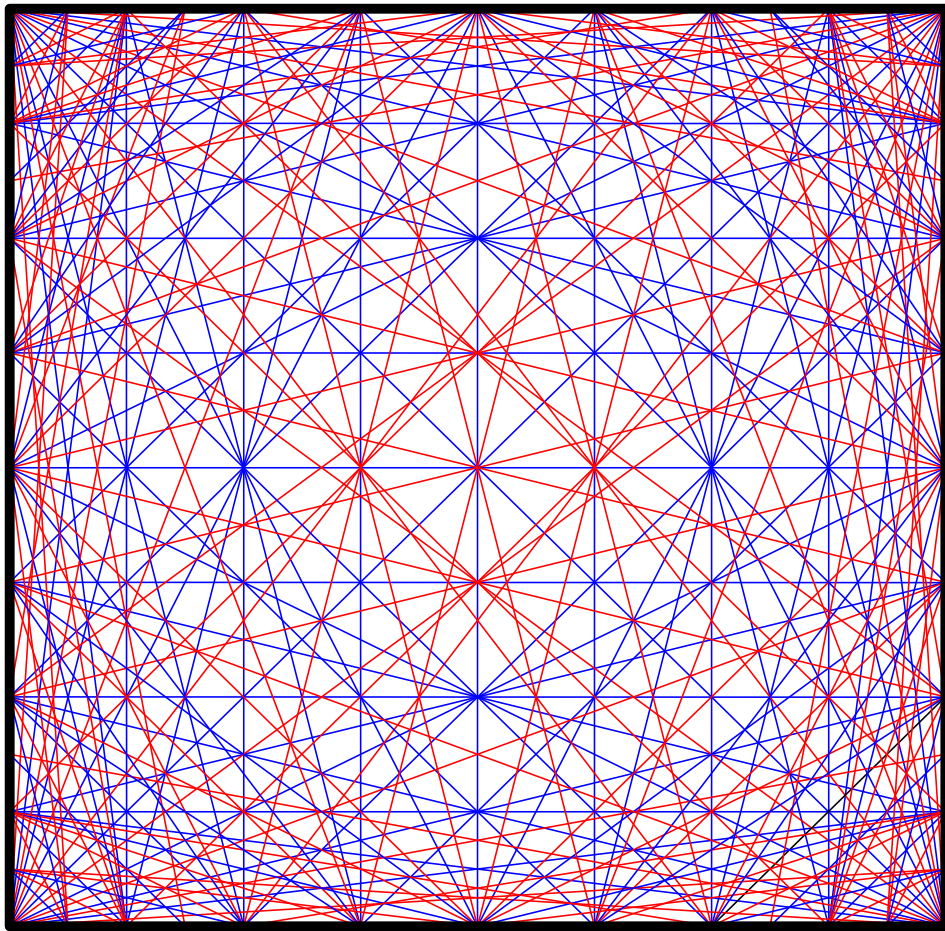


# **GOD'S PURPOSE AND PLAN**



**As Told in the Bible**

**Stuart R. Kerr, III**

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## THE LIFE OF PAUL:



Paul was born in Tarsus. He and his father were Roman citizens. Paul was a “Hebrew of the Hebrews”. He was a well-respected, well-educated, and well-read Hebrew rabbi, born into a family of Pharisees and thoroughly trained in the ultra-orthodox traditions - he was also familiar with the philosophy of the Stoics and the Cynics and he had a basic understanding of the various pagan religions. He was a cosmopolitan for his times - a Roman citizen entitled to all the legal rights thereto, a seasoned traveler, and a distinguished legal scholar. He was educated in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel [Acts 22:3].

Before his famous encounter with the risen Jesus on the Damascus Road, “Saul of Tarsus” (as he was known before his conversion experience) aggressively fought any challenge to the Pharisee's traditions. Yet, after his dramatic conversion, Paul was a completely different kind of man. He took great pains not to put any stress on his own intellectual and academic achievements, lest he unwittingly undermined the simplicity of the evangelistic message. His death occurred 64 or 65 AD. He was an active missionary for about 33 years.



*If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things  
[Phil.3:4-8]*

In the early days of the Christian Church in Jerusalem, when he was known by his birth name of Saul (Paul is his Greek name by which he later preached Christianity to the Gentiles), he exercised an authority to carry out “murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples.” [Acts 9:1] He would arrest both men and women followers of Jesus Christ and the “Way” and have them thrown into prison. In his deadly persecutions of these early Christians, he had given his approval for the killing of Stephen, the brave and outspoken first-martyr for the Christian cause. Paul was present at Stephen’s death - the first martyr of the new religion. Stephen’s death precipitated a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and many believers were scattered. Throughout Judea and Samaria, only the Apostles remained. When others of these followers continued to agitate brazenly in the open, Saul initiated a series of persecutions against these outgoing sectarians.

On his way to Damascus to persecute believers, Paul was confronted by the risen Christ. A blinding light from heaven flashed around him, knocking him to the ground. He heard the Master’s voice, asking, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Jesus appointed Paul as his servant with a mission to testify to the gospel of God’s grace to the Gentiles. Paul was “called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.” [Rom. 1:1] This mystical experience, through which Paul was converted around 35 AD when he was about 30 years old, was overwhelming. The men who were travelling with Saul heard the voice but saw no one (Acts 22:19). They led Saul by hand into Damascus where he was without sight for three days without food or drink:

***For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.  
[Acts 9:9]***

Through the ministry of Ananias in Damascus, to whom Jesus called upon in a vision to testify as to Paul's assigned mission to the Gentiles, Paul was healed of his blindness. When Paul recovered from this powerful experience, he subsequently set off for the synagogues in Damascus to begin his preaching that Jesus is the Son of God. His first public effort was to preach about Jesus in the Damascus synagogue. After a sojourn in Arabia, Paul returns and preaches in Damascus. Creating hostility in Damascus, he escaped, going to Jerusalem.

Paul went into Jerusalem to visit Peter. This first meeting between Peter and Paul was critically important. Peter and the other Apostles were understandably suspicious at first of this former persecutor turned proselytizer, but Paul was able to establish himself as a recognized Apostle alongside these founders of this church in Jerusalem. Paul did not stay long in Jerusalem, likely fearing reprisals from the Pharisees who would consider him as a renegade. He therefor returned to his home in Tarsus. Although Peter and Paul were very different persons in temperament and education, and even in expressed theology, they worked together harmoniously for the upbuilding of the emerging churches during their later years.

About eight years had elapsed when he eventually established himself in Antioch. Barnabas, a dedicated Christian disciple, was already centralized there. Paul was welcomed into the Apostle fellowship and this acceptance was supported by the sponsorship of Barnabas: "This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel." [Acts 9:15] While in Antioch, Paul met a physician named Luke, who become both a follower and a close friend.

Paul had missed the opportunity to meet the human Jesus in the flesh, but he very certainly became thoroughly exposed to the spiritual power of the risen Christ, and this experience contributed much to his fervent sharing of his personal theology of divinity and spiritual transformation. The compromise that resulted from this perspective was that Jesus' gospel for Paul became a reflection of an emerging religion about the revelation and resurrection of Christ - it shed lessened focus on Jesus' selfless gospel of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The "religion of Jesus" has since evolved into a "religion about Jesus" as dogmatized by many church denominations.

Paul was fully self-aware that he too was subject to the exposure to sin throughout his life. He was a sober, seasoned proponent of Christ when he expressed "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin" [Romans 7:14] and "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?" [Romans 7:24] Paul fully realizes his own human frailties. He's not making himself appear to be special or virtuous. He is simply stating that the entire human race is subject to sin including himself. He reminds us that all those of faith in Jesus Christ are all redeemed sinners, saved from condemnation.



***For I know that  
good itself does not  
dwell in me, that is,  
in my sinful  
nature. For I have  
the desire to do  
what is good, but I  
cannot carry it out.  
[Romans 7:18]***

The early Church leaders – James (Jesus’ brother), Peter, and John – realized that God was using Paul to reach the Gentiles, just as Peter was to be used so greatly to reach the Jews. After hearing of Paul’s conversion and message, they gave Paul their approval to continue working among the Gentiles. Paul became an extraordinary missionary and established many Gentile churches throughout Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome. Many of his instructional letters (epistles) to these churches are included in the Bible’s New Testament. The apostle Paul travelled tremendous distances as he tirelessly spread the gospel across much of the Roman Empire. His combined trips, by land and sea, total up to more than 13,000 miles. Paul, the “Apostle to the Gentiles,” had plenty of opportunity to preach to Jews in his travels. There were some four to five million Jews living abroad in the first century. Every major city had at least one synagogue, and Rome had at least eleven. The Jewish population of Rome alone was 40,000–50,000.





## The Mediterranean Basin in the Times of Jesus

The chronological order of events in Paul's ministry can be very valuable as a tool for the study of Acts and Paul's epistles. The book of Acts and the epistles of Paul sometimes give us the length of time between one event and another, whereas determining the year in which an event took place usually require deeper research. It is instructive to know the years of the beginning or end of the reigns of political rulers that are mentioned in these texts

Paul's journeys and imprisonments:

- Paul at Damascus 37-40 AD
- First Journey 45-47 AD
- Second Journey 51-53 AD
- Third Journey 54-58 AD
- Imprisonment in Judea 58-60 AD
- Voyage to Rome 60-61 AD
- Imprisonment in Rome 61-63 AD
- Post-Imprisonment Journeys (?) 63-67 AD

The table below lists the approximate years in which Paul wrote his epistles.

- First Thessalonians 52 AD
- Second Thessalonians 52 AD
- First Corinthians 57 AD

- Second Corinthians 57 AD
- Galatians 55-57 AD
- Romans 57-58 AD
- Ephesians 62 AD
- Philippians 62 AD
- Colossians 62 AD
- Philemon 63 AD
- Hebrews 64-65 AD
- Titus 64-65 AD
- First Timothy 64-65 AD
- Second Timothy 66-67 AD

### PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS:



#### **Paul's First Missionary Journey 44-46 A.D.**

After Paul witnessed the stoning of Stephen, he is confronted and converted by Jesus, after which he visits the early Christians at Jerusalem. The church leadership accepts him and sends him home to safety away in his home town of Tarsus on the southeastern coast of modern Turkey. Meanwhile, the persecution in Jerusalem grows, and believers flee to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Syrian Antioch, which isn't too far from Tarsus. The dispersed

Christians bring the gospel with them, and when the leaders in Jerusalem learn how quickly the church is growing at Antioch, they send Barnabas to Antioch to verify what is happening. Barnabas confirms that the gospel is in truth spreading and that the church in Antioch is indeed a work of God. Barnabas then goes to Tarsus to collect Paul, whom he had earlier mentored in Jerusalem. Paul returns to Antioch with Barnabas to provide leadership for the fledgling church. The church lays their hands on Paul and Barnabas and sends them off with John Mark on their first missionary journey. Barnabas is one of the leaders in Antioch, and John Mark is a cousin of Barnabas.

Paul and Barnabas, with John Mark, start their first missionary journey, walking to Seleucia on the coast, then sailing southwest to Salamis on the island of Cyprus, where Barnabas originally hailed from. They preach in the synagogue there and travel the whole island, apparently without seeing much fruit, until they arrive at the city of Paphos in the southwest. It is here where the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, is converted. They proceed from Paphos to Perga, where for some unknown reason, John Mark leaves them, returning to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas spend much time in Perga, then head north to Pisidian Antioch and preach in the synagogue on the Sabbath. In his sermon, Paul, a credentialed Pharisee, gives a synopsis of the Israelites' exile in Egypt, the judges, Kings Saul and David, and John the Baptist. He shows the Jews in Antioch how only Jesus, who died and rose again, fulfills the Jewish Messianic prophecies. Many believe, and they ask Paul and Barnabas to return the next Sabbath. The next week, almost the entire city shows up, but the Jewish leadership tries to silence their message with abusive language. Paul and Barnabas point out that the Jews had had their chance and had rejected Jesus, so Jesus' message was going to be brought to the Gentiles.

The gospel spreads through the whole region, but, eventually, despite the new converts' enthusiasm, the Jews in Pisidian Antioch stir up persecution of the missionaries, and Paul and Barnabas escape east to Iconium in Galatia (Acts 13:14–52). They travel to Iconium, where they have great success. But a great dissension arises in the city. They move to Lystra, where a man born lame is healed; the citizens thought two Greek gods had come among them. But the Jews produce an attack on the missionaries, so they flee to Derbe. They make many converts. It is in the region of Lystra and Derbe that young Timothy hears the gospel from Paul and is saved. From Derbe, Paul and Barnabas backtrack through Asia Minor, visiting Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch, strengthening the young churches and appointing elders.

New troubles develop when Christian Jews come to Antioch from Jerusalem, insisting that the only way to enter the Christian church is through Judaism. Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem to settle this dispute. This is their second visit, fourteen years after the first. Peter comes to their defense. At the Jerusalem Council, after much deliberation, Peter stands and proclaims that salvation was by faith, not works, and it is inappropriate to place such a "yoke" on the Gentiles' neck (Acts 15:10–11). James, the leader of the Jerusalem church and a half-brother of Christ, concurs, adding that, for the sake of peace within the church, the Gentiles should abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, and from eating blood or the meat of strangled animals (Acts 15:29). The Jerusalem council decides that the only requirement of Gentiles would be to abstain from:



- **Blood**
- **Food offered to idols**
- **Things strangled**
- **Fornication**

Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch with representatives from the church in Jerusalem and with these statements, and the Gentiles rejoice that they didn't have to be circumcised in order to be truly Christian. Peter's ministry hereon would continue largely to be to the Jewish Christians, while Paul would preach to the Gentiles.



## **Paul's Second Missionary Journey 49-52 A.D.**

Peter visits Antioch and eats with the Gentiles, but, when confronted by the Jerusalem Jews, he backs down. After some time, Paul proposes to Barnabas a second missionary journey together. Paul's plan is to return to the cities and churches they'd visited in Asia Minor on their first missionary journey (Acts 15:36). Barnabas agrees, but he wants to take his cousin, John Mark, who had previously abandoned them shortly into that first trip. Paul refuses to take Mark with them, so Barnabas takes Mark and sets sail for Cyprus. Paul takes Silas, one of the leaders of the Jerusalem church who had accompanied Paul to Antioch.



In the area of Derbe and Lystra, Paul meets up with Timothy again, whom Paul had mentored on his first trip. Timothy joins Paul and Silas as a ministry partner. The group sails from Troas to the small island of Samothrace, then to the city of Neapolis on the Greek coast. They quickly make their way to the Roman colony of Philippi, where the gospel is first preached in Europe (Acts 16:11,12). On the Sabbath, they go to the riverside where they supposed the Jews would gather and find a group of women who had come to pray. One of the women there is a merchant named Lydia. She and her household are converted and baptized, and she compels the missionaries to stay in her home (Acts 16:13–15). Lydia thus becomes the first convert to Christianity on European soil.

Sometime later, while going to a place of prayer, the missionaries are accosted by a slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination. The girl follows them, saying, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved” [Acts 16:16–17], and after several days Paul commands the demon to leave her. When the slave girl’s owners find that their source of income is destroyed, they bring Paul and Silas to the magistrate and incite the crowd against them. The missionaries are stripped, beaten, flogged, and thrown into prison, and their feet are placed in stocks. All of this was highly illegal, since Paul and Silas were Roman citizens and had the right to a trial.

Around midnight, Paul and Silas are praying and singing hymns when an earthquake shakes the prison, opening the prison doors and loosening the chains of all the prisoners (Acts 16:26). When the jailor finds the doors open, he draws his sword to kill himself, thinking the prisoners had fled and he would be held responsible. But then he hears the voice of Paul telling him all the prisoners are still there. The jailor immediately asks how to be saved, and Paul and Silas answer, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household.” [Acts 16:31] The jailor takes Paul and Silas to his home, where he feeds them and bandages their wounds. He and his household believe and are baptized that same night. They are released when they reveal their Roman citizenship. The missionaries leave Philippi after visiting Lydia and the Christians there (verse 40).

At Thessalonica and Berea, they encounter much difficulty presented by hostile Jews. Paul takes a ship to Athens; Silas and Timothy remain in Berea. Silas remains at Berea, later rejoining Paul at Corinth. Paul does not have much success at Athens, and soon goes on to Corinth. At Corinth they meet with great success. Silas and Timothy join Paul here. It is here that Paul meets a couple named Aquila and Priscilla, who had been among the Jews who had been expelled from Rome by the emperor Claudius. Priscilla and Aquila are described in the New Testament as providing a presence that strengthened the early Christian churches. Paul is generous in his recognition and acknowledgment of his indebtedness to them (Rom. 16:3-4). Together, they are credited with instructing Apollos, a major evangelist of the first century, explaining to him “the way of God more adequately.” [Acts 18:26]

Paul’s second missionary journey continues as the missionary team leave Corinth and sail to Ephesus in Asia Minor, taking Priscilla and Aquila with them. Paul stays in Ephesus for a little while, reasoning in the synagogue, but when the Ephesians beg him to stay, he declines. Priscilla and Aquila stay in Ephesus where they later convert and teach Apollos, but Paul sails from Ephesus to Caesarea in Israel, traveling to Jerusalem and greeting the church there; he then returns to Antioch. Timothy tells Paul of trouble at Thessalonica and

Paul sends his letter, I Thessalonians, to the church. This is the spring of 50 AD. In a few weeks he sends his second letter.

The second missionary journey comes to an end. This second journey covered over two years, 49-51 AD. Paul has a good rest and sends his epistle to the Galatians.



## Paul's Third Missionary Journey 53-58 A.D.

Paul is ready to start his third journey. The first stop of any length is at Ephesus. He teaches in the synagogue and at the school of Tyrannus for two years. Apollos, a Hellenist of Alexandria, had already started the work here. This is also where Aquila and Priscilla are converted. Paul's first and hurried visit for the space of three months to Ephesus is recorded in Acts 18:19–21. On his second visit to Ephesus, he remains "three years", for he finds it is the key to the western provinces of Asia Minor. Here "a great door and effectual" is opened to him, [1 Cor 16:9] and the church is established and strengthened by his diligent labors there. [Acts 20:20,31] From Ephesus, the gospel spreads abroad "almost throughout all Asia." [19:26] The word "mightily grew and prevailed" despite all the opposition and persecution he encountered.

On his last journey to Jerusalem, the apostle lands at Miletus and, summoning together the elders of the church from Ephesus, delivers to them a farewell charge, [20:18–35] expecting to see them no more.

There is trouble at Corinth. Paul learns that Peter has been visiting some of these same churches that Paul had planned to visit during this third missionary journey. Apollos travels to Corinth in Achaia, and Paul arrives at Ephesus where he apparently meets some of Apollos's students (Acts 19:1). These men only know of John's baptism unto repentance; they had not been born again by faith in Christ and had not received the Holy Spirit. Paul explains the complete gospel to them, pointing them to Jesus Christ as John had done. The men are baptized, and Paul lays his hands on them. They immediately receive the Spirit and, as a sign of their new life, begin speaking in tongues and prophesying. Paul spends three months teaching in the synagogue in Ephesus, reasoning from the Jewish Scriptures, but some in his audience not only reject his message, but they become abusive toward "the Way". Paul takes those who believe and moves from the synagogue to a school owned by a man named Tyrannus. There, Paul preaches daily to Jews and Greeks for two years.

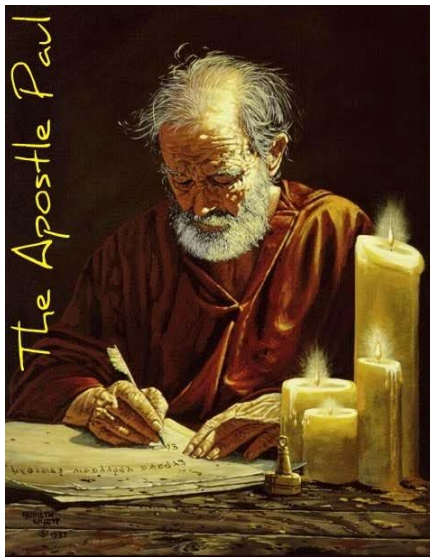
After his extended stay in Ephesus, Paul sends Timothy and Erastus ahead to Macedonia. Paul leaves Ephesus quietly. He travels across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia where he proceeds to Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea to encourage the churches there; then he goes to Greece (Achaia) and spends three months there. It is at Corinth that there springs up different ideological factions of competing teachings from Paul, Apollos, Peter, and even Christ himself (1Cor. 1:12) Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria who came to Ephesus in the early 50s. He displays an accurate knowledge of the story of Jesus and he preaches after the style of John the Baptist, though he lacks a comprehensive understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection, or about the Jesus' promised Comforter, his poured-out Spirit of truth (1Cor. 3:6). Aquila and Priscilla take some time to explain these aspects of God more accurately ((Acts 18:24-26). Apollos' gift of eloquence incites a faction within the church of Corinth that favors Apollos to the exclusion of Paul and Peter. At first, Paul sends Timothy, then he goes himself to help heal these early divisions.

Paul retraces his steps from Corinth to Berea, Thessalonica, and Philippi, where he catches up with Luke again and observes Passover. From Philippi, Paul and Luke set sail for Troas, arriving there five days later and meeting Paul's traveling companions who had gone ahead of them: Timothy, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, and Trophimus. These men represented various churches and were probably helping bring a monetary gift to the Jerusalem church. They all stayed in Troas for one week.

Paul continues his third missionary journey by taking a coastal route. Paul walks to Assos, while the rest of the party sail to that port and pick Paul up there. Then they all travel to Mitylene, Trogyllium, and Miletus, along the southwest coast of Asia Minor (Acts 20:13–15). Paul bypasses Ephesus because he knows if he stops there, he will be kept longer than he likes, and he wants to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost. Paul asks the Ephesian elders to meet him in Miletus, and they do. Paul prays with them, encourages them, warns them against false teachers, and predicts the hardships he will face in Jerusalem. After tearful good-byes, the Ephesian elders see Paul to his ship.

From Miletus, Paul and his entourage sail to Patara, then to Tyre in Syria, where they stay a week (Acts 21:1–6). The disciples there beg Paul, for his own safety, not to go to Jerusalem. But he sails on, stopping briefly in Ptolemais before landing in Caesarea and staying with Philip the evangelist. While in Caesarea, the prophet Agabus declares that Paul will be imprisoned if he goes to Jerusalem, but Paul is resolute in completing his mission. After several days, a group escort Paul to Jerusalem and to the home of Mnason, who hosts Paul and his companions. This brings Paul's third missionary journey to an end.

Some Jews stir up trouble for Paul and, in the uproar, the Romans arrest Paul. Being a Roman citizen, they send him to Caesarea for his safety, where the Roman governor keeps him in custody for two years. At this end of Paul's third missionary journey, he knows he will soon be imprisoned and probably killed. His final words to the church at Ephesus display his devotion to Christ:



***"You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace."*** [Acts 20:18-24].





## Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey 60-63 A.D.

A new governor, Festus, is now the ruler, and he wants to send Paul back to Jerusalem to be tried by the Sanhedrin. Paul urges him to send him to Rome instead. When Paul is brought before him for a second trial, he appeals to Caesar. Paul speaks before Agrippa, and his sister from Jerusalem visits him. Paul sails for Rome, and Luke accompanies him on the sea journey. It being autumn, the ship gets into serious trouble off the coast of Crete. In Acts 27:1-28:13 Luke records one of the most famous shipwreck stories in all history. The ship was storm-tossed for two weeks; finally, the passengers are landed at Malta. Paul, not being a criminal prisoner, is given much liberty and does much missionary work.

Paul and Luke reach Rome in the spring, and for the next two years, Paul is detained under house arrest. While in Rome awaiting his trial, Paul writes his letters to the Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians. The book of Acts ends abruptly. Paul had been a prisoner in Rome for two years. We really don't know what happened to Paul. Following are the presented possibilities:

- He may have been tried, convicted, and executed.
- He may have been tried and acquitted.
- The case may never have come to trial, because of the loss of papers at the time of the shipwreck.

The early church fathers all agree that Paul was tried and convicted.

The Acts of the Apostles tells us of Paul's two years in prison in Caesarea and, upon appealing to the Emperor as entitled as a citizen of Rome, being taken to Rome for trial while under house arrest. There is some indication in "2 Timothy" that he was released from his confinement and went on to continue his missionary work (possibly going to Spain). He may have been arrested a second time and was made a prisoner in Rome under much harsher conditions prior to his martyrdom. Paul's legacy was that he left behind him thriving churches throughout Asia Minor, Macedonia, and regions of present-day Turkey and Greece (Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Ephesus, Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, Crete and possibly Cyprus as well as satellite communities birthed from these centers).

