THE HOLY TRINITY THEOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Department of dogmatic Theology

Introduction to dogmatic Theology

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Week	Title	teaching materials	Remarks
1	Definition of Church	Zemene Desta(2016) "Doctrinal Theology	
2	The Main elements of Dogma	"	
3	The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity	ሃ ይ/አ በ ው	
4	Christology (ምክ ጡረ ስ ጋ ቄ	"	
5	The doctrine of Baptism ,The Doctrine of Eucharist	"	
6	Resurrection (ምክ ጡረ ምውታን)	"	
7	Who are An Orthodox Christian…?	Schmaus, (1972) "Dogma the Church and its structure	
8	Dogmatic Theology		
9	Sources of Dogma		
10	The Trinitarian dogma and the Bible	ፍ ኖ ተ ሃ ይ ማ ኖ ት	
11	The main concepts Christian Dogmatic Theology		
12	THE PURPOSE OF DOGMATIC THOLOGY		
13	Dogmatics and Faith		
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15	Final exam		

I. INTRODUCTION

The main foundation and center of Dogmatic Theology is the teaching of Jesus Christ, Who "taught with authority" (Matthew 7:29), and the risen Lord gave His Apostles a share in His authority when He commissioned them to make disciples from all the nations by teaching what He had commanded them (Matthew 28:18–20). The apostolic Church trusted that Christ had made provision for Christians to be kept by the Holy Spirit in the truth of the gospel (John 14–16). The Apostle Paul charged Timothy to preserve the deposit of the faith among other appointed teachers (1 and 2 Timothy). By the 2nd century, bishops were regarded as the special guardians of apostolic teaching, and the practice grew of bishops meeting in council at various geographical levels to determine teaching as needed.

The very first ecclesiastical council, according to tradition, took place when, as narrated in Acts , the Apostles and elders met in Jerusalem to determine the conditions under which Gentiles were to be admitted to the church. They concluded that "it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity" (Acts 15:28). The decisions of the Council of Jerusalem were termed *dogmata* (Acts 16:4).

Dogma became the traditional term for truths believed to be indispensable to the Christian faith. The question of what precisely counts as dogma is bound up with questions of pronouncement and reception. The most widely recognized source of dogmatic formulations is the ecumenical or general councils of the church, but

Christian communities vary in the number of councils they recognize as ecumenical. The Oriental Orthodox churches—the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, the Malankara Syrian [Indian] Orthodox Church, and the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church)—count only three such councils (Nicaea in 325, Constantinople in 381, and Ephesus in 431).

1. Definition of Church

Before studying Dogma, we should have to identify about the apostolic Church that has holds the main place of it. Here are different definitions of Church.

- **The sacred place and indwelling house of God**. (Genesis 28:16-17; 1 Kings 9:1-3; 2 Chronicles 7:11-16)

- **The body of each and every Christian**. (John 14:23; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 3:20)

- **The communion of Christians**. (Matthew 18:20; Acts 8:1-3; 11:25-26; 1 Peter 5:13)

➢ **Biblical Foundation of the Church**

Imagery of the Church in the Old Testament

- The Ark of Noah (Genesis 8:1-22; 1 Peter 3:20-21)
- Bethel (Genesis 28:10-22)
- The Tent of Meeting (Exodus 33:7-11)
- Synagogue (Ezekiel 11:16; Matthew 4:23; Luke 4:16-23; Acts 13:5; 14:1)
- The Temple of Solomon (1 Kings 9:1-3)

➢ **The Foundation of the Church in the New Testament**

- Christ is the founder of the Church. (Matthew 16:17-18; Acts 20:28)
- Acts 2:-24 * St. John Chrysostom referred to this day (i.e., Pentecost) as: *The birthday of the Church.*

1.1 The Four Main Dogmatic Characteristics of the Church

- ***ONE***: This is precisely because its founder and Head Christ is One. (Ephesus 4:4-5)

- ***HOLY***: This is mainly because its Head Christ is Holy. (Ephesus 5:25-27; 1 Peter 1:15-16)

- ***UNIVERSAL***: Christ is Omnipresent (present everywhere). (Matthew. 28:19-20; Mark. 16:15-16)

- ***APOSTOLIC***: The Church is faithful to the Apostolic teaching that has been handed down throughout the ages. (Acts 14:21-23; Ephesus 2:20)

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed [Verse 9]: "And we believe in one, holy, universal, apostolic church."

