Acts 2:22-36; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 Jn. 2:21-25; Jd. 1:3). The Church must also forever uphold the divinity of the Holy Spirit for it is He who links us to the triune God as the divine executor of God's redemption (Jn. 14:12-18; 21-23; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:16-21; 33, 38, 39; 13:1-3; Eph. 2:12-18; Rom. 8:1-17, 26-32; Heb. 2:3, 4; Jd. 1:20-21).