As Paul sits chained in his Roman prison awaiting his execution, he collects his memories in fighting the good fight of faith and shares these by letter to his closest friends and associates (such as Timothy). He also reflects on his own understanding of Christ and the Church he is leaving behind on earth.



## Where Paul Sent His Letters





## The Spread of Christianity

The New Testament does not say when or how Paul died. There is an early tradition found in the writing of Ignatius, probably around 110 AD, that Paul was martyred. Dionysius of Corinth, in a letter to the Romans (166–174 AD), stated that Paul and Peter were martyred in Italy. Eusebius also cites the Dionysius passage:

- The Acts of Paul, an apocryphal work written around 160, describes the martyrdom of Paul. Nero condemned Paul to death by decapitation. The date of Paul's death is believed to have occurred after the Great Fire of Rome in July 64, but before the last year of Nero's reign, in 68.
- Tertullian in his Prescription Against Heretics (200 AD) writes that Paul had a similar death to that of John the Baptist, who was beheaded.
- Eusebius of Caesarea in his Church History (320 AD) testifies that Paul was beheaded in Rome and Peter crucified. He wrote that the tombs of these two apostles, with their inscriptions, were extant in his time; and quotes as his authority a holy man of the name of Caius.
- Lactantius wrote that Nero "crucified Peter and slew Paul." (318 AD)

- Jerome in his *De Viris Illustribus (On Illustrious Men)* (392 AD) states that Paul was beheaded at Rome.
- John Chrysostom (c. 349–407) wrote that Nero knew Paul personally and had him killed.
- Sulpicius Severus says Nero killed Peter and Paul. (403 AD)

## PAUL'S MESSAGE:

The Apostle Paul, in his efforts to bring the teachings of Jesus to the favorable notice of certain groups in his day, wrote many letters of instruction and admonition. Other teachers of Jesus' gospel did likewise, but none of them realized that some of these writings would subsequently be brought together by those who would set them forth as the embodiment of the teachings of Jesus.

Pauline Christianity is the development of thinking about Jesus in a Gentile missionary context. Paul maintains the core of the teachings of Jesus and is in alignment with the pronouncements by James at the Council of Jerusalem decreeing that Christianity was for the Gentiles and not just for the Jews, James quotes the prophet Amos in support of this position [Acts 15:19–21]. He entrusted Paul among others with bringing their decision to Antioch [Acts 15:22–31]. Paul built upon the foundation of the Master's personal life and teachings, supplementing the Greek and Persian concepts of eternal life and augmenting Philo's doctrine of the temporal contrasted with the spiritual. Paul built up one of the most progressive human societies which has ever existed.

Although the tradition-bound and priest-ridden Hebrews, as a people, refused to accept either Jesus' gospel of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man or Peter's and Paul's proclamation of the resurrection and ascension of Christ (subsequent Christianity), the rest of the Roman Empire was found to be receptive to the evolving Christian teachings. The peoples of the Western world, the beneficiaries of Greek culture, had a revered tradition of a great past. They could contemplate the inheritance of great accomplishments in philosophy, art, literature, and political progress. But with all these achievements they had no soul-satisfying religion. Their spiritual hunger remained unsatisfied.

Christianity came not merely as a new religion - something all the Roman Empire was waiting for - but as a new order of human society. It early struck a decided attitude on religious rituals, education, magic, medicine, art, literature, law, government, morals, sex regulation, polygamy, and, in limited degree, even slavery. The ideals of Jesus, as they were reinterpreted by Greek philosophy and socialized in Christianity, now boldly challenged the traditions of the human race embodied in the ethics, morality, and religions of Western civilization. Abiding faith in the resurrection of Jesus was the cardinal feature of the faith of all branches of the early gospel teaching. In Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Philadelphia all the gospel teachers united in this implicit faith in the Master's resurrection.



In his letter to the Galatians, Paul is reserved about the teaching of the Jerusalem church and is hostile toward Jews who would impose Jewish distinctives, codified in the Mosaic Law, on Gentile converts. In Romans, Paul is deeply concerned about the spiritual condition and ultimate destiny of the Jewish people. Early Christians witnessed different disciples of Christ as representing different teachings; this situation was addressed by Paul himself, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians:



#### A Church Divided Over Leaders

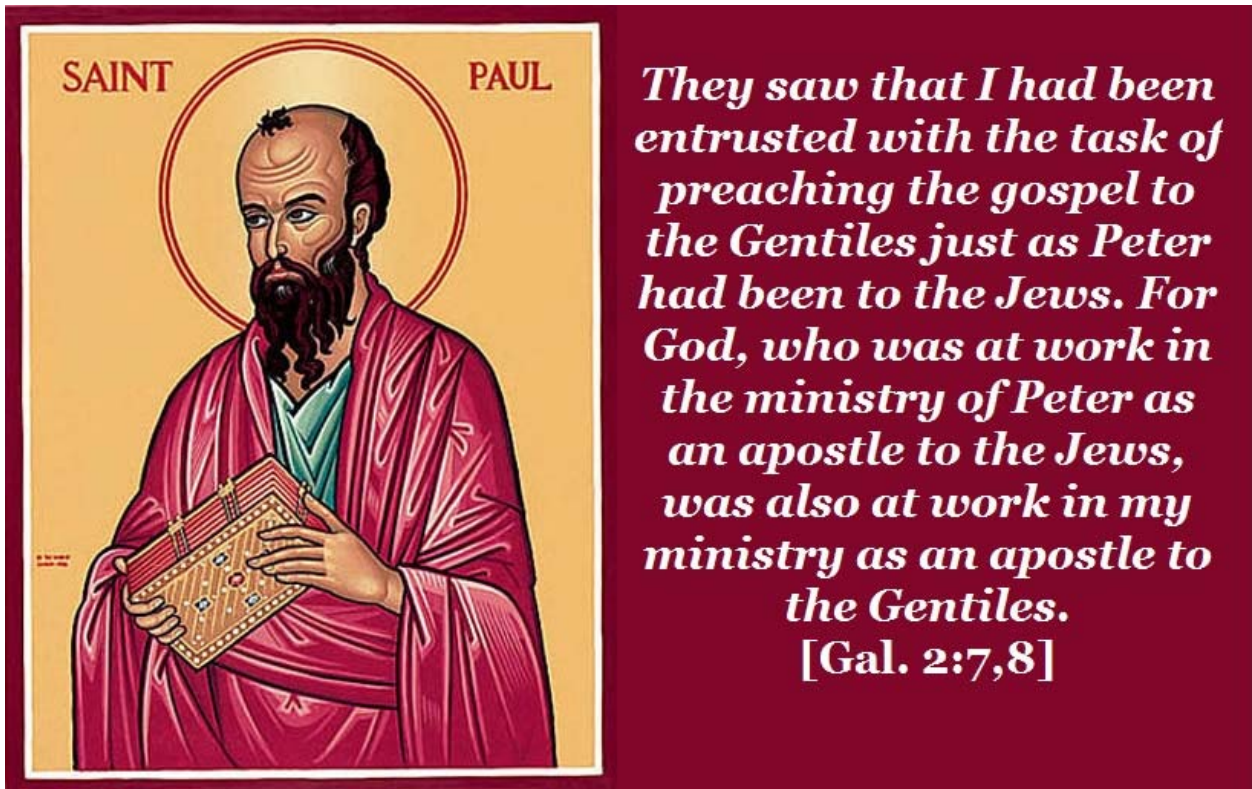
*I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."*

*Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. [1 Cor 1:10-18]*

The Jerusalem Christians had been accusing Paul of diluting the good news of the gospel to make it easier for the Gentiles to accept, while Paul accused back that they were nullifying this truth by adding unnecessary conditions to it. Paul asked whether salvation is available through Christ alone, or does it come through Christ and adherence to the Law of Moses. He pointed out that the Jewish laws cannot by themselves justify and save, though admitting "I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets." [Acts 24:14] But Paul also adds, "for what the Law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature of man, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering." [Rom. 8:3]

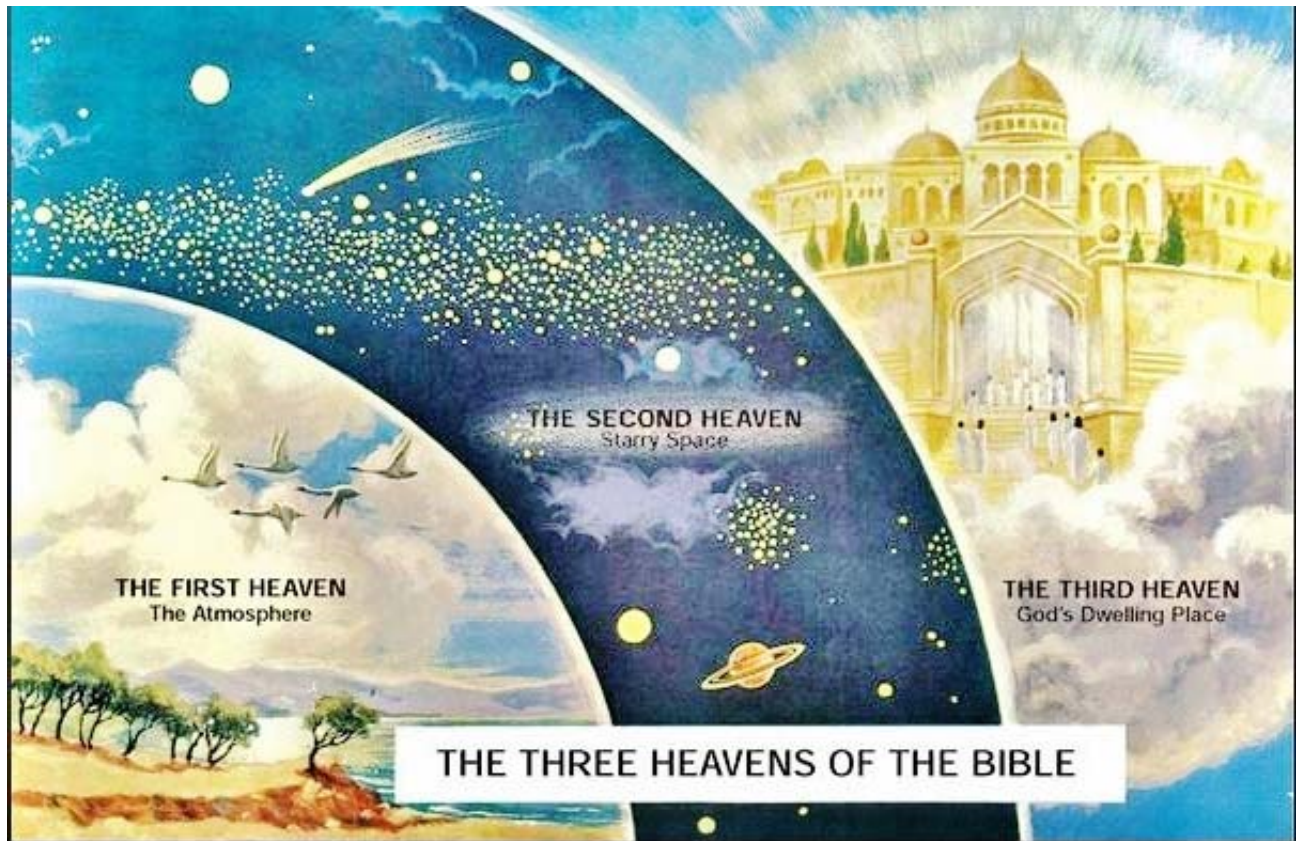
Paul stresses that the gospel gives us new moral standards for behavior, convicting us of sin and offering us the opportunity to seek God's forgiveness, and driving us to take refuge in the sufficiency of the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ's ability to redeem us. Because our sins died with Jesus, we are no longer condemned. Our faith is in the good news of Jesus Christ and in our salvation by faith.

***I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I might share in its blessings.***  
**[1Cor. 9:22,23]**



***I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.***  
**[2Tim. 4:7]**





***"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell."***  
**[2Cor. 12:2-4]**

There are those students of Scripture who accept that Paul is writing the above verse about himself, and that he is referring to his own visionary experience on the road to Damascus some years earlier [Acts 9:1-9, 22:6-11]. It was this experience that caused Paul to claim in another letter that he had seen the risen Christ [1Cor 15:1-10, cf. Gal 1:12]. Was Paul displaying modesty in addressing the Corinthians, leading him to claim that he knew a man who had this experience? Was Paul using this method of writing as a means of getting his point across in the letter?

The Bible speaks of three different heavens. Genesis 1:1 says that God created "the heavens" - plural. The first heaven is the atmosphere around the earth. In describing the rain that brought on the Flood of Noah's time, Genesis 7:11 says "the windows of heaven

were opened.” Commenting on the extent of the water, verse 19 says “all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered.”

The second heaven is commonly referred to as “outer space.” Exodus 32:13 is one of many references to “the stars of heaven.” Stars are not in the skies from which the rain falls, but in the space beyond our atmosphere. Nehemiah 9:6 also refers to space as heaven: “You alone are the Lord; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host [the planets and stars].”

A “third heaven” is mentioned in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4. Paul also called it “Paradise” in verse 4. That word is from the Greek word for park or garden—not just any park or garden, but a magnificent one. It’s the same word used in the standard Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, to mean the Garden of Eden.

In the biblical world of thought, the terrestrial realm was a world in which man was limited by the factors of time, space, and cause and effect. The celestial realm was the heaven of the divine and the spiritual. The subterrestrial realm was the area of chaos and the spiritual powers of darkness. At the highest level of the celestial sphere was the ultimate of the sacred or holy - Yahweh, the God of Judaism.

In order to reveal the purpose and destiny of man (the “crown of creation” of the terrestrial realm), the ultimacy of the celestial sphere enables man to come to a knowledge of who he is, what is his origin, and what is his destiny through celestial messengers – the angels. Because of a celestial rebellion in the heavenly sphere prior to the creation of the world, many of the “fallen angels” have attempt to deceive man with false revelation. These fallen beings have attempted to pervert the message of God in order to pervert man’s understanding of his obligations as re-born “sons” of God.

## **THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH:**

Christianity is a mighty religion, seeing that the commonplace disciples of a crucified carpenter set in motion those teachings which conquered the Roman world in three hundred years and then went on to triumph over the barbarians who overthrew Rome. This same Christianity absorbed and exalted the whole stream of Hebrew theology and Greek philosophy.

The Christian church sees "the Apostolic Age" as the foundation upon which its whole history is founded. This period, roughly dated between the years 30 and 100 AD, produced writings traditionally attributed to the direct followers of Jesus Christ (the New Testament and Apostolic Fathers collections) and is thus associated with the Apostles and their contemporaries. The Apostles traveled to Jewish communities around the Mediterranean Sea, and attracted Jewish converts. Within 10 years of the death of Jesus, The Apostles, led by Paul, had spread Christianity from Jerusalem to Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, Cyprus, Crete, and Rome. The book of Acts reports that the early followers continued daily Temple attendance and traditional Jewish home prayer. Other passages in

the canonical gospels reflect a similar observance of traditional Jewish piety such as fasting, reverence for the Torah (generally translated as "the Law" in English translations of the Bible) and observance of Jewish holy days.

In the mid-first century, in Antioch, Paul of Tarsus began preaching to Gentiles. The new converts did not follow all "Jewish Law" and refused to be circumcised, as circumcision was considered repulsive in Hellenistic culture. The resulting circumcision controversy was addressed at the Council of Jerusalem about the year 50. Paul, who was vocally supported by Peter, argued that circumcision was not a necessary practice. The council agreed that converts could forgo circumcision, but other aspects of "Jewish Law" were deemed necessary. Four years after the Council of Jerusalem, Paul wrote to the Galatians about the issue, which had become a serious controversy in their region. Paul considered it a great threat to his doctrine of salvation through faith in Jesus and addressed the issue with great detail in Galatians 3.

During the late first century, Judaism was a legal religion with the protection of Roman law, worked out in compromise with the Roman state over two centuries. In contrast, Christianity was not legalized till the 313 Edict of Milan. Observant Jews had special rights, including the privilege of abstaining from civic pagan rites. Christians were initially identified with the Jewish religion by the Romans, but as they became more distinct, Christianity became a problem for Roman rulers. This opened the way to Christians being persecuted for disobedience to the emperor, as they refused to worship the state pantheon. Jewish Christians were among the earliest followers of Jesus and an important part of Judean society during the mid- to late first century. This movement was centered in Jerusalem (possibly in the Cenacle) and led by James the Just. They held faithfully to the Torah and Jewish law (which was still somewhat fluid in this time period).

From the beginning, Christians were subject to various persecutions. This involved even death for Christians such as Stephen [Acts 7:59] and James, son of Zebedee [Acts 12:2]. Larger-scale persecutions followed at the hands of the authorities of the Roman Empire, beginning with the year 64, when, as reported by the Roman historian Tacitus, the Emperor Nero blamed them for that year's great Fire of Rome. According to Church tradition, it was under Nero's persecution that Peter and Paul were each thought to have been martyred in Rome. Similarly, several of the New Testament writings mention persecutions and stress endurance through them. For 250 years Christians suffered from sporadic persecutions for their refusal to worship the Roman emperor, considered treasonous and punishable by execution.

Christianity throughout the second and third centuries has generally been less studied than the periods that came before and after it. This is reflected in that it is usually referred to in terms of the adjacent periods with names as such "post-Apostolic" (after the period of first century formative Christianity) and "ante-Nicene" (before the First Council of Nicaea). However, the second and third centuries are quite important in the development of Christianity. There is a relative lack of material for this period, compared with the later Church Father period. For example, a widely used collection (Ante-Nicene Fathers) includes most second- and third-century writings in nine volumes. This includes the writings of the

Apostolic Fathers, Apologists, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyons, Origen of Alexandria and the New Testament Apocrypha, among others. In contrast, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (consisting mainly of Augustine, Jerome and Chrysostom) fills twenty-eight volumes.

While the preceding and following periods were diverse, they possessed unifying characteristics lacking in this period. First century Christianity possessed a basic cohesion based on the Pauline church movement, Jewish character, and self-identification as a Messianic movement. The second and third centuries saw a sharp divorce from its early roots. There was an explicit rejection of then-modern Judaism and Jewish culture by the end of the 2nd century, with a growing body of "adversus Judaeos" literature. Fourth- and Fifth-century Christianity experienced imperial pressure and developed strong episcopal and unifying structure. By the early second century, Christians had agreed on a basic list of writings that would serve as their canon, but interpretations of these works differed, often wildly. In part to ensure a greater consistency in their teachings, by the end of the first century many Christian communities evolved a more structured hierarchy, with a central bishop, whose opinion held more weight in that city. By 160, most communities had a bishop, who based his authority on the chain of succession from the apostles to himself.

Bishops would call synods to discuss problems or doctrinal differences in certain regions; the first of these to be documented occurred in Roman Asia in about 160. Some bishops began to take on a more authoritative role for a region; in many cases, the bishop of the church located in the capital city of a province became the central authority for all churches in that province. These more centralized authorities were known as metropolitan churches headed by a metropolitan bishop. The churches in Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome exerted authority over groups of these metropolitan churches.

Because of the biblical proscription against false prophets, Christianity has always been occupied with the orthodox interpretation of the faith. Indeed, one of the main roles of the bishops in the early Church was to determine and retain important correct beliefs, and refute contrarian opinions, known as heresies. As there were sometimes differing opinions among the bishops on new questions, defining orthodoxy would occupy the Church for some time.

The earliest controversies were often Christological in nature; that is, they were related to Jesus' divinity or humanity. Docetism held that Jesus' humanity was merely an illusion, thus denying the incarnation (Deity becoming human). Arianism held that Jesus, while not merely mortal, was not eternally divine and was, therefore, of lesser status than the Father. Trinitarianism held that the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit were all strictly one being with three hypostases or persons. Many groups held dualistic beliefs, maintaining that reality was composed into two radically opposing parts: matter, seen as evil, and spirit, seen as good. Such views gave rise to some theology of the "incarnation" that were declared heresies. Most scholars agree that the Bible teaches that both the material and the spiritual worlds were created by God and were therefore both good.

Early Christianity spread from city to city in the Hellenized Roman Empire and beyond into East Africa and South Asia. Christians traveled extensively, establishing communities in

major cities and regions throughout the Empire. The original church communities were founded by missionaries and numerous other Christian soldiers, merchants, and preachers in northern Africa, Asia Minor, Armenia, Arabia, Greece, and other places. Over 40 were established by the year 100, many in Asia Minor, such as the seven churches of Asia. By the end of the first century, Christianity had already spread to Greece and Italy, some say as far as India, serving as foundations for the expansive spread of Christianity throughout the world. Despite sporadic incidents of local persecution and a few periods of persecution on an empire-wide scale, the Christian religion continued its spread throughout the Mediterranean Basin. Around the year 300, Christians numbered anywhere from 5 to 10 percent of the population of the Roman Empire.

In 313, the Christian church was first recognized by the Roman Emperor Constantine I. The Edict of Milan gave full legal rights to Christians within the Empire. The Emperor Constantine I was exposed to Christianity by his mother, Helena. At the Battle of Milvian Bridge in 312, Constantine commanded his troops to adorn their shields with the Christian symbol in accordance with a vision that he had had the night before. After winning the battle, Constantine was able to claim the emperorship in the West. The accession of Constantine was a turning point for the Christian Church. After his victory, Constantine supported the Church financially, built various basilicas, granted privileges (e.g., exemption from certain taxes) to clergy, promoted Christians to some high-ranking offices, and returned property confiscated during the Great Persecution of Diocletian. Between 324 and 330, Constantine built, virtually from scratch, a new imperial capital that came to be named for him: Constantinople. It had overtly Christian architecture, contained churches within the city walls, and had no pagan temples. In accordance with a prevailing custom, Constantine was baptized on his deathbed.

Constantine also played an active role in the leadership of the Church. In 316, he acted as a judge in a North African dispute concerning the Donatist controversy. More significantly, in 325 he summoned the Council of Nicaea, the first Ecumenical Council, to deal mostly with the Arian controversy, but which also issued the Nicene Creed, which among other things professed a belief in "One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church." Constantine thus established a precedent for the emperor as responsible to God for the spiritual health of their subjects, and thus with a duty to maintain orthodoxy. The emperor was to enforce doctrine, root out heresy, and uphold ecclesiastical unity.

Constantine's son's successor, known as Julian the Apostate, was a philosopher who upon becoming emperor renounced Christianity and embraced a Neo-platonic and mystical form of paganism shocking the Christian establishment. He began reopening pagan temples, and intent on re-establishing the prestige of the old pagan beliefs, he modified them to resemble Christian traditions such as the episcopal structure and public charity. Julian's short reign ended when he died while campaigning in the East.