The Council of Nicaea: -the First Ecumenical Council of the Church held in A.D 325.

The Council of Constantinople: - is the Second Ecumenical Council held in A.D 381.

Creed: - derived from the Latin word *Credo* meaning, "I believe." Therefore, Creed is a brief confession of faith.

1.2 Who is An Orthodox Christian…?

A person who lives according to the image of Jesus Christ and affirms the fullness of truth He reveals.

Ortho	**Dox**	**Christ**	**Ian**
Straight	Belief	In Whom our faith is rooted	One who strives to live as Christ did
True	Doctrine		
Correct	Teaching		

- **Orthodox Christian Church**
- **Origins**

- Traces its origins to Jesus Christ and the apostles

- Born on day of Pentecost
- 50 days after Christ's resurrection when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles
- Apostles went throughout the world proclaiming the Good News of the Risen Christ to all who would listen.
- Subsequently spread to every corner of the world.

The Lord has given the people of God the gift of doctrine that they might learn about Him in the Word and walk in the manner He has prescribed. Doctrine is Trinitarian, a gift of the Father, revealed in Jesus, and transmitted by the Spirit in the Word to be received, confessed in the church all to the glory of God.

Dogma is a set of beliefs that is accepted by a member of a group without being questioned or doubted. Within biblical Christianity, dogma is the body of biblical teaching proclaimed and accepted by orthodox Christians. Biblical Christianity is to be believed by every Christian, so to be orthodox, Christian dogma must align with the Scriptures.

There are three basic sets of convictions that separate Biblical Christianity from other religions:

- The deity of Christ (John 1:1, 14)
- The substitutionary, His Cross fixation death and resurrection of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- His second coming (John 14:3, Rev 22:7) With that said, there are other essential Christian dogma such as:
- The Trinity
- The inspiration, inerrancy, authority, clarity, and sufficiency of the Word of God
- The Virgin Birth
- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and others

Dogma differentiates between those who believe and those who do not. Dogma, though, does not mean that Christians are divisive, for they are always to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) seasoned with grace (Colossians 4:6).

2. Dogmatic Theology

The Greek word **δόγμα** (Dogma) literally means 'opinion.' This word has another meaning, 'that which seems good.' It was later used by the classical Greek authors

as technical term either to the philosophical writings or to the decrees of public authorities. In the second sense it is used in the LXX (Septuagint) and in the New Testament, e.g. Dan.2:13; Acts.16:4; Eph.2:15 etc., whereas the patristic use developed from the first meaning.

Dogma (Latin *decretum*, Greek *dogma*) has come to have a more specific reference to the distillate of doctrines: those first (basic or axiomatic) principles at the heart of doctrinal reflection, professed as essential by all the faithful.

2.1 Etymological Root and definition

They are different definitions about the term dogma.

1 An act or instance of noticing or perceiving.

1. An act or instance of regarding attentively or watching.
2. The faculty or habit of observing or noticing.
3. Notice: to escape a person's observation.
4. An act or instance of viewing or noting a fact or occurrence for some scientific or other special purpose: *the observation of blood pressure under stress.*
5. The information or record secured by such an act.

There EOTC Religious doctrines are divided into two parts. Namely:

1- Dogma

2 Canons.

Dogma：The Greek word for faith.

Canon - The Greek word for system.

Neither dogma nor faith is added to either; it will not be reduced; It will not improve; Even when trials and temptations arise, we hold fast to our death. For example, the one who created this world from non-existence; Almighty God, who

does not search but searches; The Creator of all things, The Lord of hosts is the Lord of hosts, the God of heaven and earth.

To reach the indication of Dogma, God (the Creator) has a Trinity. But they are one in divinity, creation, power, dominion, and will. In the trinity of the Father, Son: The Holy Spirit is one God, one God. We are free from the eternal death of Adam and the bondage of the Devil through one of the three persons, the Son Jesus Christ. This is called dogma.

Dogma is not doctrinal opinion, not the pronouncement of any given teacher, but doctrinal statute (*decretum*). The dogmas of a church are those doctrines which it declares to be the most essential contents of Christianity.

Although the Greek word *dogma* appears five times in the New Testament, the only passage which it has its connotation is Acts 16:4; and there it would seem to be primarily ethical and ceremonial decisions, rather than doctrinal ones, that the writer has in mind. In the writings of St. Ignatius of Antioch, word Dogma acquires a closer meaning to the present one, which is also evident in Origen and other Fathers. But only when the councils of the Church actually began to formulate doctrine could the term began to acquire the official significance what it now possesses. **Dogmatics or Dogmatic Theology can be defined as the organized and systematic presentation of the dogmas of the Christian Church.** In this course we follow a historico-theological approach deals with the development of Dogmas of the church analysing the circumstances and background.

2.2 Sources of Dogma

On what are dogmas founded? It is clear that dogmas are not founded on the rational conceptions of separate individuals, even though these might be Fathers and teachers of the Church, but, rather, on the teaching of *Sacred Scripture* and on the Apostolic

2.1 Sacred Tradition.

The truths of faith which are contained in the Sacred Scripture and the Apostolic Sacred Tradition give the *fullness* of the teaching of faith which was called by the ancient Fathers of the Church the "catholic faith," the "catholic teaching" of the Church. The truths of Scripture and Tradition, harmoniously fused together into a single whole, define the "catholic consciousness" of the Church, a consciousness that is guided by the Holy Spirit.

- **Sacred Tradition**
  - The ongoing life of God's People
  - That which God's People have believed lived, experienced, celebrated and shared at all times and in all places.
  - The living link that unites God's people in a common faith, life & experience.
- **Sacred tradition Includes…**
- All that is essential to God's revelation and necessary for our salvation.
- **Consists of…**
- Holy Scripture
- Prayer & liturgical worship
- Accepted creeds & acts of the early Church's councils
- Writings of the Holy Fathers
- Lives of the saints. (Hagiographies)
- Artistic and hymnal expression of the Church

In the original precise meaning of the word, Sacred Tradition is the tradition which comes from the ancient Church of Apostolic times. In the second to the fourth centuries this was called "the Apostolic Tradition." One must keep in mind that the ancient Church carefully guarded the inward life of the Church from those outside of her; her Holy Mysteries were secret, being kept from non-Christians.

When these Mysteries were performed — Baptism or the Eucharist — those outside the Church were not present; the order of the services was not written down, but was only transmitted orally; and in what was preserved in secret was contained the essential side of the faith.

In the following words St. Basil, the Great gives us a clear understanding of the Sacred Apostolic Tradition: “Of the dogmas and sermons preserved in the Church, certain ones we have from written instruction, and certain ones we have received from the Apostolic Tradition, handed down in secret. Both the one and the other have one and the same authority for piety, and no one who is even the least informed in the decrees of the Church will contradict this. For if we dare to overthrow the unwritten customs as if they did not have great importance, we shall there by unperceptively do harm to the Gospel in its most important points. And

Even more, we shall be left with the empty name of the Apostolic preaching without content. For example, let us especially make note of the first and commonest thing: that those who hope in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ should sign themselves with the sign of the Cross. Who taught this in Scripture? Which Scripture instructed us that we should turn to the east in prayer? Which of the saints left us in written form the words of invocation during the transformation of the bread of the Eucharist and the Chalice of blessing? For we are not satisfied with the words which are mentioned in the Epistles or the Gospels, but both before them and after them we pronounce others also as having great authority for the Mystery, having received them from the unwritten teaching.

By what Scripture, likewise, do we bless the water of Baptism and the oil of anointing and, indeed, the one being baptized himself? Is this not the silent and secret tradition? And what more? What written word has taught us this anointing with oil itself? Where is the triple immersion and all the rest that has to do with Baptism, the renunciation of Satan and his angels to be found? What Scripture are these taken from? Is it not from this unpublished and unspoken teaching which our Fathers have preserved in a silence inaccessible to curiosity and scrutiny, because they were thoroughly instructed to preserve in silence the sanctity of the Mysteries? For what propriety would there be to proclaim in writing a teaching

concerning that which it is not allowed for the unbaptized even to behold?" (*On the Holy Spirit*, chap. 27).