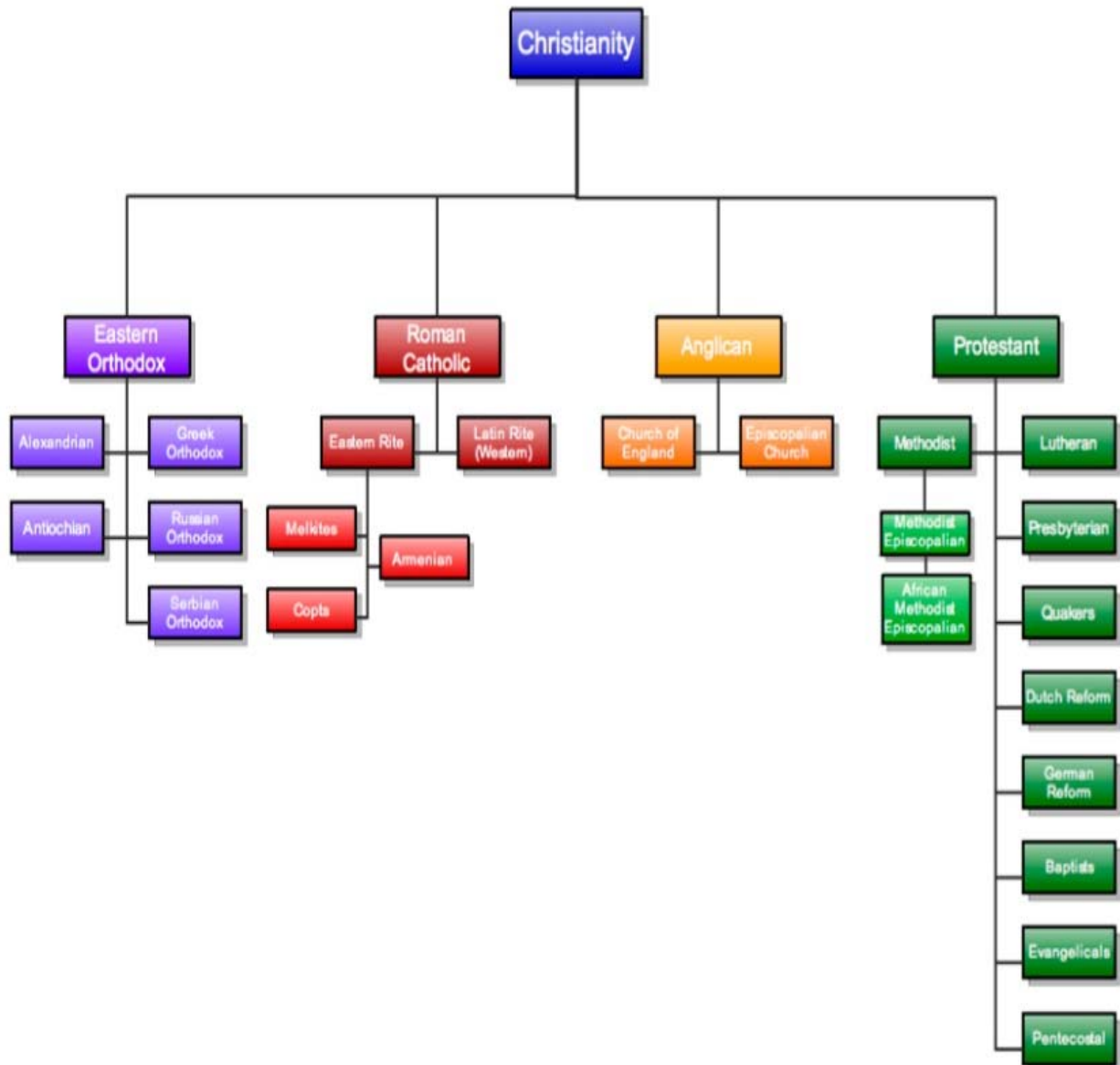
During this era, several Ecumenical Councils were convened. These were mostly concerned with Christological disputes. The two Councils of Nicaea (325, 382) condemned Arian teachings as heresy and produced the Nicene Creed. The Council of Ephesus condemned Nestorianism and affirmed Mary to be Theotokos ("God-bearer" or "Mother of God"). The

Council of Chalcedon affirmed that Christ had two natures, fully God and fully man, distinct yet always in perfect union. Thus, it condemned Monophysitism and would be influential in refuting Monothelitism.

In the year 380, the Roman Empire made Christianity their official religion and the term "Catholic" is first used for Christians who believe in the consubstantiality of God as three persons in one God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. After its establishment, the Church adopted the same organizational boundaries as the Empire: geographical provinces, called dioceses, corresponding to imperial governmental territorial division. The bishops, who were located in major urban centers as per pre-legalization tradition, thus oversaw each diocese. The bishop's location was his "seat", or "see". Among the sees, five came to hold special eminence: Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria. The prestige of most of these sees depended in part on their apostolic founders, from whom the bishops were therefore the spiritual successors. Though the bishop of Rome was still held to be the First among equals, Constantinople was second in precedence as the new capital of the empire.

The Roman Catholic Bible was completed around the year 405, and the Apostle's Creed was finalized in the early 7th century. The first division of Christianity did not occur until 1054, and it placed the Eastern Orthodox in the East and Roman Catholic in the West. The Protestant Reformation in the 16th century brought about the Baptist, Lutheran, Calvinists, and Anglican religions.





There are three main branches of Christianity - Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestantism. With their distinct beliefs, values, and practices, they all arise from the same foundation. There are many central beliefs that are shared by all the religions under the overarching Christianity. The universal beliefs are stated in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed which are recited in the worship services of the different denominations. There are a few variations and translations, but these state the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. The differences are centered on discrepancies among doctrines and organizational aspects such as forms of worship and roles of clergy members.

The Christian church has a human and a divine element, a visible and invisible element. It has been considered the mystical body of Christ. The Holy Spirit animates the body of the church with the divine life of grace imparted to the members of the church, all under the

body's head, Jesus Christ. Christ is the head and we are the body of his church. God's church is not a building but rather consists in the unified body of his faithful children.



*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*  
[Eph. 4:4-6]

The church is the holy city of God. It calls to humanity to instruct them and to lead them to everlasting fulfillment in heaven. Jesus Christ instituted his church as a living, authentic, and never-failing teaching authority empowered by his own poured out Spirit of truth. The church is made up of people dedicated to God who are bound together in love as family representing Christ to the world.

***Christ is the head of his body, the church.***  
[Col. 1:18]

***We, the many, are one body in Christ.  
[Rom. 12:5]***

***For in one spirit, we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or  
Gentiles, whether slaves or free.  
[1Cor. 12:13]***



***When Jesus came to the region Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”***

***[Mat. 16:13-20]***

Peter is the head and Prince of the Apostles, the pillar of faith, and the foundation of the Catholic Church. He received the keys to the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ, the savior and redeemer of the whole human race. The Pope is the Roman Pontiff, the Catholic

Bishop of Rome, and Peter's successor as the head of Christ's church. He is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity of all the earthly bishops and of the whole congregation of the faithful. By reason of his office as Vicar of Christ and as pastor of the entire church, the Pope has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole church, a power he can always exercise unhindered.

Peter, through his papal successors, lives and exercises judgment in perpetual authority. Therefore, whoever succeeds Peter in this chair holds Peter's primacy over the whole church according to the plan of Christ himself. In the person of Peter, the holy Apostolic See and Roman Pontiff is given by Jesus Christ the full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the whole church. It is taught and declared that Roman Catholic Church holds the pre-eminence of ordinary power over all the other Christian churches, and that this power of jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff is immediate. The bishops, who, under appointment of the Holy Spirit, succeeded in the place of the Apostles, nourish and rule individually as true shepherds to the particular flock assigned to them.

When he speaks *ex cathedra* acting as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, the Roman Pontiff defines all doctrine concerning faith and morality to be held by the universal church under the divine assistance promised to him in the person of Peter. This defining authority is considered infallible.

## **CHURCH HERESIES:**

Heresy has been a concern in Christian communities at least since the writing of the Second Epistle of Peter: "But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them - bringing swift destruction on themselves." [2 Peter 2:1] While in the first two or three centuries of the early Church heresy and schism were not clearly distinguished and a similar overlapping occurred in medieval scholastic thought, heresy is understood today to mean the denial of revealed truth as taught by the Church. Nineteenth-century theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher defined heresy as "that which preserved the appearance of Christianity, and yet contradicted its essence".

Traditionally, orthodoxy and heresy have been viewed in relation to the "orthodoxy" as an authentic lineage of tradition. Other forms of Christianity were viewed as deviant streams of thought and therefore "heterodox", or heretical. The heresies which arose in this period may be categorized into three groups: Trinitarian/Christological, Gnostic, and other heresies.

The Catholic Church makes a distinction between 'material' and 'formal' heresy. Material heresy means in effect "holding erroneous doctrines through no fault of one's own" as occurs with people brought up in non-Catholic communities and "is neither a crime nor a sin" since the individual has never accepted the doctrine. Formal heresy is "the willful and persistent adherence to an error in matters of faith" on the part of a baptized member of the Catholic Church. As such it is a grave sin and involves *ipso facto* excommunication. Here

"matters of faith" means dogmas which have been proposed by the infallible magisterium of the Church and, in addition to this intellectual error, "pertinacity in the will" in maintaining it in opposition to the teaching of the Church must be present.

### **Adoptionism – The human Jesus adopted by God**

Adoptionism, sometimes called "dynamic monarchianism", is a nontrinitarian theological doctrine which holds that Jesus was adopted as the Son of God at his baptism, his resurrection, or his ascension. Adoptionism is one of two main forms of monarchianism (the other is modalism, which regards "Father" and "Son" as two historical or soteriological roles of a single divine Person). Adoptionism denies the eternal pre-existence of Christ, denying the constant hypostatic union of the eternal Logos to the human nature of Jesus. Under adoptionism, Jesus is currently divine and has been since his adoption, although he is not equal to the Father, per "my Father is greater than I" [John 14:28], and as such is a kind of subordinationism.

Adoptionism is sometimes related to denial of the virgin birth of Jesus. A human Jesus was adopted by God at the time of his baptism and made his son; his human and divine natures existed separately. Belief that Jesus was born as a mere (non-divine) man who attained a supremely virtuous character and was adopted later as "Son of God" by the descent of the Spirit on him. Propounded by Theodotus of Byzantium, a leather merchant, in Rome c.190, it was later revived by Paul of Samosata. Adoptionism was declared heresy at the end of the second century and was rejected by the Synods of Antioch and the First Council of Nicaea, which defined the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity and identified the man Jesus with the eternally begotten Son or Word of God in the Nicene Creed. The belief was also declared heretical by Pope Victor I. Theodotus was excommunicated by Pope Victor and Paul was condemned by the Synod of Antioch in 268.

### **Apollinarianism - Christ had a single divine mind**

Apollinarianism was a view proposed by Apollinaris of Laodicea (died 390) that Jesus could not have had a human mind, but rather had a human body and a lower soul (the seat of the emotions), but that at its essential core was a divine mind. Apollinaris further taught that the souls of men were propagated by other souls, as well as their bodies. This view was declared to be a heresy in 381 by the First Council of Constantinople.

The Trinity had been recognized at the Council of Nicea in 325, but debate about exactly what it meant continued. A rival to the more common belief that Jesus Christ had two natures was monophysitism ("one nature"), the doctrine that Christ had only one nature. Apollinarism and Eutychianism were two forms of monophysitism. Apollinaris' rejection that Christ had a human mind was considered an over-reaction to Arianism and its teaching that Christ was not divine. Theodoret charged Apollinaris with confounding the persons of the Godhead and with giving in to the heretical ways of Sabellius. Basil of Caesarea accused him of abandoning the literal sense of the scripture and taking up wholly with the allegorical



sense. His views were condemned in a Synod at Alexandria, under Athanasius of Alexandria, in 362. Apollinarianism was declared to be a heresy in 381 by the First Council of Constantinople, since Christ was officially depicted as fully human and fully God.

### **Arianism – The Son and The Father are not fully equal**

In the early church beliefs, denial of the true divinity of Jesus Christ evolved various specific forms, but all agreed that Jesus Christ was created by the Father, that he had a beginning in time, and that the title "Son of God" was a courtesy one. The doctrine is associated with Arius (c.250–336) who lived and taught in Alexandria, Egypt. All forms denied that Jesus Christ is "consubstantial with the Father" but proposed either "similar in substance", or "similar", or "dissimilar" as the correct alternative.

Arianism is a nontrinitarian Christological doctrine which asserts the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who was begotten by God the Father at a point in time, a creature distinct from the Father and is therefore subordinate to him, but the Son is also God (i.e. God the Son). Arian teachings were first attributed to Arius (c.256–336), a Christian presbyter in Alexandria of Egypt. Arius had been a pupil of Lucian of Antioch at Lucian's private academy in Antioch and inherited from him a modified form of the teachings of Paul of Samosata. He taught that God the Father and the Son of God did not always exist together eternally.

Arians taught that the Logos was a divine being begotten by God the Father before the creation of the world, made him a medium through whom everything else was created, and that the Son of God is subordinate to God the Father. A verse from Proverbs was also used: "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work." [Proverbs 8:22–25] Therefore, the Son was rather the very first and the most perfect of God's creatures, and he was made "God" only by the Father's permission and power. The teachings of Arius and his supporters were opposed to the theological views held by Homoousian Christians, regarding the nature of the Trinity and the nature of Christ.

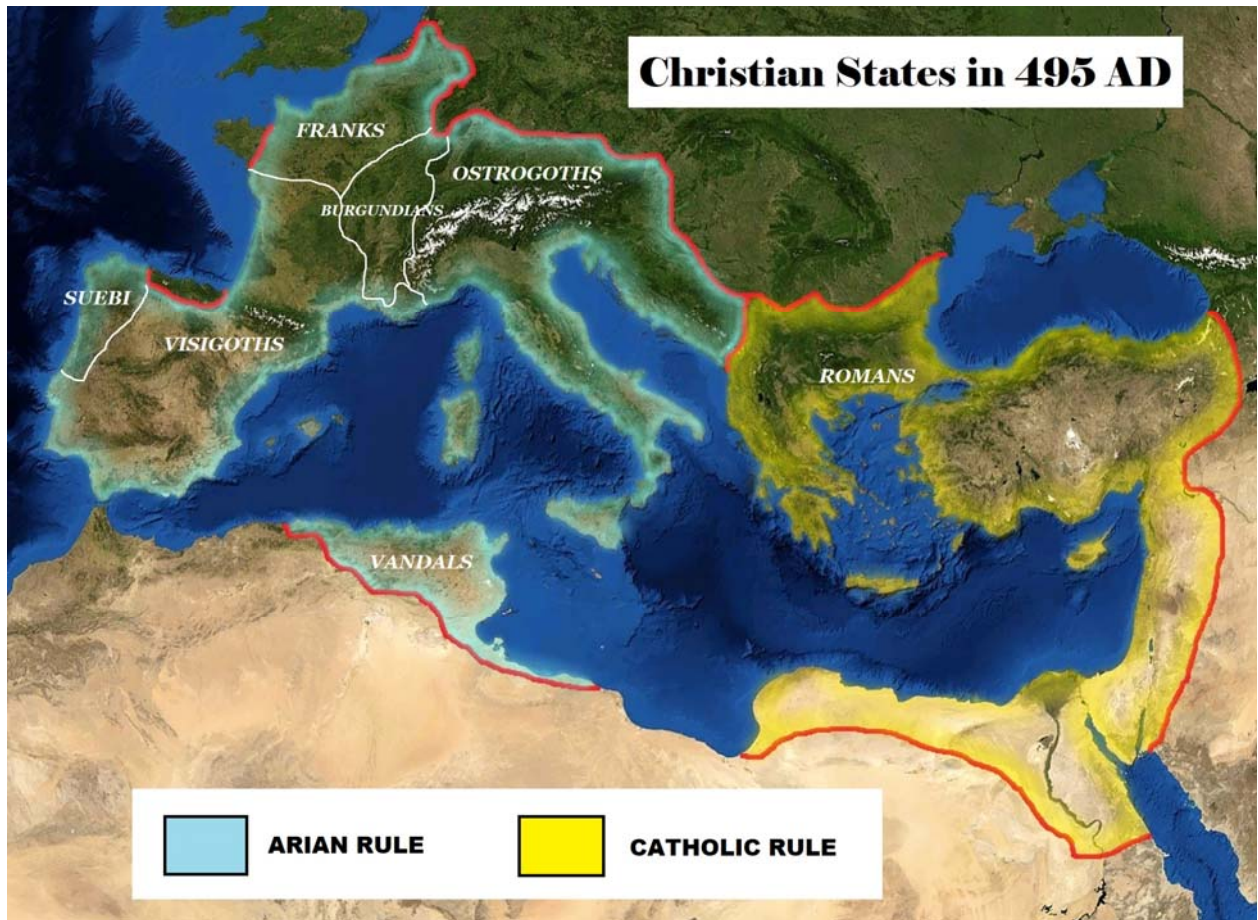
There was a dispute between two interpretations of Jesus' divinity (Homoousianism and Arianism) based upon the theological orthodoxy of the time, one trinitarian and the other non-trinitarian, and both of them attempted to solve its respective theological dilemmas. The two interpretations initiated a broader conflict as to which belief was the successor of Christian theology from its inception. The former was formally affirmed by the first two Ecumenical Councils, and in the past several centuries, Arianism has continued to be viewed as "the heresy or sect of Arius." As such, all mainstream branches of Christianity now consider Arianism to be heterodox and heretical.

The trinitarianism, or homoousianism viewpoint, was promulgated by Athanasius of Alexandria, who insisted that Homoousianism theology was both the true nature of God and the teaching of Jesus. Athanasius writes "On the Incarnation", affirming the full deity and humanity of Jesus. Arius, propagator of the eponymous Arianism, rejected the traditional doctrine of the Trinity and argued instead that Christ was not co-eternal with the Father, but

rather had a specific origin in time, stating, "If the Father begat the Son, then he who was begotten had a beginning in existence, and from this it follows there was a time when the Son was not." From Arius' perspective, the very concept of the Trinity was non-scriptural and contrary to the orthodoxy of the Church. Nonetheless, the Ecumenical First Council of Nicaea of 325, convened by Emperor Constantine to ensure Church unity, deemed Arianism to be a heresy.

The period 328–361 experienced a temporary triumph of Arianism, though this was a period of factions and confusion as well. Nicene bishops like Athanasius are deposed and banished. In 337, even the new Eastern emperor, Constantius, openly embraces Arianism. Ten years later, however, Constantine the Great, who was himself baptized by the Arian bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia, convened another gathering of Church leaders at the regional First Synod of Tyre in 335 (attended by 310 bishops), to address various charges mounted against Athanasius by his pro-Arius detractors, such as "murder, illegal taxation, sorcery, and treason," following his refusal to readmit Arius into fellowship. Athanasius was exiled to Trier (near modern-day Luxembourg) following his conviction at Tyre of conspiracy, and Arius was, effectively, exonerated.

Athanasius eventually returned to Alexandria in 346 A.D., two years after the deaths of both Arius and Constantine; though Arianism had spread, Athanasius and other trinitarian Church leaders crusaded against the theology. In 361, Valentinian becomes Western emperor, and orthodoxy begins to recover lost ground. In 381, Theodosius becomes sole emperor, Council of Constantinople, and affirms Nicene orthodoxy. Arius was again anathemized and pronounced a heretic once more at the Ecumenical First Council of Constantinople of 381 (attended by 150 bishops). Cappadocian Fathers put their final touches on Trinitarian doctrine. Still, by 390, Arianism could still be found among the Goths and other Germanic peoples. The Roman Emperors Constantius II (337–361) and Valens (364–378) were Arians or Semi-Arians, as was the first King of Italy, Odoacer (433?–493), and the Lombards were also Arians or Semi-Arians until the seventh century. Visigothic Spain was Arian until 581.



### **Docetism – Christ had no real human nature**

Docetism (from the Greek *dókeō* meaning “apparition, phantom”), is the doctrine that the phenomenon of Christ, his historical and bodily existence, and above all the human form of Jesus, was mere semblance without any true reality. Jesus' physical body was an illusion, as was his crucifixion; that is, Jesus only seemed to have a physical body and to physically die, but in reality, he was incorporeal, a pure spirit, and hence could not physically die; his sufferings on the cross were illusory. Tendencies existed in the first century, but it was most notably embraced by Gnostics in subsequent centuries. Docetism was rejected by the ecumenical councils and mainstream Christianity, and largely died out during the first millennium AD. Gnostic movements that survived past that time, such as Catharism, incorporated Docetism into their beliefs, but such movements were destroyed by the Albigensian Crusade (1209–1229).

Docetism was unequivocally rejected at the First Council of Nicaea in 325 and is regarded as heretical by the Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Coptic Church and many other Christian denominations that accept and hold to the statements of these early church councils.



## **Gnosticism – Duality of material versus spiritual**

Gnosticism refers to a diverse, syncretistic (an amalgamation of different schools of thought) religious movement consisting of various belief systems generally united in the teaching that humans are divine souls trapped in a material world created by an imperfect god, the “Demiurge”, who is frequently identified with the Abrahamic God. Gnosticism is a rejection and vilification of the human body and of the material world or cosmos. Gnosticism teaches duality in Material versus Spiritual. or Body (evil) versus Soul (good). Gnosticism teaches that the natural or material world will and should be destroyed (total annihilation) by the true spiritual God in order to free mankind from the reign of the false God or Demiurge. Christ was a divine being come to redeem believers from the evil and contaminated material world. Christ's true identity or nature was always divine and, while on earth, he occupied a supernatural body quite distinct from humanity.

At around the year 140, Valentinus begins teaching Gnostic views in Rome which resulted in his excommunication from the Church. By 180, Irenaeus writes “Against the Heresies”, opposing Gnosticism. By 450, the Gnostic sects became relatively inconsequential.

Whereas formerly Gnosticism was considered mostly a corruption of Christianity, it now seems clear that traces of Gnostic systems can be discerned some centuries before the Christian Era. Gnosticism may have been earlier than the first century, thus predating Jesus Christ. It spread through the Mediterranean and Middle East before and during the second and third centuries, becoming a dualistic heresy to Judaism, Christianity and Hellenic philosophy in areas controlled by the Roman Empire and Arian Goths, and the Persian Empire. Gnostic ideas became influential in the philosophies of various esoteric mystical movements of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe and North America, including some that explicitly identify themselves as revivals or even continuations of earlier gnostic groups.

## **Macedonianism (Pneumatomachians) - “Spirit Fighters”**

The Pneumatomachi (also known as Macedonians or Semi-Arians in Constantinople and the Tropici in Alexandria) were an anti-Nicene Creed sect that flourished in the countries adjacent to the Hellespont during the latter half of the fourth, and the beginning of the fifth century. They denied the Godhood of the Holy Ghost, hence the Greek name Pneumatomachi or “Combators against the Spirit”. While accepting the divinity of Jesus Christ as affirmed at Nicaea in 325, they denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit which they saw as a creation of the Son, and a servant of the Father and the Son. Church sources ascribe Bishop Macedonius I as its founder. Eustathius of Sebaste was their principal theologian. The writings of Macedonius himself, as well as the Pneumatomachi, have all been lost, and what is asserted regarding their doctrine comes from polemic refutations by church leaders, who regarded them as a heretical sect.

Macedonius more fully developed his theological views toward the end of his life including during a brief retirement before his death, possibly before the sect fully emerged.

Pneumatomachian doctrine was embraced by Eleusius and Marathionius, the latter a major protagonist, and it gained traction in Constantinople, Thrace, Bithynia, and the Hellespont. Emperor Julian (361 to 363) personally rejected Christianity in favor of Neoplatonic paganism, and he sought to return the Roman Empire to its original religious eclecticism. He supported the Pneumatomachi who then had enough power to declare their independence from both Arians and orthodox.

Pneumatomachi beliefs were distinct from, but in some regards reminiscent of, Arianism. Church commentators assert that they denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit and regarded the substance of Jesus Christ as being of "similar substance" (homoiousios) but not of the "same essence" (homoousios) as that of God the Father. The Macedonians supported the Homoiousian creeds of Antioch and Seleucia and condemned the Homoian creeds of Ariminum and Constantinople, and they called new synods to gain support for their views and condemn their opponents.

The Pneumatomachi were denounced in 374 by Pope Damasus I. In 381, the Pneumatomachian concept that the Holy Spirit was a creation of the Son, and a servant of the Father and the Son, prompted the First Council of Constantinople (also termed the Second Ecumenical Council) to add, "And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son is equally worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets," into the Nicene Creed. As a result of the Second Ecumenical Council, homoousios has become the accepted definition of Orthodox Christianity. Thereafter, the Macedonians were suppressed by the emperor Theodosius I. Two prominent fourth century saints, Athanasius of Alexandria and Basil of Caesarea, wrote polemics against Macedonianism ("Letters to Serapion" and "On the Holy Spirit" respectively).

### **Monarchianism – God is unity, not three persons**

Monarchianism is a Christian theology that emphasizes God as one, in direct contrast to Trinitarianism which defines God as three persons coexisting consubstantially as one in being. The first Christians had Jewish roots that upheld God as one, but they deified Jesus and worshiped him as God. This led to the creation of various models to resolve the relationship between God the Father and the Son of God. Monarchians seek to explain this relationship without causing a division within God. Writing against Praxeas (a monarchian) in the third century, Tertullian gave evidence that the majority of Christians were monarchian when he noted their startled reaction to his teaching of three in one.

Monarchians were opposed by Logos theologians (Tertullian, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen of Alexandria) and gradually the Trinitarian view gained prominence and was adopted in the First Council of Constantinople. An overemphasis on the indivisibility of God (the Father) at the expense of the other "persons" of the Trinity leading to either Sabellianism (Modalism) or to Adoptionism. Stressing the "monarchy" of God was in Eastern theology a legitimate way of affirming his oneness, that the Father is the unique source of divinity. In the 190s, Monarchianism (emphasizing God's monarchia, "unity" - not

the three persons) spreads. The 268 Council of Antioch condemns Sabellianism (i.e., modalism: Father, Son, and Spirit are temporary manifestations of the same being). By the early 300s, most Monarchianists become Arians.