From these words of St. Basil the Great we may conclude: first, that the Sacred Tradition of the teaching of faith is that which may be traced back to the earliest period of the Church, and, second, that it was carefully preserved and unanimously acknowledged among the Fathers and teachers of the Church during the epoch of the great Fathers and the beginning of the Ecumenical Councils.

Although St. Basil has given here a series of examples of the "oral" tradition, he himself in this very text has taken a step towards the "recording" of this oral word. During the era of the freedom and triumph of the Church in the 4th century, almost all of the tradition in general received a written form and is now preserved in the literature of the Church, which comprises a supplement to the Holy Scripture.

We find this sacred ancient Tradition

a) in the most ancient record of the Church, the Canons of the Holy Apostles;

b) in the Symbols of Faith of the ancient local churches;

c) in the ancient Liturgies, in the rite of Baptism, and in other ancient prayers;

d) in the ancient Acts of the Christian martyrs.

The Acts of the martyrs did not enter into use by the faithful until they had been examined and approved by the local bishops; and they were read at the public gatherings of Christians under the supervision of the leaders of the churches. In them

we see the confession of the Most Holy Trinity, the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, examples of the invocation of the saints, of belief in the conscious life of those who had reposed in Christ, and much else;

e) in the ancient records of the history of the Church, especially in the book of Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Caesarea, where there are gathered many ancient

traditions of rite and dogma — in particular, there is given the canon of the sacred books of the Old and New Testaments;

f) in the works of the ancient Fathers and teachers of the Church;

g) and, finally, in the very spirit of the Church's life, in the preservation of faithfulness to all her foundations which come from the Holy Apostles.

The Apostolic Tradition which has been preserved and guarded by the Church, by the very fact that it has been kept by the Church, becomes the Tradition of the Church herself, it "belongs" to her, it testifies to her; and, in parallel to Sacred Scripture, it is called by her "*Sacred* Tradition."

The witness of Sacred Tradition is indispensable for our certainty that all the books of Sacred *Scripture* have been handed down to us from apostolic times and are of apostolic origin.

Sacred Tradition is necessary for the correct understanding of separate passages of Sacred Scripture, and for refuting heretical reinterpretations of it, and, in general, so as to avoid superficial, one-sided, and sometimes even prejudiced and false interpretations of it.

Finally, Sacred Tradition is also necessary because some truths of the faith is expressed in a completely definite form in Scripture, while others are not entirely clear and precise and therefore demand confirmation by the Sacred Apostolic Tradition.

The Apostle commands, *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle* (IIThes. 2:15).

Besides all this, Sacred Tradition is valuable because from it we see how the whole order of Church organization, the canons, the Divine services and rites are rooted in and founded upon the way of life of the ancient Church. Thus, the preservation of "Tradition" expresses the *succession* of the very essence of the Church.

The ultimate source of 'Dogma' is the self-revelation of God Himself. By the incarnation, God revealed Himself completely to the creation. (Heb.1:1). But our understanding is incomplete. Knowing God is an ongoing process for man. According to the Orthodox Churches the dogma is preserved in the Tradition, which includes the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible is the nucleus and measuring rod of the tradition, because it contains the living word of God. And it was formed out of the primary experience and understanding the Apostolic community. The Church, which is the living body of Christ interprets and explains the mystery of God in accordance with the guidance given by the Holy Spirit. 'Tradition' includes oral traditions, liturgical texts, patristic writings, canons, creeds, and practices in the Church.

Tradition of the Church contains many things which are not in the Bible. The Bible itself testifies that it is not complete. [Jn.20:30; 21:25]. The Tradition of Church always stands in accordance with the Holy Bible and never contains anything against the doctrine of the Bible. The Church cannot accept a tradition or practice which contradicts the teachings in the Holy Bible.

2.2 Sacred Scripture

- **Old Testament**
- Records the manner in which God prepared the world for the coming of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- **New Testament**
- Completes and fulfills God's revelation…
- by proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord, God and Savior; as the very Word of God.
- Who came to live in the midst of His people; and as the perfect, final and complete revelation of God to the world

Sacred Scriptures are to be understood those books written by the Holy Prophets and Apostles under the action of the Holy Spirit; therefore, they are called "Divinely inspired." They are divided into books of the Old Testament and the books of the New Testament. Dogma is not doctrinal opinion, not the

pronouncement of any given teacher, but doctrinal statute (*decretum*). The dogmas of a church are those doctrines which it declares to be the most essential contents of Christianity Dogma is not doctrinal opinion, not the pronouncement of any given teacher, but doctrinal statute (*decretum*). The dogmas of a church are those doctrines which it declares to be the most essential contents of Christianity. Dogma is not doctrinal opinion, not the pronouncement of any given teacher, but doctrinal statute (*decretum*). The dogmas of a church are those doctrines which it declares to be the most essential contents of Christianity.

Therefore, the Fathers and teachers of the Church during the first centuries of Christianity preserved a special caution in distinguishing these books, even though they might bear the name of Apostles. The Fathers of the Church frequently entered certain books into their lists with reservations, with uncertainty or doubt, or else gave for this reason an incomplete list of the Sacred Books. This was unavoidable and serves as a memorial to their exceptional caution in this holy matter. They did not trust themselves, but waited for the universal voice of the Church.

The local Council of Carthage in 397, in its 33rd Canon, enumerated all of the books of the New Testament without exception.

St. Athanasius the Great names all of the books of the New Testament without the least doubt or distinction, and in one of his works he concludes his list with the following words: “Behold the number and names of the canonical books of the New Testament. These are, as it were, the beginnings, the anchors and pillars of our faith, because they were written and transmitted by the very Apostles of Christ the Savior, who were with Him and were instructed by Him (from the *Synopsis* of St. Athanasius).

Likewise, St. Cyril of Jerusalem also enumerates the books of the New Testament without the slightest remark as to any kind of distinction between them in the Church. The same complete listing is to be found among the Western ecclesiastical writers, for example in Augustine. Thus, the complete canon of the New Testament books of Sacred Scripture was confirmed by the catholic voice of the whole Church. This Sacred Scripture, in the expression of St. John Damascene, is the Divine Paradise."

Dogmatic Theology is the study of God," or as some calls it "the Science of God", where Christian believers learn the truth about God, the Kingdom of God, the heavenly creatures, eternal life and everlasting punishment, the Holy Bible, the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the Trinity, salvation, etc.

St, Athanasius "The Messiah, the incarnate Son of God gave His blood for us, and His flesh for our flesh and His soul for our souls. He suffered and died as a Sacrifice on our behalf and thus, He accomplished the divine statement of death as a representative of all mankind.

In his discourse on the explanation of the divinity about Jesus Christ St. Athanasius says: If the Son were a creature, man would have remained mortal as before, not being joined to God, for a creature had not joined creatures to God, as seeking itself one to join it; nor would a portion of the creation have been the creation's salvation as needing salvation itself Christianity, which enlightens man's heart to conceive the divine truth and elevates his soul to participate in heavenly life without ignoring his actual life on earth, is a "mysterious religion." Some may ask:

* What does the word "mystery" mean?
* Does it mean that Christian dogmas are not simple? or that they are not acceptable to the human mind?
* Is there a need for the "Mystery of the Holy Trinity"?

* Why do we not believe in God in simplicity and worship Him without researching His nature?

1. "Mystery" in Christianity does not mean that a believer has to believe in obscure dogmas without understanding them and that these dogmas are unacceptable to his mind. When we speak of the divine mysteries concerning God's essence, nature and deeds, we mean that He reveals these things to us, rational beings, granting us a divine enlightenment to conceive the divine knowledge which is truly supreme. Our minds are unable to conceive these things naturally without God's grace and revelation.