### **Monophysitism (Eutychianism) – Jesus has one divine nature**

Monophysitism was born in the Catechetical School of Alexandria, which began its Christological analysis with the (divine) eternal Son or word of God and sought to explain how this eternal word had become incarnate as a man - in contrast to the School of Antioch (birthplace of Nestorianism, the antithesis of monophysitism), which instead began with the (human) Jesus of the Gospels and sought to explain how this man had become united with the eternal Word in the incarnation. Both sides agreed that Christ was both human and divine, but the Alexandrians emphasized divinity (including the fact that the divine nature was itself "impassible" or immune to suffering) while the Antiochines emphasized humanity (including the limited knowledge and "growth in wisdom" of the Christ of the Gospels). Individual monophysite and Nestorian theologians in fact rarely believed the extreme views that their respective opponents attributed to them (although some of their followers may have). Ultimately, however, the dialectic between the schools of Alexandria and Antioch produced Christologies that on all sides (notwithstanding ongoing differences between the Oriental Orthodox and Chalcedonian churches) avoided the extremes and reflect both points of view.

Monophysitism is the Christological position that, after the union of the divine and the human in the historical incarnation, Jesus Christ, as the incarnation of the eternal Son or Word (Logos) of God, had only a single "nature" which was either divine or a synthesis of divine and human. Christ's divinity dominates and overwhelms his humanity, as opposed to the Chalcedonian position which holds that Christ has two natures, one divine and one human or the Miaphysite position which holds that the human nature and pre-incarnate divine nature of Christ were united as one divine human nature from the point of the Incarnation onwards.

In the 440s, Eutyches begins teaching that Christ has only one nature after the Incarnation - a divine nature. At various times, Eutyches taught that the human nature of Christ was overcome by the divine, or that Christ had a human nature, but it was unlike the rest of humanity. One formulation is that Eutychianism stressed the unity of Christ's nature to such an extent that Christ's divinity consumed his humanity as the ocean consumes a drop of vinegar. Eutyches maintained that Christ was of two natures but not in two natures: separate divine and human natures had united and blended in such a manner that although Jesus was homoousian with the Father, he was not homoousian with man. After Nestorianism was rejected at the First Council of Ephesus, Eutyches emerged with diametrically opposite views. In 449, through intimidation and bribery, a council at Ephesus (the "Robber Council") declares Eutyches orthodox. This was countered in 451 by the Council of Chalcedon that proclaims that Christ has two natures, thus condemning Monophysitism. Eutyches was excommunicated in 448. Monophysitism and Eutyches were

rejected at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Monophysitism is also rejected by the Oriental Orthodox Churches

Monophysitism is contrasted to Dyophysitism which maintains that Christ maintained two natures, one divine and one human, after the incarnation. Historically, Monophysitism refers primarily to the position of those (especially in Egypt and, to a lesser extent, Syria) who rejected the Council of Chalcedon (the fourth ecumenical council), in 451. The moderate members of this group, however, maintained a "Miaphysite" theology. The Miaphysite Oriental Orthodox Churches today include the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Malankara Orthodox Church of India. Many Oriental Orthodox reject the label "Monophysite" even as a generic term, but it is extensively used in the historical literature.

After the Council of Chalcedon, the Monophysite controversy (together with institutional, political, and growing nationalistic factors) led to a lasting schism between the Oriental Orthodox churches, on the one hand, and the Western and the Eastern Orthodox churches on the other. The Christological conflict among Monophysitism, Dyophysitism, and their subtle combinations and derivatives lasted from the third through the eighth centuries and left its mark on all but the first two Ecumenical councils. In the 500s, after repeated attempts at reconciliation, Monophysites consolidate in Coptic, Syrian, and Armenian communions. The vast majority of Christians presently belong to the Chalcedonian churches. i.e. the Roman Catholic, Maronite, Eastern Orthodox, and traditional Protestant churches (those that accept at least the first four Ecumenical Councils); these churches have always considered Monophysitism to be heretical.

### **Nestorianism – Mary is not “God-bearer”**

Nestorianism is a Christological doctrine that emphasizes a distinction between the human and divine natures of the divine person, Jesus. It was advanced by Nestorius (386–450), Patriarch of Constantinople from 428 to 431, and it was influenced by Nestorius's studies under Theodore of Mopsuestia at the School of Antioch. In 428, Nestorius objects to calling Mary Theotokos (“God-bearer”), and proposed Christotokos (“Christ-bearer”) as more suitable. But Cyril of Alexandria defends the term and condemns Nestorius. Nestorius's teachings brought him into conflict with other prominent church leaders, most notably Cyril of Alexandria, who criticized especially his rejection of the title Theotokos (“Mother of God”) for Mary, the mother of Jesus. Nestorius and his teachings were eventually condemned as heretical at the Council of Ephesus in 431 and the Council of Chalcedon in 451, which led to the Nestorian Schism; churches supporting Nestorius broke with the rest of the Christian Church. Nestorius was banished to Upper Egypt in 436.

In 451, the Council of Chalcedon condemns Nestorians, who gradually move to Persia and further east to form their own church; many of Nestorius's supporters relocated to the Sasanian Empire, where they affiliated with the local Christian community, known as the

Church of the East. Over the next decades the Church of the East became increasingly Nestorian in doctrine, leading to it becoming known alternatively as the Nestorian Church. Nestorians remain a separate church to this day.

### **Pelagianism – Salvation by good works**

Pelagianism is the belief in Christianity that original sin did not taint human nature and that mortal will is still capable of choosing good or evil without special divine aid. This theological theory is named after the British monk Pelagius (354–420 or 440), although he denied, at least at some point in his life, many of the doctrines associated with his name. Pelagius was identified as an Irishman by Saint Jerome. In 390, Pelagius moves to Rome and is disturbed by the moral laxity he witnesses. By 410, Pelagius is teaching salvation by good works; some of his followers deny original sin. In 411, Augustine begins writing against Pelagius. Pelagianism was attacked in 415 at the Council of Diospolis (also known as Lydda or Lod), which found Pelagius to be orthodox. The Council of Carthage affirms Augustine's teaching in 418, and the Council of Ephesus condemns Pelagianism in 431. With the condemnation at the Council of Orange (529), Pelagianism dies out

Pelagius taught that the human will, as created with its abilities by God, was sufficient to live a sinless life, although he believed that God's grace assisted every good work. Pelagianism has come to be identified with the view (whether taught by Pelagius or not) that human beings can earn salvation by their own efforts.

Pelagius rejected the Biblical concept of grace. According to his opponents, Pelagius taught that moral perfection was attainable in this life without the assistance of divine grace through human free will. Augustine contradicted this by saying that perfection was impossible without grace because we are born sinners with a sinful heart and will. The Pelagians charged Augustine with departing from the accepted teaching (e.g.: John 8:11) of the Apostles and the Bible, demonstrating that the doctrine of original sin amounted to Manichaeism, which taught that the flesh was in itself sinful (and thus denied that Jesus came in the flesh). This charge would have carried added weight since contemporaries knew that Augustine had himself been a Manichaean layman before converting to Christianity. Augustine also taught that a person's salvation comes solely through a free gift, the efficacious grace of God, but that this was a gift that one had no free choice to accept or refuse.

The strict moral teachings of the Pelagians were influential in southern Italy and Sicily, where they were openly preached until the death of Julian of Eclanum in 455, and in Britain until the coming of Saint Germanus of Auxerre c429. Despite repeated attempts to suppress Pelagianism and similar teachings by orthodox clergy, some followers of Pelagianism were still active in the Ostrogothic Kingdom (493–553), most notably in Picenum and Dalmatia during the rule of Theoderic the Great.

## **Sabellianism - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are characterizations of one God**

In Christianity, Sabellianism is the belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three different modes or aspects of one God, as opposed to a Trinitarian view of three distinct persons within the Godhead. First formally stated by Noetus of Smyrna c.190, it was refined by Sabellius c.210 who applied the names merely to different roles of God in the history and economy of salvation. Noetus was condemned by the presbyters of Smyrna. Tertullian wrote *Adversus Praxeam* against this tendency and Sabellius was condemned by Pope Callistus. The term Sabellianism comes from Sabellius, who was a theologian and priest from the third century. None of his writings have survived and so all that is known about him comes from his opponents. All evidence shows that Sabellius held Jesus to be deity while denying the plurality of persons in God and holding a belief similar to Modalistic Monarchianism. Modalistic Monarchianism has been generally understood to have arisen during the second and third centuries, and to have been regarded as heresy after the fourth.

Sabellianism has been rejected by the majority of Christian churches in favor of Trinitarianism, which was eventually defined as three distinct, co-equal, co-eternal Persons of One Substance by the Athanasian Creed, probably dating from the late 5th or early 6th century. The Greek term *homoousian* or "consubstantial" had been used before its adoption by the First Council of Nicaea. The Gnostics were the first to use the word, while before the Gnostics there is no trace at all of its existence. The early church theologians were probably made aware of this concept, and thus of the doctrine of emanation, taught by the Gnostics. In Gnostic texts the word *homoousian* is used with the following meanings:

- Identity of substance between generator and generated.
- Identity of substance between things generated of the same substance.
- Identity of substance between the partners of a syzygy.

It has been noted that this Greek term *homoousian* or "consubstantial", which Athanasius of Alexandria favored, was also a term reportedly used by Sabellius - a term that many who held with Athanasius were uneasy about. Their objection to the term *homoousian* was that it was considered to be un-Scriptural, suspicious, and "of a Sabellian tendency." This was because Sabellius also considered the Father and the Son to be "one substance," meaning that, to Sabellius, the Father and Son were one essential person, though operating as different manifestations or modes. Athanasius' use of the word is intended to affirm that while the Father and Son are eternally distinct in a truly personal manner (i.e. with mutual love John 3:35, 14:31), both are nevertheless One Being, Essence, Nature, or Substance, having One personal Spirit.

## **SACRAMENTS:**

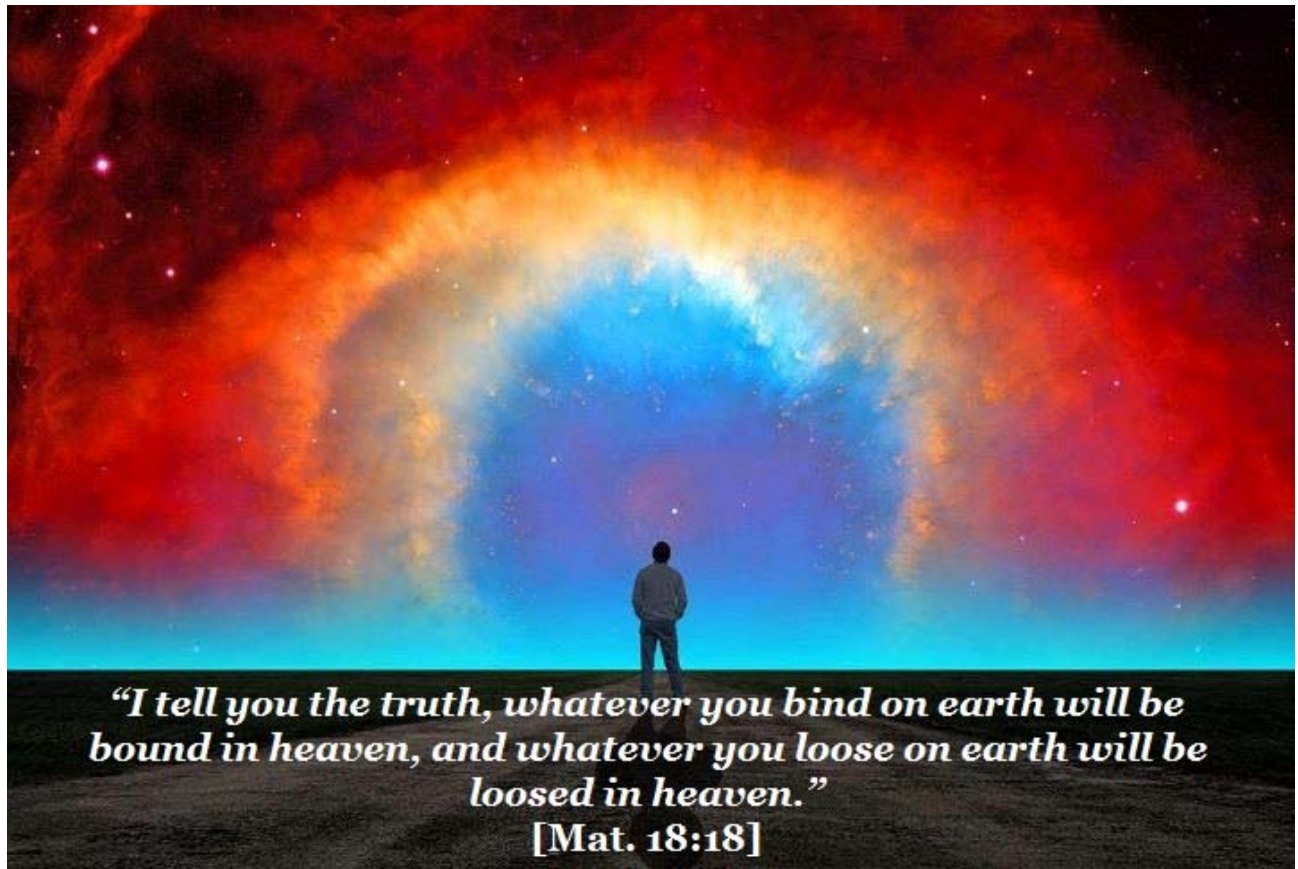
According to Catholic theology, there are seven sacraments of the Catholic Church which are believed to have been instituted by Jesus and entrusted to the Church. Sacraments are visible rites seen as signs and efficacious channels of the grace of God to all those who receive them with the proper disposition. The sacraments of "initiation" into the Church (the

body of Christ), consist of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. This Christian initiation is accomplished by means of these sacraments which establish the foundations of Christian life. The faithful are reborn by Baptism, are strengthened by Confirmation, and are then nourished by the Eucharist (“the food of eternal life”). The sacraments of healing, consist of Penance and Anointing of the Sick; and the sacraments of service consist of Holy Orders and Matrimony. These seven sacraments were codified in the documents of the Council of Trent (1545–1563):

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- The Eucharist
- Penance
- Anointing of the Sick
- Holy Orders
- Matrimony

Various reformers of the sixteenth century denied that Christ instituted many of the Catholic Church’s seven sacraments except two – Baptism and the Eucharist. The Augsburg Confession (1530) declared that the sacraments of Anointing the Sick and Confirmation were not instituted by Christ. Luther had taught that faith alone assures the efficacy of the sacraments – men can without resorting to these sacraments obtain the grace of justification by faith alone.

In the seven sacraments, Christ communicates the divine life to the members of his church through visible, external signs which he instituted for this purpose:



### Baptism

Baptism is seen as the first and foremost sacrament of Christian initiation; it is the gateway to life in the spirit and the entrance into the other sacraments. Baptism frees us from sin and establishes us as reborn "sons of God". Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water. It is usually enacted by pouring water three times on the recipient's head, while reciting the baptismal formula: "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"



***“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”***

**[Acts 2:38]**



In the Roman Catholic rite, the Sacrament of Baptism is followed by years of catechesis before being completed later by Confirmation and the Eucharist, the summit of the Christian initiation. Baptism is the beginning of new life whereupon is imprinted on the soul an indelible spiritual character which consecrates the baptized person for Christian worship.

In the Bible, John's baptism of repentance prepared his followers to receive the good news about Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God. John's baptism with water prepared a person to receive Christ's message, to demonstrate repentance and humility, and to demonstrate a willingness to turn from sin. This is the beginning of the spiritual process of transformation. When Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit, the entire person is transformed by the power of the Spirit, offering forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life. Christian baptism symbolizes the spiritual death, burial, and resurrection with Christ. This is accomplished through a believer's salvation experience. Through baptism, men pass from a state of bondage to sin into a state of righteousness in the presence of God. The church follows Christ's command to go forth and teach all nations baptizing them in the Spirit:

***Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.***

**[Mat. 28:19]**

## Confirmation

By baptism one is reborn into the Christian life. By the Sacrament of Confirmation one is fully immersed in the Holy Spirit. Confirmation is a complement to the Sacrament of Baptism. It impresses its spiritual impression on the soul:



***“When they [Peter and John] arrived, they prayed for them [Samaritans] that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of Jesus Christ. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”***  
**[Acts 8:15-17]**

By the Sacrament of Confirmation, the grace given in baptism is "strengthened and deepened." The baptized are made more securely bound to the church and are thereby enriched with the special strength of the Holy Spirit. A candidate for confirmation will have obtained the age of reason, must profess the faith, exist in a state of grace, display an



intention for receiving this sacrament, and finally be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ.

### Eucharist

The Sacrament of the Eucharist is regarded as the most important of the seven sacraments considering that it contains the essence of Jesus Christ, the very author of that grace that all of the sacraments give. In the holy Eucharist, Christ's redemptive work is re-enacted for believers of every age, producing in them the salutary effects of that redemption. Under the sacred ritual of the Eucharist, Christ remains ever present, consoling and invigorating his church.



***“Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”***

**[John 6:53,54]**

The Eucharist is called the Holy Communion because it is by this sacrament that we unite ourselves to Christ. He makes us sharers in his body and blood to form a single body. There have evolved three perspectives interpreting this commemorative rite initiated at the “Last Supper” of the Lord:

1. The shared bread and wine actually become Jesus’ body and blood.
2. The bread and wine remain unchanged, yet Jesus is spiritually present by faith in and through them.
3. The bread and the wine remain unchanged and are a lasting memorial of Jesus’ sacrifice.

Catholics maintain that Christ’s body and blood are truly contained in this “sacrament of the altar” within the species of bread and wine. This is transubstantiation by the divine power within Christ – the bread into his body and the wine into his blood. This rite enacts a mystery of shared unity whereby we may take from his substance as he himself took from our substance.

### **Penance**

The Sacrament of Penance is the first of two sacraments of healing. Penance has been called the sacrament of conversion, being the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin. It consecrates the Christian sinner’s personal and ecclesiastical steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction. Catholic confession to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. By the priest’s sacramental absolution, God grants the penitent pardon and peace, and it imparts to the sinner the love of a reconciling God. The whole power of the Sacrament of Penance consists in restoring us to God’s grace and joining with him in intimate friendship.

***“Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit.”***  
**[Ez. 18:30,31]**



By personal sin, men lose the justification they first received in baptism. Christ entrusted the church with the power to forgive the sins committed after baptism through penance. The penitent confesses his sins to a duly authorized priest who is the minister of this sacrament. Acting as judge, the priest judicially ascertains the gravity of the sins committed and whether the penitent is truly sorry. If the penitent is deemed worthy, the priest gives him absolution and enjoins a suitable penance. This sacrament of healing and forgiveness restores the life of grace to those who have lost it or increases it in those who already live in grace. It wipes out the debt of eternal punishment due to mortal sins and removes at least part of the temporal punishment due to either mortal or venial sins. To all, penance gives strength against future lapses into sin.

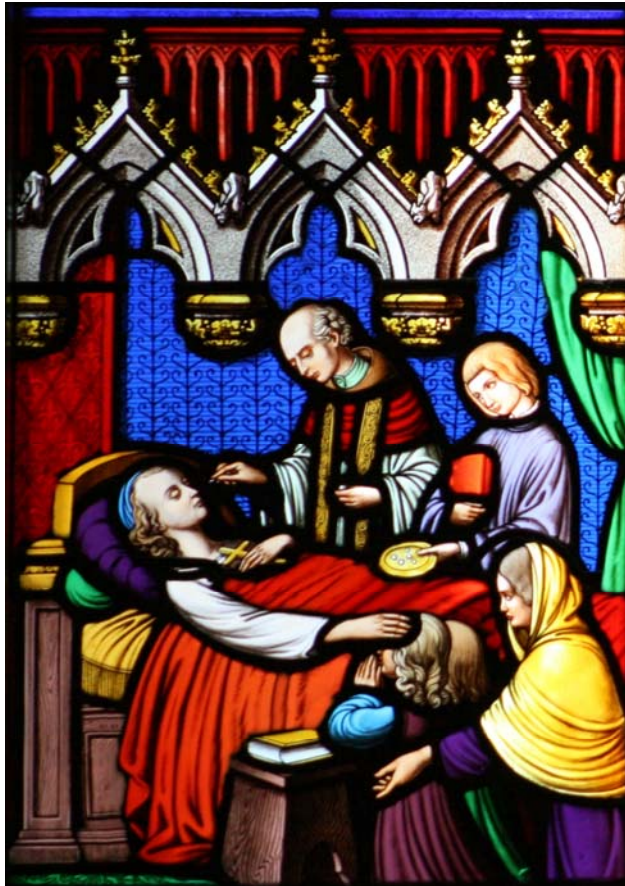
The sacrament of Penance is divided into four elements;

1. Contrition of the heart for which remorse for the sin committed and the expressed intention to sin no more are required.
2. Oral confession for which it is required that the sinner confess to the priest all the sins he remembers.
3. Absolution by the priest.
4. Penance for his sins which is determined by the judgment of the priest, generally performed through prayer, fasting, or almsgiving (acts of material charity). Raised up from his sin, the sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by determining to make amends for the sin.



### Anointing of the Sick

Anointing of the Sick is the second sacrament of healing. Christ instituted a special sacrament of fortification and healing by which the church consoles those who are on the threshold of mortal salvation. Of special concern are those whom illness has brought to the precipice of death. Extreme unction with holy oil purifies the soul with an increase of grace and strengthens it for the sufferings and temptations of its last agony, preparing it for entry into the heavenly estate. The effect of this sacrament is the healing of the soul and the comfort of the body.



***“Is any of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make that sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.”***  
**[James 5:14,15]**

Extreme unction with holy oil is applied over the eyes for sight, on the ears for hearing, on the nose for smelling, on the mouth for taste and speech, on the hands for touch, on the feet for walking, and on the loins for carnal delectation. This anointing of the sick represents the grace of God poured into the soul.

## **Holy Orders**

“Holy Orders” is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his Apostles continues to be exercised in the Church; thus, it is the sacrament of Apostolic ministry. Holy Orders is a sacrament of service by which a man is made a bishop, a priest, or a deacon, and thereby dedicated to be an image of Christ. A bishop is the minister of this sacrament. Ordination as a bishop confers the fullness of the sacrament, making the bishop a member of the body of successors of the Apostles, and giving him the mission to teach, sanctify, and govern, along with the care of all the Churches. Ordination as a priest configures the priest to Christ the Head of the Church and the one essential High Priest, and conferring on him the power, as the bishops' assistant, to celebrate the sacraments and other liturgical acts, especially the Eucharist. Ordination as a deacon configures the deacon to Christ the Servant of All, placing him at the service of the bishop, especially in the Church's exercising of Christian charity towards the poor and preaching of the word of God.

The priesthood was established by God among the Israelites during their exodus from Egypt. God chose the tribe of Levi as priests for the nation. Their primary duties were the offering of sacrifice and prayer for the people. Christ, in offering himself up for the sins of all mankind, fulfilled the duties of the Old Testament priesthood once and for all. But just as the Eucharist makes that sacrifice present to us today, so the New Testament priesthood is a sharing in the eternal priesthood of Christ. While all believers are, in some sense, priests, some are set aside to serve the Church as Christ himself did.

Christ appointed men to share in his own priesthood. The fullest sharing was given to the apostles and their successors, the bishops, for they alone have the power to transmit their priestly character to others. Priests possess the same power as the bishops with regard to the offering of the sacrifice – the principle function of the priesthood – while deacons have the office of cooperating with the priests in the liturgy of the sacrifice. The assignment of holy orders imparts an indelible character or seal signing the soul of a priest forever. The power of consecrating, offering, and administering Christ's body and blood during the Eucharist, and likewise the power of remitting and of retaining sins, was given to the apostles and to their successors in the priesthood.

Nuns are consecrated virgins and widows who, with the church's approval, are called by the Lord to live in their respective states of virginity or perpetual chastity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. They are consecrated to God by the diocese and bishop according to the approved liturgical rite. They are betrothed mystically to Christ, the Son of God, and are dedicated to the service of the church.