Mystery does not oppose man's mind, but is supreme and inconceivable without God's help. God created us as rational, not irrational, beings. He reveals Himself and His deeds to us, not to abolish our minds, but to elevate them and for all our human nature to accept Him and acknowledge His mysteries:

"To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4:11), "... having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposes in Himself" (Eph. 1:9).

God who loves mankind as rational beings "talked with Moses as friend to friend" (Ex. 33:11); He desires to enter in a dialogue with every believer. Here are some quotes of **St. Clement of Alexandria**, which declare that Christianity elevates man's mind and does not abolish it by faith or by God's revelation, but makes it wise: "*...the soul is raised to God: trained in the true philosophy, it speeds to its kindred above, turning away from the lusts of the body, and besides these, from toil and fear...*"; and "A noble hymn of God is an immortal man, established in righteousness, in whom the oracles of truth are engraved! For where, but in a soul that is wise, can you write truth?" **St. Clement** explains that human knowledge is necessary for the understanding of the scriptures, but not without God's help.

2. Some accuse Christianity of a lack of simplicity, i.e., of complexity, because of

its belief in the Three Hypostasis in one divine essence. They look to this dogma as if it were a mystery which may be understood as a kind of polytheism. Those who refuse this dogma, believing in the one absolute God, also believe in many mysteries which the mind cannot conceive by itself. They speak of God's hands, face, throne etc. They believe

3. The Trinitarian Dogma and the Bible

The Trinitarian dogma is the first of all biblical dogma24. The Holy Trinity is referred to at Jesus' baptism (John 1:27-33). Our baptism too is performed in the name of the Three Hypostases according to St. Matthew (28:19). St. Paul's benediction enumerates them in 2 Cor. 13:14. The Three are spoken of in John 14:16; Eph. 2:18; Pet. 1:21, 22; etc. The works and the titles of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit declare Their divinity as we will later see. After light was thrown on the nature of God by New Testament revelation, Christians began to see that in the Old Testament there is not much light thrown upon God which points to His tri-hypostases. One of them is the Trisagion (holy, holy, holy) of Isaiah's vision in 6:3, when coupled with the "who will go for us?" in 6:8. Another is the plurality of persons (hypostases), possibly implied in the plural "Elohim" (God), often used, even in the Deuteronomy 6:4 "unity" passage; and certainly suggested in such passages as "let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26) and "let us go down, and there confound their language" (Gen. 11:7).

Truly, in the Old Testament, the dogma of the Trinity was not clear, for the Jews were surrounded by many nations who worshipped idols, and they themselves sometimes worshipped the false gods of their neighbors. Certainly, if God had revealed this dogma openly, they would have misunderstood it and believed in polytheism. Moreover, there was no need to accept this dogma before the Incarnation of the Word of God and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church.

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3.1. Revelation, Faith and Interpretation

Revelation is the basis and content of Christian faith and Dogmas of the Church. Hence, it is important to emphasize about it . Apart from God's selfrevelation there would be no knowledge of God and no Christian faith. In other words we can say, what God has revealed about himself constitute the content of our knowledge and faith. The 'revelation' refers to both the act of revealing and the content of what is revealed. According to St. Ephrem, one of the prominent Syrian Church Fathers of fourth century, the nature (universe) and Scripture are two great fountains of revelation. He explains incarnation of God as the key to open those fountains. Creation is the outcome of the spoken word of God and Scripture is the word of God recorded in human Languages. Incarnation is the ultimate self-revelation of God into the history. Incarnation is the perfection of all revelations. It can be called the crown of revelation.

3.2 Revelation as a Personal Communication

We can say that revelation is a communication between God, the absolute infinite Person and human beings limited and finite persons. In the process of revelation the infinite person God came down and used finite things, language and methods of communication to make the revelation real and fruitful. The revelation becomes fruitful and meaningful when it communicates the idea of God to the limited capacity of humanity. As one human person can be known through his words and deeds, God also reveals His self through the words and deeds while being both transcendent and immanent. 1.3.2. Perfection of Revelation through Jesus Christ

The self- revelation of God through the incarnation is the absolute disclosure of God. The revelation is complete in the incarnation, but the understanding of man is

yet on the way to reach its perfection (Heb.1:1). The idea of definitive and full revelation in Christ is very often misunderstood as if we already know the whole truth and every- thing about God's plan of salvation. We do not know yet in any comprehensive way the mystery of Christ. It has to be gradually unfolded by the Holy Spirit who alone will lead the Church into the fullness of truth. (Jn 14:25-26). The revelation is culminated in the incarnation does not mean that God is never more present and acting in history. God through the risen Christ and His spirit is all the more dynamically present in the created world and in human history leading the whole creation to its final fulfilment.

3.3 . Understanding and Interpretation of Revelation

The revealed truth can be understood through the experience and interpretation. In order to understand and comprehend the divine truth of revelation, human beings have to depend on their experience. The revelation and revelational experience are to be interpreted in an understandable manner to humanity. Through the revelational experience and interpretation a version of revelation or revealed truth which is understandable to humanity originates. That should be totally loyal to and in line with the absolute truth. In that process is the need of human reason and interpretation.

Reason is man’s quest for truth, but revelation is God’s revealing Himself. In logic reason is all important, but in theology reason is used to understand the divine revelation. Reason enables man to distinguish between right and wrong. Revelations do not minimize the importance of reason or reject it. On the contrary they sharpen reason.

Interpretation is primarily the understanding of the revelation using reason. The interpretations have to be made in the light of the teachings and guidelines of the Church. The interpretation must be for the building up of the Church. The Bible

and the Tradition of the Church contains different interpretations of the ultimate Truth. We have to be loyal to the Church's understanding in interpreting revelation, because the Church of God is the custodian of Bible and Tradition, which are the major sources of Revelation. Church is entrusted by our Lord to continue his ministry until His second coming.

3.4 . Revelation through the Conscience of Man

The revelation of God is present everywhere in the world in different ways even without the persons serving as the instruments for it. It is expressed through Philosophy, Science and all the creative activities of human beings. Human beings have a tendency towards creativity and beauty. That itself is a proof for the pressure of God or His power on them. The universality of the conscience and its turn towards goodness also points to the natural revelation outside the religions. St. Paul speaks about it in Rom. 2:14-15, "For when the Gentiles who do not have the law by nature observe the prescriptions of the law, they are a law for themselves even though they do not have the law. They show that the demands of the law are written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even defend them".

In his fourth way to prove the existence of God St. Thomas Aquinas speaks about the inclination of conscience towards goodness. He explains: we can see in the world degrees of perfection and goodness. We know these degrees because we can compare them with the *maximum in any genus* (genus = group of things). As human beings have the capacity for both good and bad deeds they cannot be the source of all goodness. Therefore, the maximum in the genus of morality and goodness must be God (the most perfect being), who is the 'first cause', or source, of all goodness and perfection. We could notice the traits of Platonic and

philosophy in it. Plato taught about the perfect existence of everything and Aristotle has observed that we can find a moral God behind a moral religion.

This idea was taken and developed by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), which is presently known as 'Moral Argument'. Kant first denied the existence of God, but later repented and wrote: "The powerful moral judgment of the conscience points to the existence of God." Conscience and moral rules can only be thought of as given by God. Our conscience proves that there is God. We can consider this argument as a partial truth, but not capable enough to prove the divine existence. We cannot make any comment depending on human conscience. No body has the pure conscience except Jesus. Conscience of each person is conditioned by different factors in his / her life.

3.5 . Faith

The attitude of faith is a universal human phenomenon. Every human person has some sort of faith, whether they are aware of it or not. Human experience shows that no finite object can really or ultimately satisfy the human quest. In all decisions and actions every human person in the quest for final self-realization or ultimate salvation tends to the infinite and transcendent, whatever way they may conceive it. That expresses the faith in the absolute reality, Who is God.