## **Matrimony**

Matrimony is another sacrament of service that consecrates family life the natural institution for building up the Church, and for providing grace in the interests of marriage. Raised by Christ to the high dignity of love uniting Christ and the Church, this sacrament establishes

between a husband and wife a permanent and exclusive bond sealed by God. This sacrament confers on them the grace needed for attaining holiness in their married life and for responsible acceptance and upbringing of their children.

Three blessings are ascribed to matrimony:

1. Procreation and education of children for the worship of God.
2. The fidelity that each of the spouses must observe towards each other.
3. The indissolubility of matrimony because it signifies the indivisible union of Christ with the church.



***For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.***

**[Gen. 2:24]**

***Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.***

**[Mat. 19:6]**

***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.***

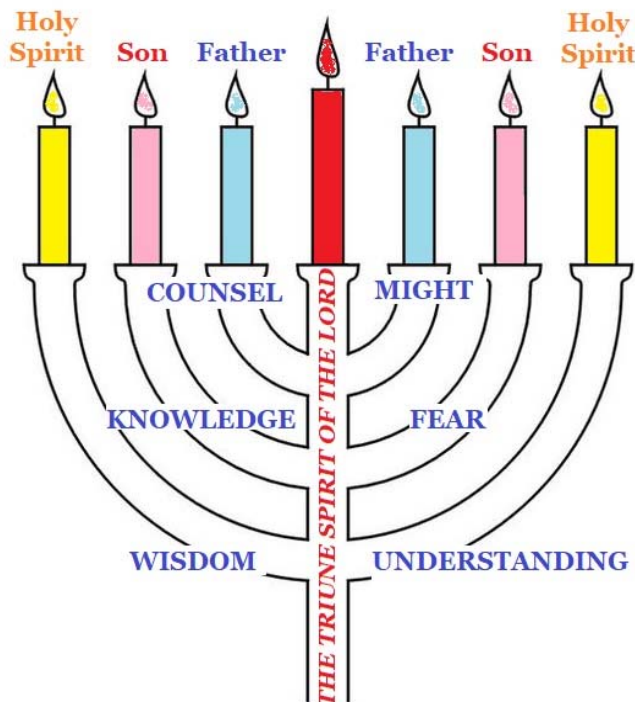
**[Eph. 5:25]**

The permanent and indissoluble bond of matrimony lies in its unity and strength:

***Anyone who divorces his wife, and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.***

**[Luke 16:18]**

## TRIUNE SPIRIT:



## SPIRITS OF GOD

*The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him -*

*the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,*

*the Spirit of counsel and of might,*

*the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord -*

*and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.*

**[Is. 11:2,3]**

Isaiah 11:2,3 describes the "Spirits of God" with three categorical expressions of Spirit (each expressed with paired descriptors) that reflect the individual and personal Spirits of the heavenly Father, the "poured out" truth of the divine Son, and the infinite inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Spirits of God are also inferred four times in the New Testament book of Revelation. Early on in his visionary book of Revelation, John reached out to the churches which are in Asia Minor and paid reverence to these inspirational Spirits which are before the heavenly Father's throne (Rev. 1:4, 3:1, 4:5). These sevenfold Spirits are sent forth into all the earth to reveal and inspire mankind (Rev. 5:6).

As presented in the book of Revelation, there are the seven Spirits (1:4; 4:5; 5:6); still, there is only one Spirit: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit" (Eph. 4:3,4). In Revelation, the one Spirit of God has become seven Spirits. Essentially God the Spirit is one, but in function he is seven. As seven is the number for completion in God's operation, so the Spirits must be sevenfold in God's diversified endowment to his creation. In substance and existence God's Spirit is one; in the intensified function and work of God's operation, God's Spirit is sevenfold. It is like the lampstand in Zechariah 4:2. In existence it is one lampstand, but in function it is seven lamps:

***Then the angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep. He asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a***



***solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps.***

**[Zech. 4:1,2]**



***But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.***

**[1Cor. 6:17]**

***There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.***

**[1Cor. 12:4-6]**

God is Spirit, and all bestowed Spirit comes from God. This Spirit of the Lord is bestowed upon mankind either from God directly, or it is poured out through the person of his Son Jesus Christ as the Spirit of truth, or this Spirit imbues us via the divine agency of the Holy Spirit. The source and center of this triune Spirit ministry is manifested Spirit in divine unity, but this Spirit touches upon humanity as ministered differentially via the three divine personalities of the existential Trinity. Considering the unity of God as Spirit, all three persons of the Trinity generate seven functions of this triune-expressed Spirit. In John's Revelation, the sevenfold Spirit of God is sent out into all the earth (Rev. 5:6). In Paul's letter to the Romans, he refers to the seven graces of God as these are manifested to humankind reflecting these manifold spirits of God. These seven graces are:

- 1) Insight (prophecy)
- 2) Helpfulness (service or ministry)
- 3) Instruction (teaching)
- 4) Encouragement
- 5) Generosity (giving)
- 6) Guidance (leadership)



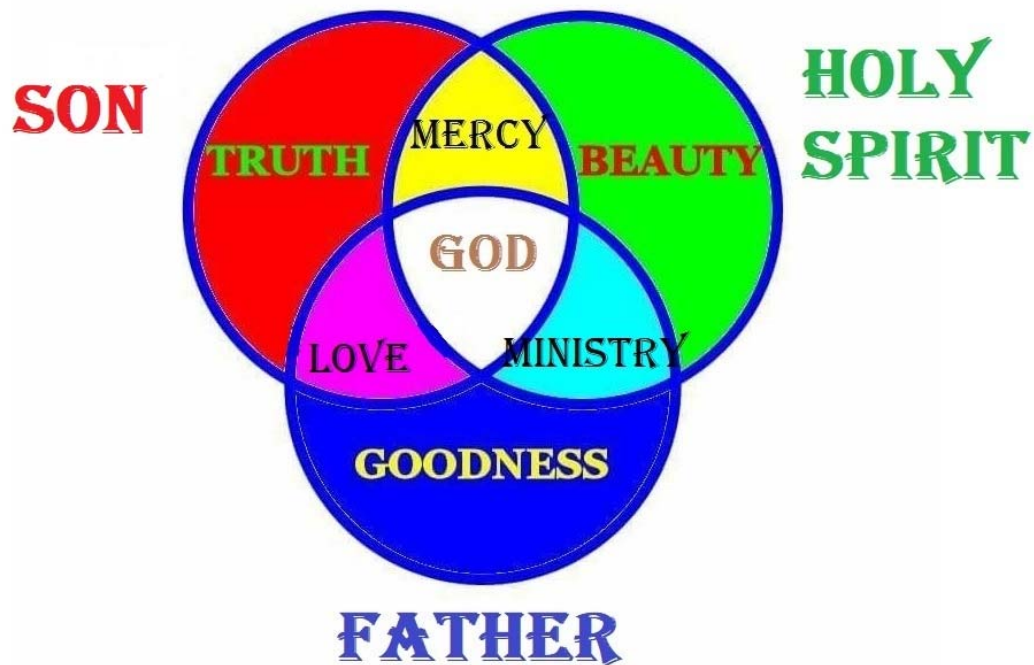
7) Mercy (compassion)

***We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.***  
**[Rom. 12:6-8]**

I realize that, while the great God is absolute, eternal, and infinite, he is also good, divine, and gracious. I recognize the truth of the great declarations: "God is spirit" and "God is love," "God is love"; therefore, his only personal attitude towards the affairs of the universe is always a reaction of divine affection. God is love, and that such a God of love dominates the universes and in mercy controls the fate and judgment of all his creatures. God is love; therefore, he must be good, and his goodness is so great and real that it cannot contain the small and unreal things of evil. God is so positively good that there is absolutely no place in him for negative evil. The brotherhood of men is founded on the fatherhood of God. The family of God is derived from the love of God -- God is love. God the Father divinely loves his children, all of them!



In the Godhead there are the Father, the Son, and the Spirit - the divine Trinity. There is a distinction between the three, but they cannot be separated absolutely. Traditional theology teaches us that the Triune God is of three persons with one substance, and that the three persons should not be confused, and the one substance not divided.



## ***ONE GOD, THREE PERSONS, SEVEN FUNCTIONS***

By having received this same Spirit of God, we are all united together in one Spirit with and through God. Christ's Spirit and the Father's Spirit come to dwell in each of us, and the Holy Spirit inspires us. This unified Spirit ministers to us in the triune manifestation of the Spirit of the Father (the Lord's Spirit), the Spirit of the Spirit (the Holy Spirit), and the Spirit of the Son (the Spirit of truth). Yet, this triune ministry of Spirit is, in divine essence, one and undivided. God's Spirit shines on us in power [Spirit of God], in wisdom [Holy Spirit], and with understanding [Spirit of truth]. This unity of Spirit binds us together and unifies the spirits within each and every one of us. We are filled with the present "power" of the Father, with the "inspiration" of the Holy Spirit, and we are given the "deep conviction" as poured out as the living Spirit of truth of Jesus Christ.

***To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his.  
[Job 12:13]***

***I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that***

***surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.***

**[Eph. 3:16-19]**

***Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.***

**[Eph. 4:3-6]**

***With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.***

**[2Thess. 1:11]**

God's Spirit is both unity *and* diversity. The triune Spirit of God is only partially expressed in the Torah as the Spirit of the Father and the ever-present Holy Spirit – it lacked the conjoining element of humanity. In the New Testament, we find the Holy Spirit consummating the bringing of divinity into humanity in the sublime person of Jesus Christ as given testimony at his baptism by John. Humanity enters into divinity through the sinless nature of the Son of God, and the Spirit of God attains a human element. This renewed Spirit is poured out upon all mankind as Jesus' living Spirit of truth.

***Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.***

**[1Cor. 12:12,13]**

All divine acts of God are Trinitarian acts, and the particular role of the uniting Holy Spirit is to inspire within the mind of mortal awareness a higher Spirit revelation of the Son and, through him, onward to the Spirit "heart" of the Father.

**The Spirit of the Father:**

- "Original" Spirit
- Power
- Immanence
- Air (Breath)
- Authority
- Love
- "Thought"

**The Spirit of the Son:**

- "Expressed" Spirit
- Understanding

- Truth
- Fire
- Deep Conviction
- Mercy
- “Word”

**The Spirit of the Spirit:**

- “Consummated” Spirit
- Wisdom
- Inspiration
- Water
- Sanctified Righteousness
- Ministry
- “Act”

***I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors: You have given me wisdom and power.***

**[Dan. 2:23]**

***For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.***

**[1Thess. 1:5,6]**

***For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.***

**[2Tim. 1:6,7]**

***God is spirit. [John 4:24]***



## **TRIUNE SPIRIT**

***He made the earth by his power; he  
founded the world by his wisdom and  
stretched out the heavens by his  
understanding.***

***[Jer. 51:15]***



## **The Spirit of the Father – The Power of God’s Spirit**

***Power belongs to you, God.***  
**[Ps. 62 11]**

The earliest manifestation of God’s awesome power is seen in the creation of the world in which we live: “For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made.” [Romans 1:20]. Throughout Scripture, the creation of the world is cited as a compelling testimony of the power of God. The nation Israel praised God throughout their history for the power he displayed in delivering them from their bondage in Egypt. They see this deliverance as proof of God’s power by their assurance for their entrance into the land as God had promised. The exodus was indeed a demonstration of God’s omnipotent Spirit. This awesome power of the Spirit of the Lord was even onetime imparted to seventy of Israel’s elders under Moses’ watch care by sharing of Moses’ Spirit of the Lord. God tells Moses:



***I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone... Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied - but did not do so again.***  
**[Num. 11:17]**

This Spirit “power” of the Lord has “stirred” within quite a number of Old Testament personages throughout its recorded history. We know that the “Spirit of the Lord” came upon Gideon [Judges 6:17], and also that it stirred within Samson [Judges 13:24,25] and that this “Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him.” [Judges 15:14,15] The “Spirit of God” came upon Saul (the first King of Israel) [1Sam. 10:10] as well as upon David (the second King of Israel) [1Sam. 16:13], all in awesome power. When the “Spirit of God” came upon Saul’s men, they gained the power to prophesy. [1Sam. 19:20], and David himself testified to prophecy when he said, “The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.” [2Sam. 23:2]

The “Spirit of God” came upon both Prophets Azariah [2Chro. 15:1] and Zechariah [1Chron. 24:20] Ezekiel was given a “vision given by the Spirit of God” [Ez. 11:22-24] The Prophet Micah became “filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might.” [Micah 3:8] The prophets make much of the power of God. They do so because they were calling Israel to trust in God and place their hope in Him. They do so because they speak of even greater events God is going to bring to pass, events which involve a “new creation,” and therefore require the power which only the Spirit of the Lord, the Creator, has.

Jesus is known to have “returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit” [Luke 4:14] and that “the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick.” [Luke 5:17] Sometimes, this Spirit power within Jesus could be drawn from his very being “and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.” [Luke 6:19]

***By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.  
[1Cor. 6:14]***

In fact, this Spirit within Jesus could be irresistibly drawn from Jesus by extraordinary demonstrations of faith, even without his conscious awareness of the resulting healing event. Such was the circumstance that startled him when he exclaimed, “I know that power has gone out from me.”:





***As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. “Who touched me?” Jesus asked... “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.” Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.” [Luke 8:42-48]***

As for his Apostles, Jesus was able to give them “power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases” [Luke 9:1], and he let them have the “authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome the power of the enemy.” [Luke 10:19] Paul refers to the “power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God” [Romans 15:18,19], and he testifies that he preaches “with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.” [1Cor. 2:4,5] Paul stresses that the kingdom of God is a matter of power [1Cor. 4:20], and that it is God’s

power that raises the dead [1Cor. 6:14] and gives them a new imperishable body that is raised in power and glory. [1Cor. 15:42,43]

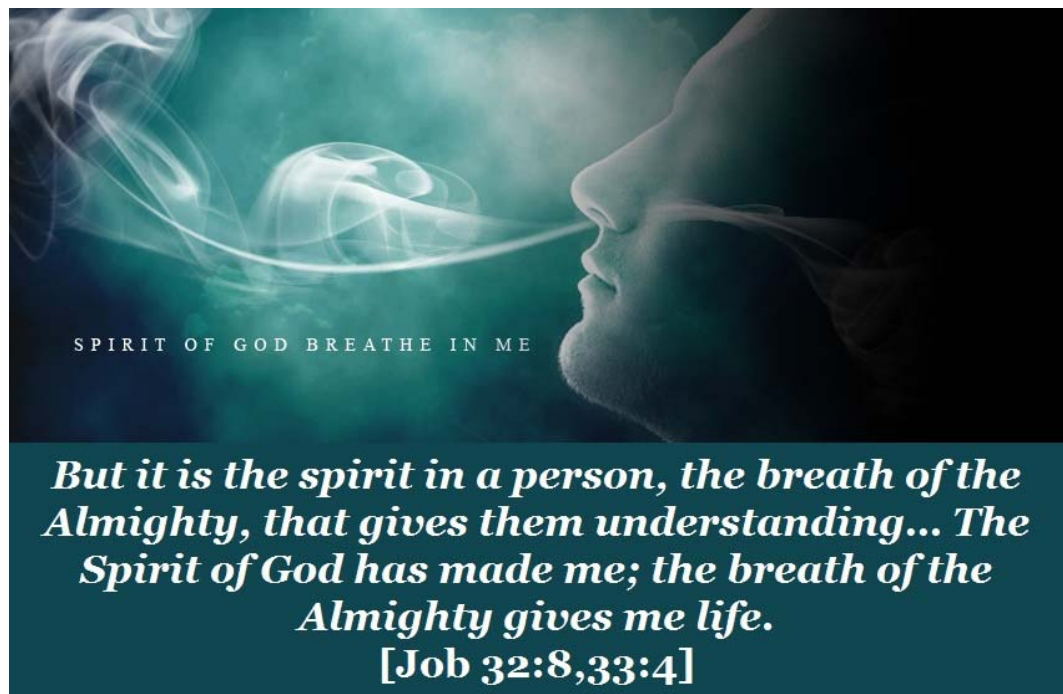
***Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.***  
**[2Cor. 3:17,18]**

Psalm 143 pays recognition to God's good Spirit which leads us all "on level ground." [Ps. 143:10] We are the lamps of the heavenly Father, ever-responsive to the inner pilot light of his living Spirit that "sheds light on one's inmost being" [Proverbs 20:27], and it is "in the human heart" where the Lord has set eternity. [Eccl. 3:11]

***Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.***  
**[1Cor. 3:16,17]**

***And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.***  
**[Eph. 2:22]**

Mankind's participation in the Spirit of God begins when man was created and when God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" [Gen 2:7].





***I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.  
[Ez. 37:6]***



***I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. [Eph. 1:18-21]***

Power is the very essence of God; it is in his divine nature. God's absolute power, coupled with his absolute authority, allows the Lord to do "whatever he pleases" (Psalm 115:3), with no limitations at all.



***Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen.***

**[Rom. 1:20]**

***Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.***

**[Rom. 13:1]**

***My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.***

**[1Cor. 2:4,5]**

***I [Paul] became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.***

**[Eph. 3:7-9]**

***And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power.***

**[Rev. 15:8]**

***"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God."***

**[Rev. 19:1]**

### **The Spirit of the Spirit – The Wisdom of the Holy Spirit**

***Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.***

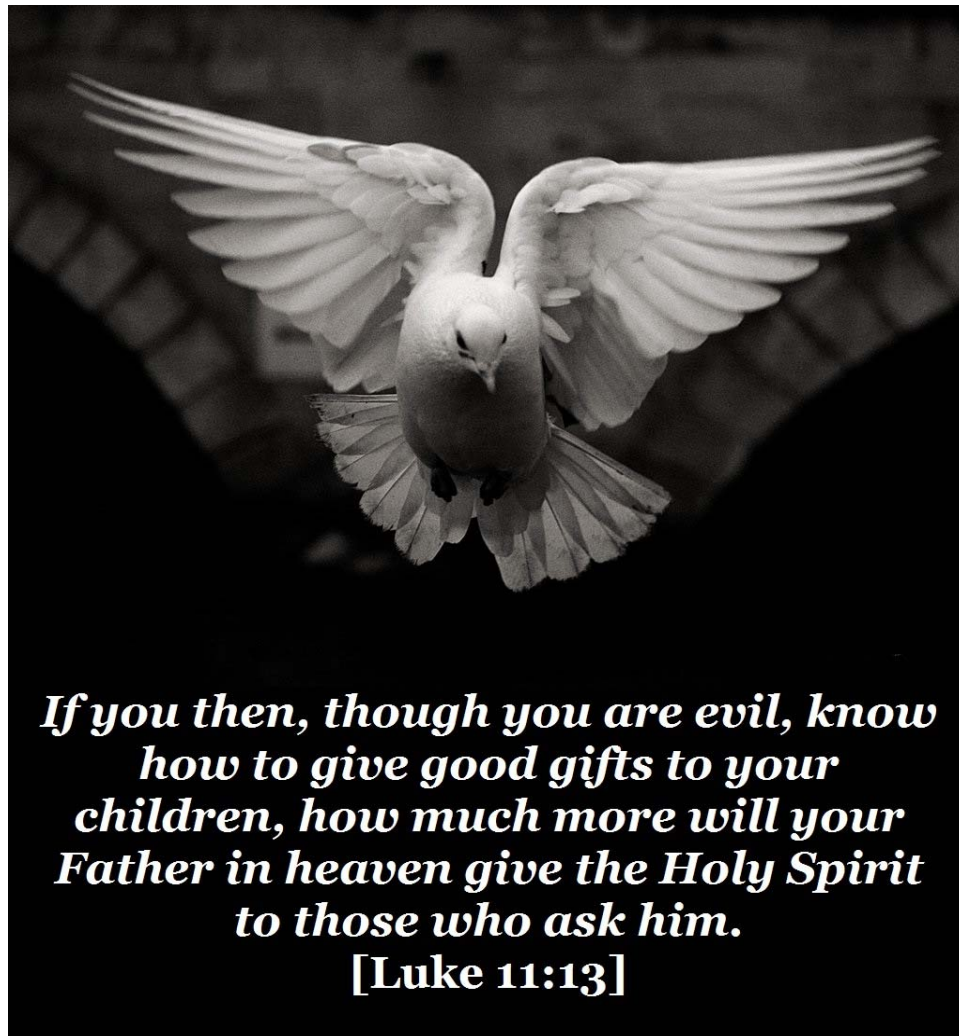
**[Mat. 4:1]**

***At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.***

**[Mat. 10:19,20]**

All major acts of God are expressions of his triune Spirit, and the particular role of the Holy Spirit is to inspire God's wisdom into creation by a revelation of the incarnated Son and through him of the heavenly Father himself. The personal being of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, remains mysteriously elusive even if he is active at every great stage of divine expression - creation. The Holy Spirit reveals God's Spirit as portraying his presence and care in conveying to men's souls his divine love. This love can be conveyed to men only through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The heavenly Father's creative and loving purpose is also a Spirit that makes effective his laws and designs in the governing

creation. The Holy Spirit works within the Spirit unity of God by inspiring the souls of men into a greater awareness of God's immanent presence and his intended purposes and plans for his creation.



***In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.  
[Rom. 8:26,27]***

***The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not***

***in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit,  
explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.***

**[1Cor. 2:10-13]**

***Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by  
the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin  
in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were  
carried along by the Holy Spirit.***

**[2Pet. 1:20,21]**

The function of the Holy Spirit is not to reveal himself but to reveal the Son "through whom all things are made" and who is also personally known from his humanity as Jesus Christ. The influence of the consummated Spirit acts in perfect synchronicity with the original purposes and plans of God. The Holy Spirit assumes, inspires, and vivifies everything which is still fundamentally good and beautiful, despite the Fall of Adam, and provides for the fulfillment of providential destiny. In this sense, the Spirit is the very impetus for the emerging kingdom of God.

When Genesis mentions the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters [Gen 1:2], tradition interprets this passage in the sense of a primal maintenance of all things by the Holy Spirit which makes possible the subsequent appearance of all creation through the expressed Word of God – Jesus Christ. The action of the Holy Spirit is part of the continuous upholding of the world by the creative action of God.



***In the beginning God  
created the heavens  
and the earth. Now  
the earth was  
formless and empty,  
darkness was over  
the surface of the  
deep, and the Spirit  
of God was hovering  
over the waters.***

**[Gen. 1:1,2]**

The restoring of the intended Edenic relationship between God and man is skillfully consummated by the Holy Spirit; the cosmic balance is restored again. The descent of the united Spirit anticipates the ultimate fulfilment of God's intended destiny. By the power of the triune Spirit, the true and natural relationship is restored between God, man, and creation.

***If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!***

**[Luke 11:13]**

***When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.***

**[Luke 12:11,12]**

The Holy Spirit in his action reveals not himself, but the Son; when he encompasses Mary, the Word is conceived; when he descends on the Son at the baptism in Jordan, he reveals the Father's embrace of the Son. In the Holy Spirit, one sees the Son while the Son himself is the divine image of the Father. This living image reflects a living relationship between the divine persons of the Trinity and this is manifested by the incarnation of the Son himself into the nature of mankind. Through the Spirit, the Word became man, and through the Spirit, true life reaches all men.

***But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.***

**[Titus 3:4-6]**

The Holy Spirit is a perfect spirit, uncreated, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, united. This Spirit could be viewed as the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Water, the primeval cosmic element, is symbolic of the power of God and of the sanctifying descent of the Holy Spirit". Water is a source of life for the entire cosmos over which man is called to rule. By the power provided through the Holy Spirit, a true and natural relationship is restored between God, man, and creation. Man's spirit separated from God is more needy and wanting than the body of a man lost in the desert without any water. The Holy Spirit is the river of living water that flows through us, providing life and strength.

***Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.***

**[Is. 12:2,3]**

***Till the Spirit is poured on us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest... The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever.***



**[Is. 32:15-17]**

***For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your [Jacob] offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.***

**[Is. 44:3]**



***“As for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the Lord. “My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants—from this time on and forever,” says the Lord.***

**[Is. 59:21]**

***For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.***

**[Ez. 36:24-28]**





***I will pour out my  
Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and  
daughters will  
prophecy, your old  
men will dream  
dreams, your young  
men will see visions.  
Even on my servants,  
both men and women, I  
will pour out my Spirit  
in those days.  
[Joel 2:28,29]***

Water represents the Holy Spirit's ability to refresh us, quench our spiritual thirst, cleanse us, and bring forth life wherever he flows. He is the rain of Heaven, and he is the living river that flows from within. Just like we need water to live, so too do we need the Holy Spirit for spiritual life. We use water to cleanse and nourish us: these are images which draw us into the life of the Holy Spirit.

***Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
[Ps. 51:11]***

***Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand  
about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you  
speaking, but the Holy Spirit.  
[Mark 13:11]***

***His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied.  
[Luke 1:67]***

***And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out  
into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.  
[Rom. 5:5]***



***As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”***  
**[Mat. 3:16]**

"Baptized in the Spirit" indicates an outward immersion into the reality of the Holy Spirit, while "filled with the Spirit" suggests an internal diffusion. Both terms speak to the totality of receiving the Spirit. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is described in various places as the Spirit "poured out upon", "falling upon", "coming upon" people. In Christian theology, baptism with the Holy Spirit (also called baptism in the Holy Spirit or Spirit baptism or baptism with the Holy Ghost) is distinguished from "baptism with water". It is frequently associated with incorporation into the Christian Church, the bestowal of spiritual gifts, and empowerment for Christian ministry. The term baptism with the Holy Spirit originates in the New Testament, and all Christian traditions accept it as a theological concept.

***But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John... he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.”***  
**[Luke 1:13,15]**

***Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”***  
**[John 3:5-8]**

When the Holy Spirit descended upon Mary within her fertile womb of her being, this mother of Jesus became impregnated with the Spirit of the Son of God:

***“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.***  
**[Luke 1:35]**

In Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary arrived at the temple to present their child Jesus for the ritual of purification as required by the Law of Moses. The Holy Spirit had descended upon a man called Simeon revealing that he would live to see the Lord's Messiah before he dies. Moved by the Spirit, he enters the temple's courts to give praise to the child Jesus:

***Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God.***  
**[Luke 2:25-28]**

It would appear that the Spirit functions in us in at least two different modes – inward to God “in tongues” and outward to people “in prophecy”:

***All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.***  
**[Acts 2:1-4]**

***There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them... Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines... For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body - whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.***  
**[1Cor. 12:4,7-11,13]**

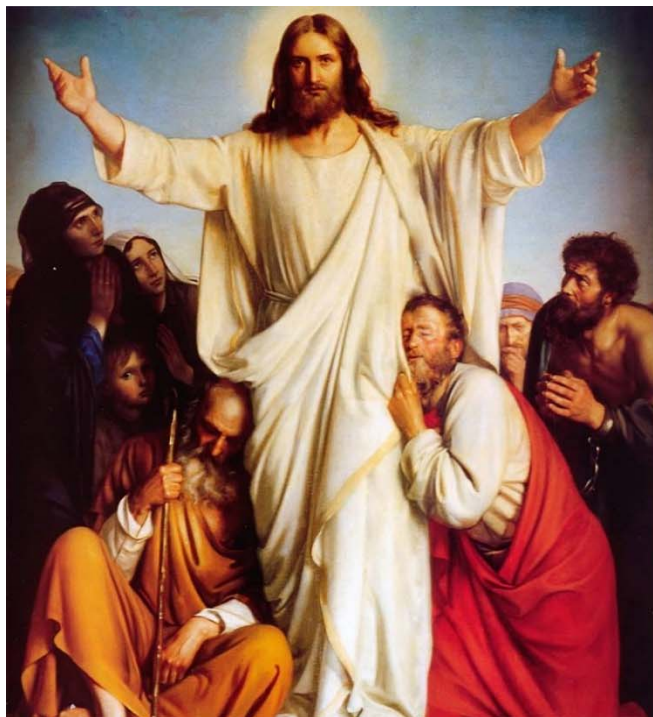
***Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is***



***greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified.***  
**[1Cor. 14:1-5]**

### **The Spirit of the Son – The Understanding of the Spirit of Truth**

By virtue of who he is as celestial creator of all things, God is the sovereign ruler of the universe. He has all power and all authority, and he divests the power of his Spirit and entrusts roles of leadership to individuals in the family, the church, the workplace, the governments of the world, and unto the personal prerogatives of his fellow persons of the Trinity, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The orderliness we find in human structures of authority reflects the order of God's own nature and creative expressions. God is Trinity: the Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The Father sends the Son into the world as Savior and Redeemer. [See I John 4:9] Jesus is obedient to God the Father. [See John 5:19.] When Jesus returned to heaven, he and the Father sent the Son's Spirit of truth to comfort Jesus' disciples and all other believers, leading them in all truth, reminding them of the words of Jesus, and empowering them to carry out Jesus' commission to spread the Gospel. [See John 14:26, 15:26, and Acts 1:8]



***You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.***  
**[Rom. 8:9-11]**

From the Spirit of God in the Old Testament to the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the New Testament, there was no expressed humanity in divinity. God becomes man and brings divinity into humanity; the Son of God became the Son of Man and lived on this earth for over thirty years during which time he lived in full sincerity to the Holy Spirit. He submitted

himself to the cross, thus inaugurating a new manifestation of God's providential purpose and plan. Jesus Christ becomes the life-giving Spirit of truth.



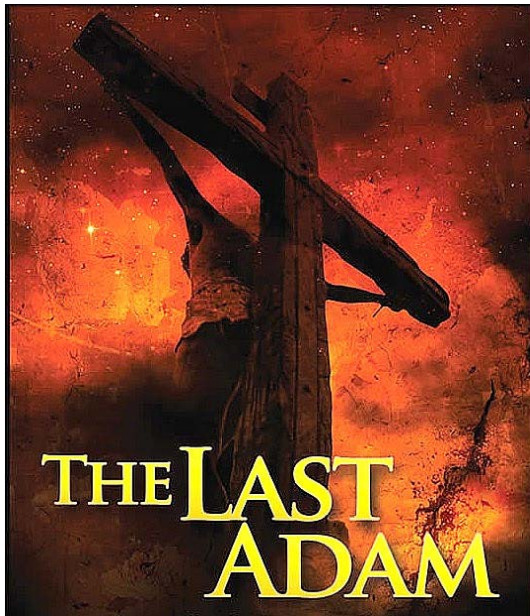
### The Supremacy of the Son of God

*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

**[Col. 1:15-20]**

Christ reveals his life-giving Spirit and the Spirit of God becomes consummated through the processes of incarnation, mortal life and death, and eventual resurrection. This life-giving Spirit of the Son of God went through all the living experiences to which we all are subject. Jesus' Spirit of truth comes, and we know him; he will be with us forever. His Spirit teaches us everything, reminding us of all that Jesus said to us and bearing witness to him. His Spirit leads us into all truth, glorifying him. It manifests the risen Lord to the world, recalling his words and opening our minds to the understanding of his death and resurrection. Jesus said his "Advocate" "will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:26) With the fervor of consuming fire, the Spirit of truth is branded into our hearts making clear and present the ineffable mystery of Christ.





*So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man. [1 Cor. 15:45-49]*

In days of old, there was only the old creation as descended through the progeny of Adam. Then, at the commencement of the new creation in the resurrection of Christ, the Spirit comes into being fully manifested in triune harmony and synergy. That which was originally known as the Spirit of God and the Holy Spirit has become triunely revealed in the poured-out Spirit of the resurrected Christ. In the union of creation and salvation, the Son and the Spirit are accomplishing one single divine act driven by the powerful "breath" of the Spirit of the Father. No singular expressed Spirit is subordinated to another in their existential unity.

The "head" of the new and redeemed humanity is Christ, and God's Spirit is leading us all to the presence of his uniting "light". God's triune Spirit transforms the Christian community into the living "Body of Christ." Christ becomes the sole image appropriate to the common nature of humanity. The Holy Spirit grants to each person created in the image of God the possibility of fulfilling Christ's likeness in the communal spirit. There is one divinity and one divine Spirit in action leading mankind to the presence of God.

***Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.***

**[Acts 16:6,7]**

***He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.***

**[Gal. 3:14]**

***I [John the Baptist] baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.***

**[Mat. 3:11]**

Jesus tells his apostles that at the times of the coming persecutions, when the Temple in Jerusalem will be destroyed, that they should not be worried about being witnesses for him. His Spirit of truth will bolster and reinforce their spiritual testimony:

***But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.***

**[Luke 21:14,15]**

Shortly prior to his coming ascension to the Father, Jesus opens the minds of his Apostles so that they would understand the Scriptures prophecy that is contained within the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.

***I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.***

**[Luke 24:49]**

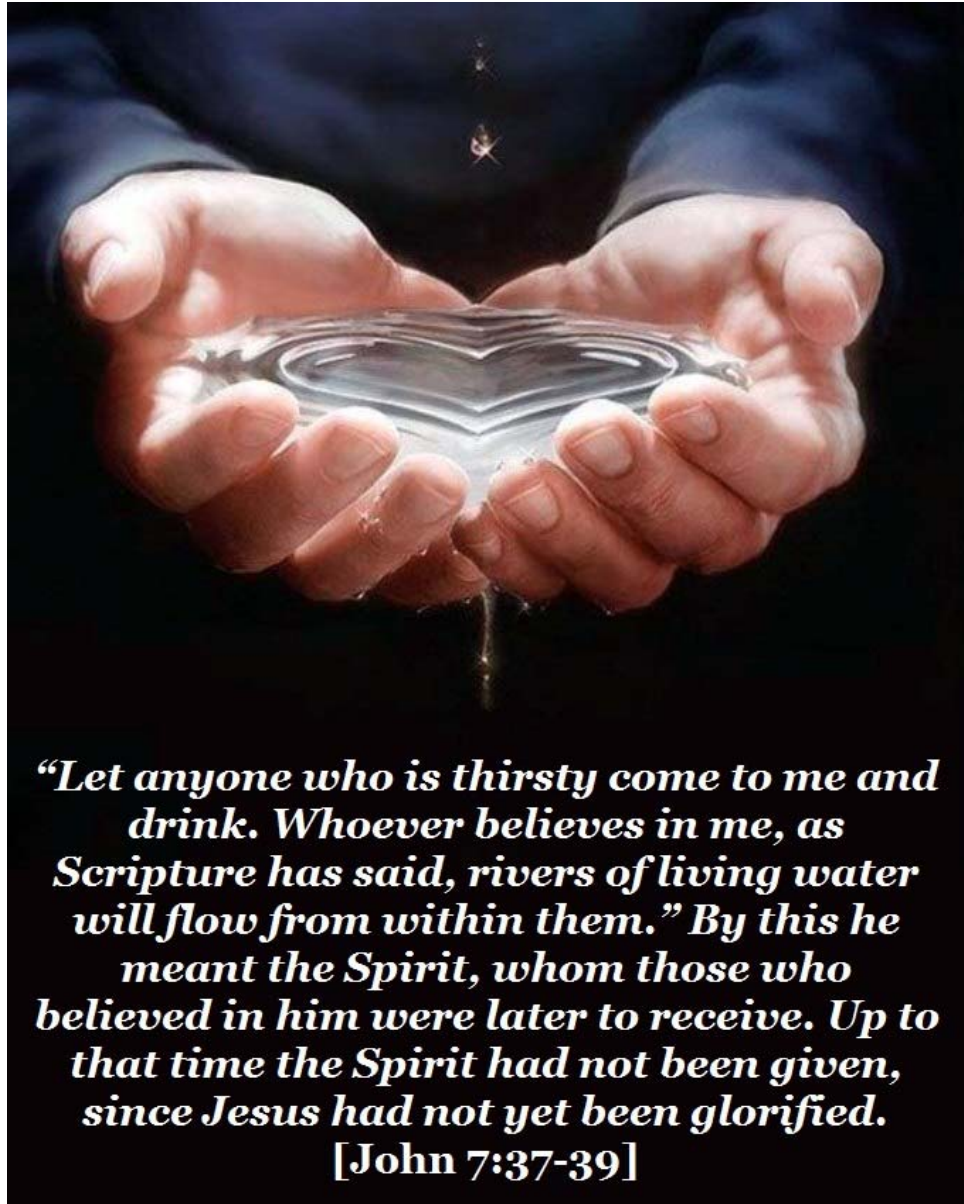
Once earlier, Jesus asked a Samaritan woman standing by a well for a drink of water, and she reacted demurely because he was a Jew. Jesus says, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." [John 4:10] Incredulously, she asks where she can get this living water?:

***Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."***

**[John 4:13,14]**

***Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.***

**[John 4:23,24]**



The “Spirit of truth” opens our blind eyes so the human heart can see the truth. God has chosen to reveal himself in the person of Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of truth accurately retains and reveals that true revelation from God in the God-breathed Scriptures. The Spirit of truth glorifies the Son so that we may know the Father. He reveals to us the Father in the Son. The Spirit of truth reveals to every seeker of the truth the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and everyone who believes on him has eternal life. He prepares our minds to accept this truth.

***Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.  
[John 8:32]***



***If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.***

**[John 14:15-19]**

***When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.***

**[John 15:26]**



***“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”***

**[John 16:13-15]**

***When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and***

***filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.***

**[Acts 2:1-4]**

Jesus' Spirit of truth is the spiritual "Comforter" promised by Jesus himself. It descended upon the Apostles at Pentecost in "tongues of fire", and it services us today in the here and now. It brings to us Jesus' own personal presence to be with us and to guide us in his truth. This is the spiritual presence of Jesus himself. Recognition of the spiritual quality of truth may be viewed as being intellectually consistent, but its true comprehension is validated by the unerring response of the ever-present Spirit of truth.

***So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.***

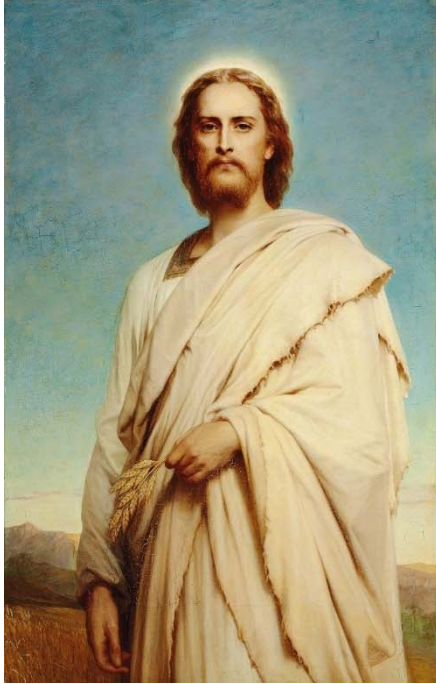
**[Rom. 7:4-6]**

***Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.***

**[Rom. 8:1,2]**

Jesus' Spirit of truth leads man to the fertile realization of truth, and the Father's spiritual presence functions to spiritually elevate such comprehension of truth to the transcendent comprehension of soul-insight. These spirit forces conspire to enable mortal man to grasp the reality of spiritual values and to comprehend the purposes and plans of the spiritual Father. These Spirits of the divine presence are able to assist man in the spiritual appropriation of all truth contributory to the enhancement of the ever-progressing reality of personal religious experience - God-consciousness.





***For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.***

***[Rom. 8:14-17]***

***So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.***

***[1Cor. 14:15]***

***Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”***

***[Gal. 4:6]***

***For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.***

***[Eph. 2:18]***

***Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.***

***[Phil. 1:18,19]***

***But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.***

***[Titus 3:4-7]***

***The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.***  
**[1John 3:24]**

***We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.***  
**[1John 4:6]**

## **THE TRINITY:**

The traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity has been considered the primary and distinctive aspect of the Christian conception of God, and even as the central mystery of the Christian faith. It enshrines the deepest truth of traditional Christianity. Considering that the different elements of the Trinity doctrine are found scattered throughout all parts of the Bible, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of St. John's Revelation, there is no one place where this doctrine is set forth in a complete and systematic form. Even in the New Testament, a doctrine of the Trinity does not begin to approach systematic treatment. Rather, it is presented as a long string of incidental allusions and references. The New Testament assumes the Trinity with a sublime naturalness and simplicity.

The revelation of the Old Testament fixed in the hearts and minds of the people of God the great fundamental truth of the unity of the Godhead. However, the times were not yet fertile for a revelation of the Trinity within the unity of this Godhead until the fullness of the time had come for God to send forth his Son and his Spirit into the world. A revelation of the Trinity before then would only have revealed the Trinity of persons within the divine unity of Jehovah as a mere abstract truth without relation to manifested fact, without significance for the further development of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

I very early became convinced of and comfortable with the Christian concept of the Blessed Trinity. The theological mystery of the Trinity that insists that God does not exist except as Father, Son, and Spirit has always been surprisingly compatible with my sensibilities. Through prayer and meditation, I have faith-experienced a personal intuition of each of these three divine persons. Once I began distinguishing in prayer and meditative contemplation the individually divine and personal presences of the Father and Son and Spirit, I could certainly begin to rationalize that beyond these three divine persons there could be no personal God. My personal faith-experience with these three persons of Deity helps me experience the truth of their divine and personal beings. Nevertheless, intellectually they remain a continual mystery.

The Trinity should be seen as a paradigm that reveals the inner and three-personed life of God within the unity of the godhead. The primal core of the Trinity begins with the Father, proceeds through the agency of the Son, and is generated in the Spirit who is effective and immanent in the world. The divine nature of God's deity is equally present in each phase of

its manifestation. From our own experience, we know of the Father through the revelation of the Son, and we recognize the divinity of the Son by the omnipresence of the Spirit.

The Trinity is revealed as a mystical spiritual experience because God transcends human concepts. The truth of the Trinity remains the ultimate mystery – it remains beyond words, concepts, and human analysis. God is unlike anything in his creation and anything in our experience. Still, God not only stays within himself in his eternal mystery, but at the same time is totally immersed in his creation.

Through his primal and infinite free will, God puts limits on himself, emptying himself into his eternal Son in an act of self-expression and, with the concurrent generation of the infinite Spirit, deity reunifies itself with the inevitable formation of the Trinity. Likewise, God vacates within his presence a secure and cherished place for his creation of the heavens and the earth; this is a dependent creation that is not overwhelmed and swallowed by his otherwise awesome and primal being. His absolute and unqualified being allows for a qualified expression of deity absoluteness.

The doctrine of the Trinity has always posed conceptual challenges for Christian theology. We read throughout the Bible that God invites us all to share in his divine and inner life through his Son Jesus Christ. We are empowered by the faith-inspiration of the Holy Spirit to do this. From this implicit invitation, there evolved the theological concept of the Trinity where the individualized essence of Godhead is seen as being shared equally with each of the three persons of the Trinity - the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Each of these three persons equally possesses all the substance and all the attributes of undivided Deity. This plurality of three persons in a unified Godhead is of one singular essence, and this unity of essence is manifested in three persons. The most widely accepted distinction that can be made about this divine relationship is that the Son always comes from the Father, and that the Spirit always comes jointly from the Father and the Son.

***Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.”***  
**[Gen. 1:26]**

***Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.***  
**[Mat. 28:19]**

***May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.***  
**[2Cor. 13:14]**

***He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.***  
**[Eph. 2:17,18]**

***To God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the***

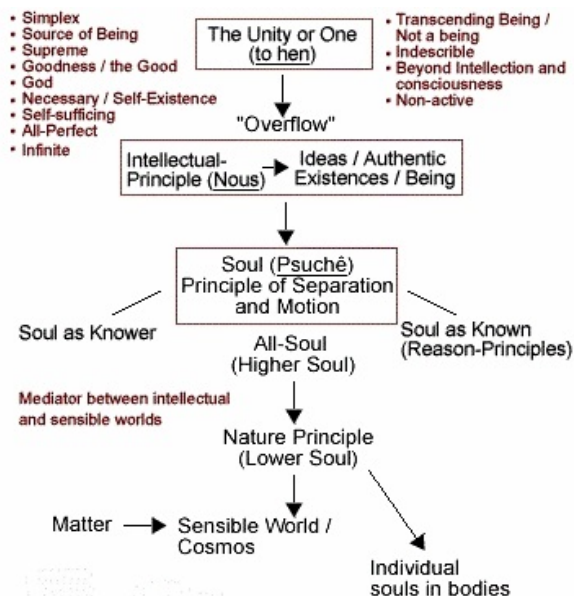
***foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood.***  
**[1Pet. 1:1,2]**

***And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.***  
**[1John 5:6-8]**

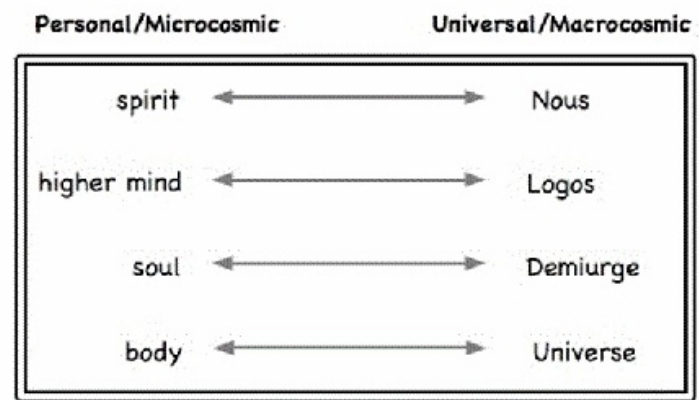
[Late manuscripts of the Vulgate, (not found in any Greek manuscript before the fourteenth century): "testify in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that testify on earth:"]

### **Early Trinity Developments**

Plotinus was a Neoplatonist and mystic who, in 244, established a school in Rome and focused his thought on the relations between the One and the Many. Borrowing from Plato, he assigned the One (or the Good) as the first principle. From the One came the intelligible reality of Ideas, and from these was derived the World-Soul as the third member of the Plotinian triad. The World-Soul was subsequently responsible for the material and living creation. Plotinus exercised a subtle but effective influence on the evolving thought of the early Church Fathers. In his "Enneads", he was willing to envision a heavenly existence; he describes a future abode such that "there shall a man see, as seeing may be in Heaven, both God and himself; himself made radiant, filled with the intelligible light, or rather grown one with that light in its purity, without burden or any heaviness, transfigured to godhead, nay, being in essence God. For that hour he is enkindled."



### ***Platonic "Mind. Body, and Soul"***





Since the early developments of Christian thought, the search has been to find God as infinite Deity who is not only transcendent but also immanent. Eusebius, the so-called "Father of Church History", was a bishop of the early church in Caesarea in 313. He suggested that Plato, in his letters, came upon an early idea of the Trinity through his three principles of the One (or Good), the Nous (or Mind), and the World-Soul. Indeed, there were many Platonist thinkers who were contemporaries with the Church Fathers and who were highly motivated to use Plato's ideas for bridging the tremendous conceptual gap between man and God. For these Neoplatonists, the ultimate One transcends all finite experience, while the dualism of Thought and Reality is responsible for the ever-changing world of things and beings.

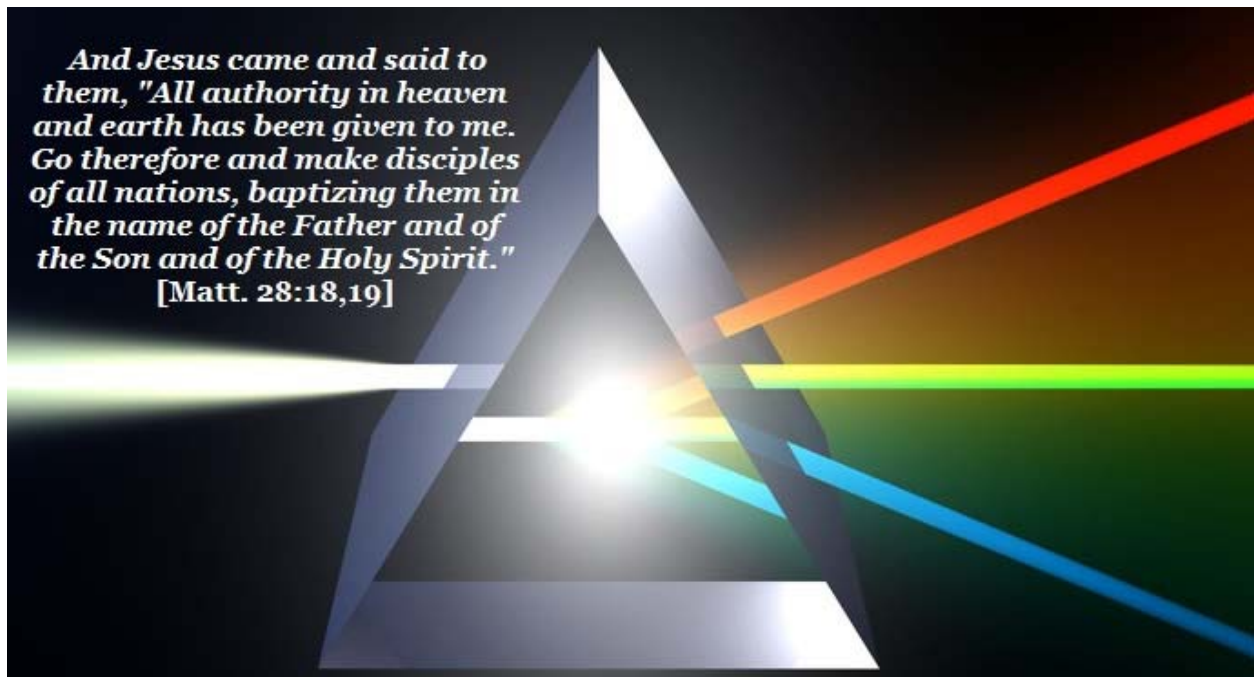
Origen was an early theologian and a prolific Christian writer before the Council of Nicaea in 325. He attempted to reconcile Platonic philosophy with the seeds of early Christian thought. In the strictest and Christian sense, God the Father is the Creator of an infinity of worlds, one succeeding the other and all different from one another. The Logos, or Word, is the exemplar of Creation, and through the Logos all things are created with the Logos acting as mediator between God and his creatures. The final member within the Godhead is the Holy Spirit, immediately below whom are the created spirits who, through the agency of the Spirit, are lifted up to become sons of God in union with the Word, and finally as participants in the divine life of God Himself.

In these early developments of Christian thought, the emphasis is on God as infinite Deity who is not only transcendent but also immanent. Man becomes united with God by participating in the divine life through the grace received from God's Word, the Son. And the infinite and the finite are being regarded not as set-over against one another but as united without confusion:



God is being emphasized not as an undifferentiated unity but as the Trinity of Persons, as infinite spiritual life. This use of the term "Trinity" as such is not found in the Bible. One of

the first uses of this term was in the second century AD by Tertullian, the Church Father of Carthage, to express the truth taught in the Scriptures denoting the triune revelation of God as Father, Son, and Spirit.

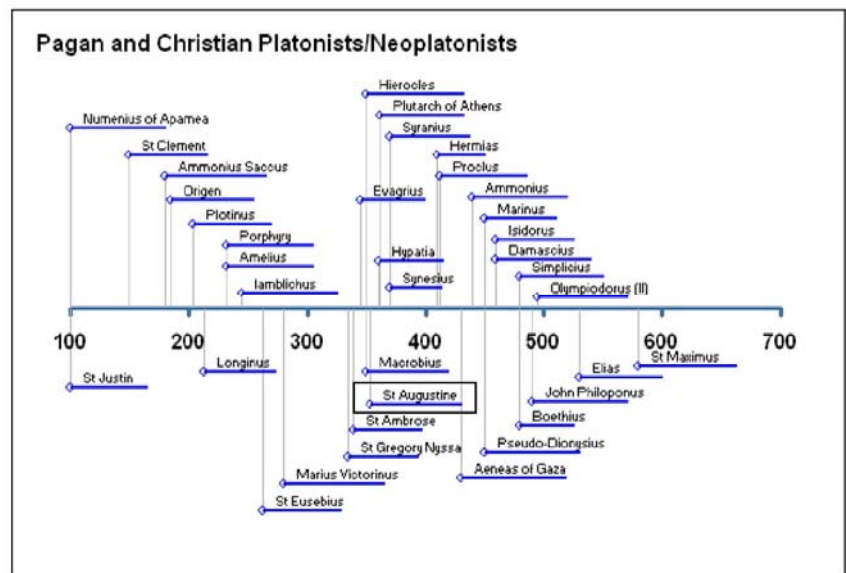
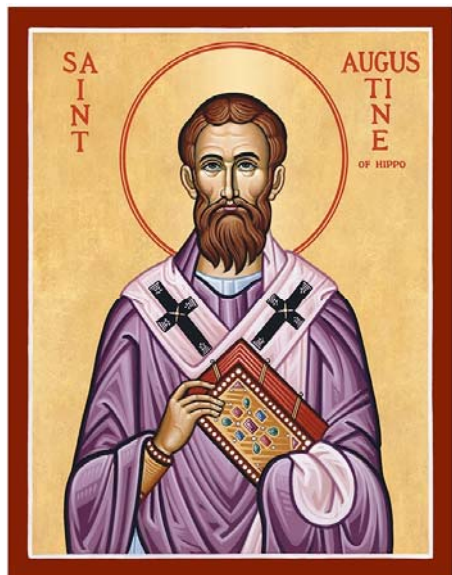


St. Gregory, the "Cappadocian Father", was born about 335 and later became bishop of Nyssa. He posited a further rationalization for the Trinity of Persons in one Godhead. God must have a Logos, a Word, a Reason, and this Logos must be eternal just as he must be living. The Logos is one in nature with the Father, for there is only one God. The only distinction between the Logos and the Father is the distinction of relation.

The term Logos was increasingly being accepted as the name given to the pre-existence of Christ. In opposition to this developing view of the Logos, a view that constituted the basis for the established Creeds of later Christianity, there appeared during the period of the Church Fathers two heretical positions. First, there was the proposal that the Logos was created by God out of nothing and consequently was not God. This belief became known as Arianism, which was anathematized (denounced) at the Council of Nicaea. Second, there was the proposition that the Logos was not a real personal being but was only a "power" of God. This view became best known as Sabellianism after the name of one of its key proponents.

St. Augustine, "Doctor of the Church", was born in Tagaste in the province of Numidia in 354. He had ties to the Neoplatonists, and early expressed his view that their foundational concept of "Ideas" is contained in the Christian concept of the divine Word and that the Word is the archetype of Creation. The Father knows himself perfectly and that this act of self-knowledge is the image and expression of himself - it is his Word. As proceeding from

the Father, the Word is divine - the divine Son. Representing the Father, the Word expresses, represents, all that the Father can effect.



In the ninth century, John Scotus Erigena of Ireland emphasized that the generation of the Word, or Son, is not a temporal process (i.e., having a definite beginning and progressing towards a definite end), but is rather an "eternity process" outside of the stream of time as we know it. The constitution of the archetypal Ideas, or exemplary causes, in the Word is a logical and not a temporal sequence. The priority of the Word to the emergence of these reality archetypes implies that causal sequences proceed from the Word by "generation", although there was never a time when the Word was without the archetypes.

The Franciscan theologian St. Bonaventure, "Doctor Seraphicus", was born at Bagnorea in Tuscany in the year 1221. He entered the Franciscan Order and became a student of the Augustinian tradition of theological teaching. For Bonaventure, reality was founded on the three cardinal centers of "creation" (Father), "exemplarism" (Son), and "illumination" (Spirit). The doctrine of exemplarism reveals the world of creatures as standing to God in the relation of imitation to model, while the doctrine of illumination traces the stages of the soul's return to God by the final attainment of Perfect Being. Thus, for Bonaventure, it is through the Word of God that all things are created, and it is the Word of God, the consubstantial image of the Father, whom all creatures mirror. The Word of God is the door through which the soul enters into God above itself, and it is the Holy Spirit, whom he has sent, who inflames the soul and leads it beyond the limitations of its clear ideas into the final ecstatic union.

The German Nicholas of Cusa was born in 1401, was ordained a priest in 1426, and was appointed to the bishopric of Brixen in 1450. His thought was governed by the idea of unity as the harmonious synthesis of differences, the synthesis of opposites that transcends and yet includes distinctions. The idea of material nature itself was considered as an external manifestation of God. God contains all things, material and spiritual, in that he is the cause

of all things. He is imminent in all things such that all things are essentially dependent on him. In Nicholas' creation, unity is derivatized into plurality, infinity into finitude, simplicity into composition, eternity into succession, necessity into possibility. The divine infinity reveals itself in the multiplicity of finite things, and the divine eternity expresses itself in temporal succession. The world is a harmonious system. It consists of a multiplicity of finite things, but its members are so related to one another and to the whole that there is an all-embracing "unity in plurality".

### **The Christian Trinity**

The traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity has been considered the primary and distinctive aspect of the Christian conception of God, and even as the central mystery of the Christian faith. It enshrines the deepest truth of traditional Christianity. Considering that the different elements of the Trinity doctrine are found scattered throughout all parts of the Bible, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of John's Revelation, there is no one place where this doctrine is set forth in a complete and systematic form. Even in the New Testament, a doctrine of the Trinity does not begin to approach systematic treatment. Rather, it is presented as a long string of incidental allusions and references. The New Testament assumes the Trinity with a sublime naturalness and simplicity.

The revelation of the Old Testament fixed in the hearts and minds of the people of God the great fundamental truth of the unity of the Godhead. However, the times were not yet fertile for a revelation of the Trinity within the unity of this Godhead until the fullness of the time had come for God to send forth his Son with his Spirit into the world. A revelation of the Trinity before then would only have revealed the Trinity of persons within the divine unity of Jehovah as a mere abstract truth without relation to manifested fact, without significance for the further development of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

The knowledge of God was acquired gradually as men became increasingly able to receive it. The Old Testament reveals to us God the Father as Creator and Lawgiver. The Gospels reveal to us God the Son as Redeemer, and the rest of the New Testament reveals the Holy Spirit as Strengtheners and Sanctifiers. These revelations came through the growing understanding of biblical men as they reflected on the meaning of God's activity amongst them. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity arose as the final summation of the biblical revelation of God.

The Hebrew tribes, along with those of the later appearing Mohammedans, have had great difficulty in distinguishing between the concept of worshiping three gods, a triad form of polytheism, and Trinitarianism - the worship of one Deity existing in a triune manifestation of divinity and personality. There are numerous accounts of emerging monotheistic peoples who, when in the midst of combating retrogressive polytheistic tendencies, often become rigidly closed to any approach towards Trinitarianism.



The incarnation of Jesus, Son of man and Son of God, and the outpouring of his promised Holy Comforter at Pentecost marked a tremendous impact in the divine plan for furthering a more complete revelation that God personalizes as three persons: as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Even as God himself is revealed to be unity in distinction of Persons, in Jesus there is revealed a new perspective on personality as unity in diversity. Jesus' dual nature as Son of man and Son of God forevermore reveals to the world the unity of his person in diversity of natures, a divine unity in identification between Creator and creature. The human nature of Jesus in no way detracts from his divine nature as Son of God, for these natures are exquisitely unified and super summative in quality. As revealed with assurance by the life of Jesus, man himself can strive to attain divine unity with the Father by progressive reciprocal communion. We have been given the choice to unify our will with his will, and by virtue of this conformity, we can increasingly attain his divine nature as achieved by personality intercourse with a personal God. The submission of our will to the will of our Creator does not threaten an individual with personality submersion or surrender.

The great revelations of the Bible have always been progressive; what is only intimated at first is set forth more clearly and fully as time goes on. Premature revelation is a hindrance to religious progress. Mankind needed to understand the unity of God before it could be profitably introduced into the mystery of the Trinity.

## **CREEDAL STATEMENTS:**

The mystery of the Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God as he exists within himself, and it is therefore the source of all other mysteries of faith. After the mystery of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God is the next greatest mystery of the Christian religion. Because these mysteries are so difficult to comprehend, these concepts have been subject to innumerable heresies.

It is impossible to find God's Son without the assistance of the Spirit, and no one can approach the Father except through the Son, for the knowledge of the Father is embodied in the Son and the knowledge of God's Son is obtained through the inspiration of the Spirit. The Son proceeds from the Father; they are equally eternal, because the divine nature that each possesses is eternal. From God the Father "knowing" proceeds the Son "known", perfectly alike.

The Son is the perfect image of the Father, perfectly mirroring and expressing all that the Father is. The Son is uncreated, eternal, equally God. Without beginning, the Son eternally proceeds from the Father. The Father and the Son love one another with a boundless affection that fully expresses their reality. This love is personal and living as are the Father and the Son, and this personal love proceeding from the Father and the Son is manifested in the person of the Holy Spirit. From this eternal relation of the Father and Son is breathed forth the divine person of the Holy Spirit, equally omnipotent, equally eternal.

The doctrine of the blessed Trinity, although certainly implied in the Bible, was relatively late in being explicitly formulated by the early Church Fathers. This evolution of the Trinity doctrine focused in on the desire to find the One behind the differentiation of three persons in God. This differentiation of persons came to be seen as an eternal differentiation that existed only on the plane of his Deity manifestation. God himself, beyond this plane of his manifestation, remains undifferentiated unity. As the centuries passed, the Christian Church increasingly guarded its developing doctrine of the Trinity against the errors and heresies that had prevailed at one time or another in its history. Throughout the first three centuries following the death of Jesus, there were no important conclaves of the early churches. The formulation of creedal statements regarding the Trinity was a slow and arduous process. Because of the inevitable confusion and contradiction in the mode of any statement along these lines, the Church was compelled to analyze the Trinity doctrine and to set it forth in clear-cut formal statements, in creeds.

A religious creed is a concise confession of shared beliefs often expressed in the form of a fixed set of statements. In early Christianity recognition was paid to 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 as a creedal statement as received by Paul regarding Jesus' death and resurrection:

***For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.***

**[1Corinth. 15:3-8]**

### **The Apostle's Creed (late 2<sup>nd</sup> century)**

***I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,***

***the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.***

The Apostle's Creed is one of the earliest formal creeds expressed within the Christian Church. The earliest known mention of the expression "Apostles' Creed" occurs in a letter of 390 AD in a letter, probably written by Ambrose, from a Council in Milan to Pope Siricius: "Let them give credit to the Creed of the Apostles, which the Roman Church has always kept and preserved undefiled." It may have been associated with the belief, widely accepted in the fourth century, that, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, each of the twelve Apostles contributed an article to the twelve articles of the creed. It is widely used by a number of Christian denominations for both liturgical and catechetical purposes, most visibly by liturgical Churches of Western tradition, including the Catholic Church, Lutheranism and Anglicanism. It is also used by Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists.

The Apostles' Creed is Trinitarian in structure with sections affirming belief in God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son and the Holy Spirit. The Apostles' Creed was based on Christian theological understanding of the Canonical gospels, the letters of the New Testament and to a lesser extent the Old Testament.

***Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"***  
**[Mat. 28:18,19]**

Because of the early origin of its original form, it does not address some Christological issues defined in the Nicene and other Christian Creeds. It thus says nothing explicitly about the divinity of either Jesus or the Holy Spirit. This makes it acceptable to many Arians and Unitarians. Nor does it address many other theological questions which became objects of dispute centuries later. Many of the individual statements of belief can be found in the various writings of the Church Fathers including Irenaeus, Tertullian, Novatian, Marcellus, Rufinus, Ambrose and Augustine.

### **The Nicene Creed (325)**

***We believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
Maker of all things  
visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Son of God,  
begotten of the Father  
Light of Light, very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father;  
By whom all things were made  
Who for us men, and for our salvation,***

***came down  
and was incarnate and was made man;  
He suffered,  
and the third day he rose again,  
ascended into heaven;  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
And in the Holy Ghost.***

The Nicene Creed was first promulgated at Nicaea in 325 A.D. at the first ecumenical council to protect the Catholic faith against the arising Arian heresies first proposed in the early fourth century by the Alexandrian presbyter Arius. Arius contended that Jesus Christ was not truly divine but was instead a created being. God himself is unique who is alone self-existent and immutable. Therefore, the Son is not self-existent and co-essential with the Father and therefore cannot be God. The Trinitarian viewpoint was formally affirmed at the Ecumenical First Council of Nicaea avowing the co-essential divinity of the Son as being “consubstantial” with the Father. In 381, it was amended at the First Council of Constantinople, and the amended form is referred to as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

The Oriental Orthodox and Assyrian churches use this profession of faith with the verbs in the original plural (“we believe”) form, but the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic churches convert those verbs to the singular (“I believe”). The Anglican and many Protestant denominations generally use the singular form, but sometimes use the plural.

The Apostles' Creed is also used in the Latin West, but not in the Eastern liturgies. On Sundays and solemnities, one or other of these two creeds is recited in the Roman Rite Mass after the homily. The Nicene Creed is also part of the profession of faith required of those undertaking important functions within the Catholic Church.

### **The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381)**

***We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit***



***he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.***

The "Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed" is a revised version of the Nicene Creed as adopted at the Second Ecumenical Council held in Constantinople in 381. It stands as the only accepted ecumenical statement of the Christian faith by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Anglican, and the major Protestant denominations. This creed found its way into the Eastern Church in the late fifth century and into the Western liturgy towards the end of the eighth century. The most notable revision to the Nicene Creed is the addition of "We believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son, he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

### **The Chalcedonian Creed (451)**

The Chalcedonian Definition (also called the Chalcedonian Creed) was adopted at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. Chalcedon was an early center of Christianity located in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). The council was the fourth of the Ecumenical Councils that are accepted by Chalcedonian churches which include the Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, and most Protestant churches. It was the first council not to be recognized by any Oriental Orthodox church; these churches may be classified as non-Chalcedonian.

The definition defines that Christ is "acknowledged in two natures", which "come together into one person and one hypostasis". The formal definition of "two natures" in Christ was understood by the critics of the council at the time, and is understood by many historians and theologians today, to side with western and Antiochene Christology and to diverge from the teaching of Cyril of Alexandria, who always stressed that Christ is "one".

Regarding the Person of Christ and the Hypostatic union, Chalcedonian Creed affirmed the notion that Christ is "One Person", having "One Hypostasis". The Christological notions of "One Person" (monoprosopic - having one prosopon / Greek term for person) and "One Hypostasis" (monohypostatic - having one hypostasis) were stated explicitly, in order to emphasize Council's anti-Nestorian positions.

### ***The Chalcedonian Creed (Definition)***

***Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began he was begotten of the Father, in respect of his deity, and now in these "last days," for us and behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his humanness.***

***We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten in two natures; and we do this without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area or function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the "properties" of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one "person" and in one reality. They are not divided or cut into two persons, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of Fathers has handed down to us.***

### **The Athanasian Creed (circa. fifth or sixth century)**

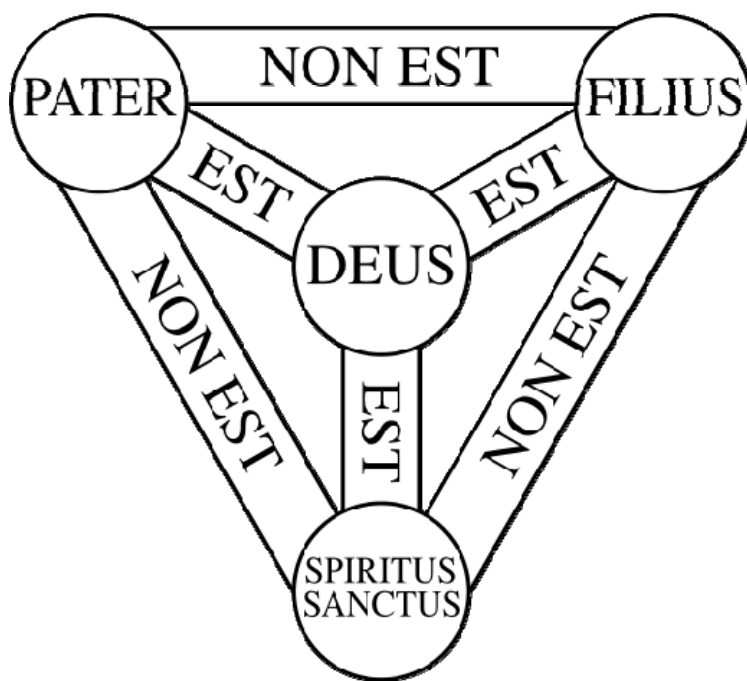
The Athanasian Creed focuses on Trinitarian doctrine and Christology. It is believed to have originated around the fifth or sixth century. It is within this creed that there is explicitly expressed the equality of the three persons of the Trinity. This creed also includes "anathemas" as condemnations of those who entertain heretical beliefs. The Athanasian Creed is usually divided into two sections, one addressing the doctrine of the Trinity, and the other addressing the doctrine of Christology

The first section of the creed ascribes the divine attributes to each of the three persons of the Trinity (i.e., the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) individually. Each person of the Trinity is described as uncreated, limitless, eternal, and omnipotent. Divine attributes and divinity are ascribed to each person of the Trinity, thus avoiding subordinationism. This Creed stresses the unity of the three persons in the one Godhead where the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct from each other. For the Father is neither made nor begotten; the

Son is not made but is begotten from the Father; the Holy Spirit is neither made nor begotten but proceeds from the Father and the Son.

It has been widely accepted by modern scholars that the creed was not authored by Athanasius, that it was not originally called a creed at all, nor was Athanasius' name originally attached to it. Athanasius' name seems to have become attached to the creed as a sign of its strong declaration of Trinitarian faith. The most likely time frame is in the late fifth or early sixth century AD – at least 100 years after Athanasius. The theology of the creed is firmly rooted in the Augustinian tradition, using exact terminology of Augustine's *On the Trinity* (published 415)

The Shield of the Trinity, a visual representation of the doctrine of the Trinity, derived from the Athanasian Creed. The Latin reads: "The Father is God, The Son is God, The Holy Spirit is God; God is the Father, God is the Son, God is the Holy Spirit; The Father is not the Son, The Son is not the Father, The Father is not the Holy Spirit, The Holy Spirit is not the Father, The Son is not the Holy Spirit, The Holy Spirit is not the Son."



***Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled; without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this: That 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 Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is; such is the Son; and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated; the Son uncreated; and the Holy Ghost***

***uncreated. The Father unlimited; the Son unlimited; and the Holy Ghost unlimited. The Father eternal; the Son eternal; and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals; but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated; nor three infinities, but one uncreated; and one infinite. So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son Almighty; and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties; but one Almighty. So the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord; the Son Lord; and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity; to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; So are we forbidden by the catholic religion; to say, There are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten; but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid; the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity.***

***Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation; that he also believe faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess; that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Essence of the Father; begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the Essence of his Mother, born in the world. Perfect God; and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood. Who although he is God and Man; yet he is not two, but one Christ. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by assumption of the Manhood by God. One altogether; not by confusion of Essence; but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the God the Father Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the living and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies; And shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe truly and firmly, he cannot be saved.***

**The Creed of the Eleventh Council of Toledo (675)**

The Creed of the Eleventh Council of Toledo stands as an explanation of the Catholic Faith against the Priscillianists who developed a belief system in the fourth century by Priscillian that derived from the Gnostic-Manichaeian doctrines of dualism taught by Marcus, an Egyptian from Memphis. This dualism is based on a belief in the existence of two kingdoms, one of Light and one of Darkness. The salvation of men is dependent on an enlightened liberation from the darkness of matter. Matter and nature are considered evil, and it required the coming of Jesus Christ in a heavenly bodied completely divorced of any connection to material reality who through his doctrine and his apparent death released the souls of men from the domination of earthly matter.

Although attended by only 17 bishops in 675 AD, it was known for the beautiful confession of faith which was recited at its opening. It has since been highly regarded as a genuine expression of Trinitarian faith, a truly important conceptualization of Church doctrine. It stands as precise summation of the previous traditions of the earlier councils and the early evolution of patristic theology of the Western Churches.

**(The divine Trinity)**

***We confess and believe that the holy and ineffable Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is one God by nature, of one substance, of one nature as also of one majesty and power.***

**(The Father)**

***And we profess that the Father is not begotten, not created, but unbegotten. For He Himself, from whom the Son has received His birth and the Holy Spirit His procession, has His origin from no one. He is therefore the source and origin of the whole Godhead. He Himself is the Father of His own essence, who in an ineffable way has begotten the Son from His ineffable substance. Yet He did not beget something different (aliud) from what He Himself is: God has begotten God, light has begotten light. From Him, therefore, is "all fatherhood in heaven and on earth."***

**(The Son)**

***We also confess that the Son was born, but not made, from the substance of the Father, without beginning, before all ages, for at no time did the Father exist without the Son, nor the Son without the Father. Yet the Father is not from the Son, as the Son is from the Father, because the Father was not generated by the Son but the Son by the Father. The Son, therefore, is God from the Father, and the Father is God, but not from the son. He is indeed the Father of the Son, not God from the Son; but the latter is the Son of the Father and God from the Father. Yet in all things the Son is equal to God the Father, for He has never begun nor ceased to be born. We also believe that He is of one substance with the Father; wherefore He is called homoousios with the Father, that is of the same being as the Father, for homos in Greek means 'one' and ousia means 'being', and joined together they mean 'one in being'. We must believe that the Son is begotten or born not from nothing or from any other substance, but from the womb of the Father, that is from His substance.***



***Therefore the Father is eternal, and the Son is also eternal. If He was always Father, He always had a Son, whose Father He was, and therefore we confess that the Son was born from the Father without beginning. We do not call the same Son of God a part of a divided nature, because He was generated from the Father, but we assert that the perfect Father has begotten the perfect Son, without diminution or division, for it pertains to the Godhead alone not to have an unequal Son. This Son of God is also Son by nature, not by adoption; of Him we must also believe that God the Father begot Him neither by an act of will nor out of necessity, for in God there is no necessity nor does will precede wisdom.***

**(The Holy Spirit)**

***We also believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, is God, one and equal with God the Father and the Son, of one substance and of one nature, not, however, begotten nor created but proceeding from both, and that He is the Spirit of both. Of this Holy Spirit, we also believe that He is neither unbegotten nor begotten, for if we called Him unbegotten we would assert two Fathers, or if begotten, we would appear to preach two Sons. Yet He is called the Spirit not of the Father alone, nor of the Son alone, but of both Father and Son. For He does not proceed from the Father to the Son, nor from the Son to sanctify creatures, but He is shown to have proceeded from both at once, because He is known as the love or the sanctity of both. Hence we believe that the Holy Spirit is sent by both, as the Son is sent by the Father. But He is not less than the Father and the Son, in the way in which the Son, on account of the body which He has assumed, testifies that He is less than the Father and the Holy Spirit.***

**(The oneness in the Trinity)**

***This is the way of speaking about the Holy Trinity as it has been handed down: one must not call it or believe it to be threefold, but Trinity. Nor can it properly be said that in the one God there is the Trinity, but the one God is the Trinity. In the relative names of the persons the Father is related to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to both. While they are called three persons in view of their relations, we believe in one nature or substance. Although we profess three persons, we do not profess three substances, but one substance and three persons. For the Father is Father not with respect to Himself but to the Son, and the Son is Son not to Himself but in relation to the Father; and likewise the Holy Spirit is not referred to Himself but is related to the Father and the Son, inasmuch as He is called the Spirit of the Father and the Son. So when we say 'God', this does not express a relationship to another, as of the Father to the Son or of the Son to the Father or of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son, but 'God' refers to Himself only.***

***For, if we are asked about the single persons, we must confess that each is God. Therefore, we say that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God ' each one distinctly; yet there are not three gods, but one God. Similarly, we say that the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, the Holy***

***Spirit is almighty, each one distinctly; yet there are not three almighty ones, but one Almighty, as we profess one light and one principle. Hence we confess and believe that each person distinctly is fully God, and the three persons together are one God. Theirs is an undivided and equal Godhead, majesty and power, which is neither diminished in the single persons nor increased in the three. For it is not less when each person is called God separately, nor is it greater when all three persons are called one God.***

***This Holy Trinity, which is the one true God, is not without number; yet it is not comprised by number, because in the relationships of the persons there appears number, but in the substance of the Godhead nothing is comprised that could be counted. Therefore they imply number only in so far as they are mutually related, but they lack number in so far as they are by themselves (ad se). For this Holy Trinity has so much one name referring to its nature that it cannot be used in the plural with relation to the three persons. This then is, in our faith, the meaning of the saying in Holy Scripture: "Great is our Lord, abundant in power, and of His wisdom there is no number."***

**(The Trinity in the oneness)**

***However, though we have said that these three persons are one God, we are not allowed to say that the same one is the Father who is the Son, or that He is the Son who is the Father, or that He who is the Holy Spirit is either the Father or the Son. For He is not the Father who is the Son, nor is the Son He who is the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit He who is the Father or the Son, even though the Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, that is one God by nature. For, when we say: He who is the Father is not the Son, we refer to the distinction of persons; but when we say: the Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, and the Holy Spirit that which the Father is and the Son is, this clearly refers to the nature or substance, whereby God exists since in substance they are one; for we distinguish the persons, but we do not divide the Godhead.***

***Hence, we recognize the Trinity in the distinction of persons and we profess the unity on account of the nature or substance. Thus, the three are one by nature, not as person.***

**(The undivided Trinity)**

***Nevertheless these three persons are not to be considered separable since, according to our belief, none of them ever existed or acted before another, after another, without another. For they are inseparable both in what they are and in what they do, because, according to our faith, between the Father who generates and the Son who is generated or the Holy Spirit who proceeds, there has not been an interval of time in which the one who generates would precede the one who is generated, or there would be no begotten one to Him who begets, or the Holy Spirit in His proceeding would appear later than Father or Son. For this reason we profess and believe that this Trinity is***

***inseparable and distinct (inconfusa). We say, therefore, of these three persons, as our forefathers defined it, that they should be acknowledged, not separated. For if we listen to what Holy Scripture says about Wisdom: "She is a reflection of eternal light" (Wis. 7.26), we see that, as the reflection belongs inseparably to the light, so too, according to our confession, the Son cannot be separated from the Father. Therefore, neither do we confuse these three persons whose nature is one and inseparable, nor do we preach that they are in any way separable.***

***The Holy Trinity itself has indeed deigned clearly to reveal it to us: in these names by which He wanted the single persons to be known, it is impossible to understand one person without the other; one cannot conceive of the Father without the Son, nor can the Son be found without the Father. Indeed, the very relationship expressed in the personal names forbids us to separate the persons, for, though it does not name them together, it implies them. No one can hear any one of these names without necessarily understanding also the other. While then these Three are One and this One Three, each of the persons retains His own characteristics: The Father has eternity without birth; the Son has eternity with birth; the Holy Spirit has procession without birth with eternity.***

### **The Fourth Lateran Council (1215)**

The Lateran Councils were ecclesiastical synods of the Catholic Church held at Rome in the Lateran Palace. The Fourth Council of the Lateran was convoked by Pope Innocent III with the papal bull *Vineam domini Sabaoth* of 19 April 1213, and the Council gathered at Rome's Lateran Palace beginning 11 November 1215. It was the twelfth ecumenical council overall and was attended by 71 patriarchs and metropolitan bishops, 412 bishops, and 900 abbots and priors along with representatives of several monarchs. The Pope presented 71 decrees (canons), and Canon 1 deals with a then-current exposition of Catholic faith.

It begins with an orthodox doctrine regarding the Trinity and creation, but then it adds for the first time the doctrine of transubstantiation to be declared the official doctrine of the Church:

***There is indeed one universal church of the faithful, outside of which nobody at all is saved, in which Jesus Christ is both priest and sacrifice. His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been changed in substance, by God's power, into his body and blood, so that in order to achieve this mystery of unity we receive from God what he received from us.***



*Firmly we believe and simply we confess that one alone is true God, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, three persons, one essence, one substance, and one nature entirely simple. The Father is from no one, the Son from the Father alone, and the Holy Ghost equally from both, always without beginning or end. The Father begetting, the Son begotten, and the Holy Ghost proceeding; consubstantial, co-equal, co-omnipotent, and co-eternal. [Canon I of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215]*

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### **Confession of Faith**

***We firmly believe and simply confess that there is only one true God, eternal and immeasurable, almighty, unchangeable, incomprehensible and ineffable, Father, Son and holy Spirit, three persons but one absolutely simple essence, substance or nature {1}. The Father is from none, the Son from the Father alone, and the holy Spirit from both equally, eternally without beginning or end; the Father generating, the Son being born, and the holy Spirit proceeding; consubstantial and coequal, co-omnipotent and coeternal; one principle of all things, creator of all things invisible and visible, spiritual and corporeal; who by his almighty power at the beginning of time created from nothing both spiritual and corporeal creatures, that is to say angelic and earthly, and then created human beings composed as it were of both spirit and body in common. The devil and other demons were created by God naturally good, but they became evil by their own doing. Man, however, sinned at the prompting of the devil.***

***This holy Trinity, which is undivided according to its common essence but distinct according to the properties of its persons, gave the teaching of salvation to the human race through Moses and the holy prophets and his other servants, according to the most appropriate disposition of the times. Finally the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, who became incarnate by the action of the whole Trinity in common and was conceived from the ever virgin Mary through the cooperation of the holy Spirit, having become true man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh, one person in two natures, showed more clearly the way of life. Although he is immortal and unable to suffer according to his divinity, he was made capable of suffering and dying according to his humanity. Indeed, having suffered and died on the wood of the cross for the salvation of the human race, he descended to the underworld, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. He descended in the soul, rose in the flesh, and ascended in both. He will come at the end of time to judge the living and the dead, to render to every person according to his works, both to the reprobate and to the elect. All of them will rise with their own bodies, which they now wear, so as to receive according to their deserts, whether these be good or bad; for the latter perpetual punishment with the devil, for the former eternal glory with Christ.***

***There is indeed one universal church of the faithful, outside of which nobody at all is saved, in which Jesus Christ is both priest and sacrifice. His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been changed in substance, by God's power, into his body and blood, so that in order to achieve this mystery of unity we receive from God what he received from us. Nobody can effect this sacrament except a priest who has been properly ordained according to the church's keys, which Jesus Christ himself gave to the apostles and their successors. But the sacrament of baptism is consecrated in water at the invocation of the undivided Trinity — namely Father, Son and holy Spirit — and brings salvation to both children and adults when it is correctly carried out by anyone in the form laid down by the church. If someone falls into sin after having received baptism, he or she can always be restored through true penitence. For not only virgins and the continent but also married persons find favor with God by right faith and good actions and deserve to attain to eternal blessedness.***

### **The Council of Florence (1438-1445)**

The seventeenth Ecumenical Council took place in the papal palace consisting of nine consecutive sessions. In the last session, Giovanni di Ragusa set forth clearly Catholic Church doctrine in the following terms: "the Latin Church recognizes but *one* principle, *one* cause of the Holy Spirit, namely, the Father. It is from the Father that the Son holds his place in the 'Procession' of the Holy Ghost. It is in this sense that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, but He proceeds also from the Son."



***All that the Father is, and all that he has, he does not have from another but of himself; he is the principle that has no principle. All that the Son is, and all that he has, he has from the Father; he is a principle from a principle. All that the Holy Spirit is and all that he has, he has from the Father and equally from the Son. Yet the Father and the Son are not two principles of the Holy Spirit, but one principle, just as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are not three principles of creation, but are one principle.***

### **The Creed of the Council of Trent (1564)**

The Council of Trent was held between 1545 and 1563 in Trent (or Trento, in northern Italy). It was the 19th ecumenical council of the Catholic Church. Prompted by the Protestant Reformation, it has been described as the embodiment of the Counter-Reformation. The Council issued condemnations of what it defined to be heresies committed by proponents of Protestantism, and also issued key statements and clarifications of the Church's doctrine and teachings, including scripture, the Biblical canon, sacred tradition, original sin, justification, salvation, the sacraments, the Mass and the veneration of saints. The Council met for twenty-five sessions between 13 December 1545 and 4 December 1563. Pope Paul III, who convoked the Council, presided over the first eight sessions (1545–47), while the twelfth to sixteenth sessions (1551–52) were overseen by Pope Julius III and the seventeenth to twenty-fifth sessions (1562–63) by Pope Pius IV.

One of the great works of the Council of Trent was the Tridentine Profession of Faith, a statement of the Creed that clearly articulates the Catholic Faith in the face of the revolutionary doctrines of the Protestant “Reformers.” Today this creed remains as the core of accepted doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. It consists of twelve articles, the first containing the Nicene Creed in full. The subsequent eleven are clear and precise summaries of specific doctrines as settled by the Council of Trent, together with the addition that the Roman Church is the mother and teacher of all the rest, with an oath of obedience to the Pope, as the successor of the Prince of the apostles, and the vicar of Christ.

***I believe in one God, The Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God. Born of the Father before all ages. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God. Begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father. By whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. And became incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary: and was made man. He was also crucified for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And on the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Who together with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, and who spoke through the prophets. And one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness***

***of sins and I await the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.***

***The Apostolic and Ecclesiastical traditions and all other observances and constitutions of that same Church I firmly admit to and embrace.***

***I also accept the Holy Scripture according to that sense which holy mother the Church hath held, and doth hold, and to whom it belongeth to judge the true sense and interpretations of the Scriptures. Neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.***

***I also profess that there are truly and properly Seven Sacraments of the New Law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all are necessary for everyone; to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony; and that they confer grace; and that of these, Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders cannot be repeated without sacrilege. I also receive and admit the accepted and approved ceremonies of the Catholic Church in the solemn administration of the aforesaid sacraments.***

***I embrace and accept each and everything which has been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent concerning original sin and justification.***

***I profess, likewise, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially, the Body and Blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that a conversion takes place of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood, which conversion the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation. I also confess that under either species alone Christ is received whole and entire, and a true sacrament.***

***I steadfastly hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful. Likewise, that the saints, reigning together with Christ, are to be honored and invoked, and that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be venerated. I most firmly assert that the images of Christ, of the Mother of God, ever virgin, and also of other Saints, ought to be kept and retained, and that due honor and veneration is to be given them.***

***I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.***

***I acknowledge the Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church as the mother and teacher of all churches; and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ.***

***I likewise undoubtedly receive and profess all other things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred Canons, and general Councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent, and by the ecumenical Council of the Vatican, particularly concerning the primacy of the Roman Pontiff and his infallible teaching. I condemn, reject, and anathematize all things contrary thereto, and all heresies which the Church hath condemned, rejected, and anathematized.***

***This true Catholic faith, outside of which no one can be saved, which I now freely profess and to which I truly adhere, I do so profess and swear to maintain inviolate and with firm constancy with the help of God until the last breath of life. And I shall strive, as far as possible, that this same faith shall be held, taught, and professed by all those over whom I have charge. I N. do so pledge, promise, and swear, so help me God and these Holy Gospels of God.***

### **The First Vatican Council - Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith (1870)**

The First Vatican Council was the twentieth ecumenical council of the Catholic Church as convoked by Pope Pius IX on 29 June 1868. This twentieth ecumenical council was held three centuries after the Council of Trent. It met in the Vatican Basilica and it is best known for its definition of papal infallibility. One of its purposes was, to define the Catholic doctrine. The Constitution on the Catholic faith is presented in four chapters: Chap. I. treats of God as the Creator; Chap. II. of revelation; Chap. III. of faith; and Chap. IV. of faith and reason.

#### ***Chapter 1 - On God the creator of all things***

***1. The Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church believes and acknowledges that there is one true and living God, creator and lord of heaven and earth, almighty, eternal, immeasurable, incomprehensible, infinite in will, understanding and every perfection.***

***2. Since he is one, singular, completely simple and unchangeable spiritual substance, he must be declared to be in reality and in essence, distinct from the world, supremely happy in himself and from himself, and inexpressibly loftier than anything besides himself which either exists or can be imagined.***

***3. This one true God, by his goodness and almighty power, not with the intention of increasing his happiness, nor indeed of obtaining happiness, but in order to manifest his perfection by the good things which he bestows on what he creates, by an absolutely free plan, together from the beginning of time brought into being from nothing the twofold created order, that is the spiritual and the bodily, the angelic and the earthly, and thereafter the human which is, in a way, common to both since it is composed of spirit and body [10].***

**4. Everything that God has brought into being he protects and governs by his providence, which reaches from one end of the earth to the other and orders all things well [11]. All things are open and laid bare to his eyes [12], even those which will be brought about by the free activity of creatures.**

## **Chapter 2 - On revelation**

**1. The same Holy mother Church holds and teaches that God, the source and end of all things, can be known with certainty from the consideration of created things, by the natural power of human reason : ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. [13] 2. It was, however, pleasing to his wisdom and goodness to reveal himself and the eternal laws of his will to the human race by another, and that a supernatural, way. This is how the Apostle puts it : In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son [14].**

**3. It is indeed thanks to this divine revelation, that those matters concerning God which are not of themselves beyond the scope of human reason, can, even in the present state of the human race, be known by everyone without difficulty, with firm certitude and with no intermingling of error.**

**4. It is not because of this that one must hold revelation to be absolutely necessary; the reason is that God directed human beings to a supernatural end, that is a sharing in the good things of God that utterly surpasses the understanding of the human mind; indeed eye has not seen, neither has ear heard, nor has it come into our hearts to conceive what things God has prepared for those who love him [15].**

**5. Now this supernatural revelation, according to the belief of the universal Church, as declared by the sacred Council of Trent, is contained in written books and unwritten traditions, which were received by the apostles from the lips of Christ himself, or came to the apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and were passed on as it were from hand to hand until they reached us [16].**

**6. The complete books of the old and the new Testament with all their parts, as they are listed in the decree of the said Council and as they are found in the old Latin Vulgate edition, are to be received as sacred and canonical.**

**7. These books the Church holds to be sacred and canonical not because she subsequently approved them by her authority after they had been composed by unaided human skill, nor simply because they contain revelation without error, but because, being written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and were as such committed to the Church.**

**8. Now since the decree on the interpretation of Holy Scripture, profitably made by the Council of Trent, with the intention of constraining rash speculation, has been wrongly interpreted by some, we renew that decree and declare its meaning to be as follows: that in matters of faith and morals, belonging as they do to the establishing of Christian doctrine, that meaning of Holy Scripture must be held to be the true one, which Holy mother Church held and holds, since it is her right to judge of the true meaning and interpretation of Holy Scripture.**

**9. In consequence, it is not permissible for anyone to interpret Holy Scripture in a sense contrary to this, or indeed against the unanimous consent of the fathers.**

### **Chapter 3 - On faith**

**1. Since human beings are totally dependent on God as their creator and lord, and created reason is completely subject to uncreated truth, we are obliged to yield to God the revealer full submission of intellect and will by faith.**

**2. This faith, which is the beginning of human salvation, the Catholic Church professes to be a supernatural virtue, by means of which, with the grace of God inspiring and assisting us, we believe to be true what He has revealed, not because we perceive its intrinsic truth by the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God himself, who makes the revelation and can neither deceive nor be deceived.**

**3. Faith, declares the Apostle, is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen [17].**

**4. Nevertheless, in order that the submission of our faith should be in accordance with reason, it was God's will that there should be linked to the internal assistance of the Holy Spirit external indications of his revelation, that is to say divine acts, and first and foremost miracles and prophecies, which clearly demonstrating as they do the omnipotence and infinite knowledge of God, are the most certain signs of revelation and are suited to the understanding of all.**

**5. Hence Moses and the prophets, and especially Christ our lord himself, worked many absolutely clear miracles and delivered prophecies; while of the apostles we read: And they went forth and preached every, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it [18]. Again it is written: We have the prophetic word made more sure; you will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place [19].**

**6. Now, although the assent of faith is by no means a blind movement of the mind, yet no one can accept the gospel preaching in the way that is necessary**



***for achieving salvation without the inspiration and illumination of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all facility in accepting and believing the truth [20].***

***7. And so faith in itself, even though it may not work through charity, is a gift of God, and its operation is a work belonging to the order of salvation, in that a person yields true obedience to God himself when he accepts and collaborates with his grace which he could have rejected.***

***8. Wherefore, by divine and Catholic faith all those things are to be believed which are contained in the word of God as found in Scripture and tradition, and which are proposed by the Church as matters to be believed as divinely revealed, whether by her solemn judgment or in her ordinary and universal magisterium.***

***9. Since, then, without faith it is impossible to please God [21] and reach the fellowship of his sons and daughters, it follows that no one can ever achieve justification without it, neither can anyone attain eternal life unless he or she perseveres in it to the end.***

***10. So that we could fulfill our duty of embracing the true faith and of persevering unwaveringly in it, God, through his only begotten Son, founded the Church, and he endowed his institution with clear notes to the end that she might be recognized by all as the guardian and teacher of the revealed word.***

***11. To the Catholic Church alone belong all those things, so many and so marvelous, which have been divinely ordained to make for the manifest credibility of the Christian faith.***

***12. What is more, the Church herself by reason of her astonishing propagation, her outstanding holiness and her inexhaustible fertility in every kind of goodness, by her Catholic unity and her unconquerable stability, is a kind of great and perpetual motive of credibility and an incontrovertible evidence of her own divine mission.***

***13. So it comes about that, like a standard lifted up for the nations [22], she both invites to herself those who have not yet believed, and likewise assures her sons and daughters that the faith they profess rests on the firmest of foundations.***

***14. To this witness is added the effective help of power from on high. For, the kind Lord stirs up those who go astray and helps them by his grace so that they may come to the knowledge of the truth [23] ; and also confirms by his grace those whom he has translated into his admirable light [24], so that they may persevere in this light, not abandoning them unless he is first abandoned.***

**15. Consequently, the situation of those, who by the heavenly gift of faith have embraced the Catholic truth, is by no means the same as that of those who, led by human opinions, follow a false religion; for those who have accepted the faith under the guidance of the Church can never have any just cause for changing this faith or for calling it into question.**

**This being so, giving thanks to God the Father who has made us worthy to share with the saints in light [25] let us not neglect so great a salvation [26], but looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith [27], let us hold the unshakable confession of our hope [28].**

#### **Chapter 4 - On faith and reason**

**1. The perpetual agreement of the Catholic Church has maintained and maintains this too: that there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct not only as regards its source, but also as regards its object.**

**2. With regard to the source, we know at the one level by natural reason, at the other level by divine faith.**

**3. With regard to the object, besides those things to which natural reason can attain, there are proposed for our belief mysteries hidden in God which, unless they are divinely revealed, are incapable of being known.**

**Wherefore, when the Apostle, who witnesses that God was known to the gentiles from created things [29], comes to treat of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ [30], he declares: We impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this. God has revealed it to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God [31]. And the Only-begotten himself, in his confession to the Father, acknowledges that the Father has hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to the little ones [32].**

**4. Now reason, does indeed when it seeks persistently, piously and soberly, achieve by God's gift some understanding, and that most profitable, of the mysteries, whether by analogy from what it knows naturally, or from the connection of these mysteries with one another and with the final end of humanity; but reason is never rendered capable of penetrating these mysteries in the way in which it penetrates those truths which form its proper object.**

**For the divine mysteries, by their very nature, so far surpass the created understanding that, even when a revelation has been given and accepted by faith, they remain covered by the veil of that same faith and wrapped, as it were, in a certain obscurity, as long as in this mortal life we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, and not by sight [33].**

**5. Even though faith is above reason, there can never be any real disagreement between faith and reason, since it is the same God who reveals the mysteries and infuses faith, and who has endowed the human mind with the light of reason.**

**6. God cannot deny himself, nor can truth ever be in opposition to truth. The appearance of this kind of specious contradiction is chiefly due to the fact that either the dogmas of faith are not understood and explained in accordance with the mind of the Church, or unsound views are mistaken for the conclusions of reason.**

**7. Therefore we define that every assertion contrary to the truth of enlightened faith is totally false [34].**

**8. Furthermore the Church which, together with its apostolic office of teaching, has received the charge of preserving the deposit of faith, has by divine appointment the right and duty of condemning what wrongly passes for knowledge, lest anyone be led astray by philosophy and empty deceit [35].**

**9. Hence all faithful Christians are forbidden to defend as the legitimate conclusions of science those opinions which are known to be contrary to the doctrine of faith, particularly if they have been condemned by the Church; and furthermore they are absolutely bound to hold them to be errors which wear the deceptive appearance of truth.**

**10. Not only can faith and reason never be at odds with one another but they mutually support each other, for on the one hand right reason established the foundations of the faith and, illuminated by its light, develops the science of divine things; on the other hand, faith delivers reason from errors and protects it and furnishes it with knowledge of many kinds.**

**11. Hence, so far is the Church from hindering the development of human arts and studies, that in fact she assists and promotes them in many ways. For she is neither ignorant nor contemptuous of the advantages which derive from this source for human life, rather she acknowledges that those things flow from God, the lord of sciences, and, if they are properly used, lead to God by the help of his grace.**

**12. Nor does the Church forbid these studies to employ, each within its own area, its own proper principles and method: but while she admits this just freedom, she takes particular care that they do not become infected with errors by conflicting with divine teaching, or, by going beyond their proper limits, intrude upon what belongs to faith and engender confusion.**

**13. For the doctrine of the faith which God has revealed is put forward not as some philosophical discovery capable of being perfected by human**

***intelligence, but as a divine deposit committed to the spouse of Christ to be faithfully protected and infallibly promulgated.***

***14. Hence, too, that meaning of the sacred dogmas is ever to be maintained which has once been declared by Holy mother Church, and there must never be any abandonment of this sense under the pretext or in the name of a more profound understanding.***

***May understanding, knowledge and wisdom increase as ages and centuries roll along, and greatly and vigorously flourish, in each and all, in the individual and the whole Church: but this only in its own proper kind, that is to say, in the same doctrine, the same sense, and the same understanding.***