In Christian understanding faith is the human response to divine revelation. It is a pre-condition and solid ground of learning theology. Without having faith in God, we cannot study dogma, because it is not simply an intellectual exercise. Faith must be our constant companion in learning Theology. Faith is at once the gift of God and the determination of man. It is clear in the conversation between Lord Jesus Christ and Apostles "He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has

not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father" (Mt. 16:15-17). The Christian view is that faith in God has evolved through ages and through God's own revelation. No rational quest can find out a complete answer to the question of man's faith in God. Human experience shows that no finite object can really or ultimately satisfy the human quest. In all the decisions actions every human being in quest for final self-realization or ultimate salvation tends to the infinite and transcendent, whatever way they may conceive it.

Christian faith can be called total response and commitment of the whole person to God revealed through the incarnate second person Jesus Christ. Faith is not merely the intellectual acceptance of some truths revealed by God. Nevertheless it has its rational, cognitive, ethical, mystical and emotional and other dimensions, which are expressed in various ways, in creeds, beliefs, dogmas, rites and rituals. In another way we could say faith is not just an ascent of the intellect to a set of truths, but a personal encounter and experience with God which transcends the whole person. We see this in the life of saints who really encountered God.

3.6 . Interpretation

Interpretation is primarily the understanding of the revelation using reason. The interpretations have to be made in the light of the teachings and guidelines of the Church. The interpretation must be for the building up of the Church. The Bible and the Tradition of the Church contains different interpretations of the ultimate Truth. We have to be loyal to the Church's understanding in interpreting revelation, because the Church of God is the custodian of Bible and Tradition, which are the major sources of Revelation. Church is entrusted by our Lord to continue his ministry till His second coming.

Learning Dogmatic Theology is not an end in itself. It only leads us to the conviction that our intellectual capacity cannot comprehend God. Learning dogma

must be a first step of 'living theology', which is a higher spiritual experience. Theology brings us to the realm above reason even without neglecting reason. Instead of trying to contain the ultimate truth in our intellect, it teaches us a life of worship based on Eucharist, Sacraments and prayers. Dogma also teaches us that we can grow in the grace of God through such a life. Such a growth is called Theosis or divinization.

Dogma is the care for studying the truths of the Christian faith with the aim of offering it in a scientific way. Ecclesiastically, dogma is inseparable from the Church, for the Church is the one that explains and comments on the orthodox dogma.

The orthodox dogma is a dogma for life and fellowship with the Lord Christ, with His angels and His saints. It follows that if we seek to live a true spiritual life, we must have an Orthodox dogma. Orthodoxy believes in the Holy Trinity, in one nature of the person of the Lord Christ, out of two natures in a complete union, with one will. (Orthodoxy) believes in the mystery of the Eucharist through which we are united to the Lord's body and blood, where He abides in us and we in Him. All of these are essential in shaping our spiritual life.

There are today some teachings that lessen the importance of dogma and imagine the possibility of having a Christian spiritual life without paying much attention to dogma. These teachings claim that Christian life is a spiritual pious and emotional relationship with God that should be unfettered with dogma! These teachings go under the name "nondenominational".

The truth is, he errs whoever thinks that Christianity is piety and emotion only, and that dogma has no importance in it. The truth is that orthodoxy of spiritual life is intertwined with orthodoxy of dogma. The two cannot be separated. Orthodox dogma is inseparable from the life of the church in the same way that the stream is

inseparable from the river. For the dogma cannot be apprehended outside the Church.

The word Orthodoxy means the true, upright, original and constant doctrine. It was so understood before the schism of Chalcedon in 451 AD. Orthodox dogma is based on biblical doctrines and apostolic tradition preserved and explained by the early Fathers. The early church preserved the orthodox dogma, considering it the basis of the true Christian spiritual life.

The holy Bible that teaches us about the Christian virtues is the same Bible that teaches us about the dogma that we believe in. The Bible never separates piety from dogma. There is no orthodox dogma that is not based on the Holy Bible. For example, concerning the mysteries of the Church, we find in the Bible that God is the author of the mysteries and commanded His disciples to continue in them.

Also, other orthodox dogmas like justification and salvation are found explained in St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians. The sacrament of the priesthood was instituted by the Lord Jesus Himself in John 20:21-23. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews explains this sacrament and demonstrating its superiority to the priesthood of the Old Testament. St. James in his epistle explains to us the connection between faith and works and how that faith without works is dead.

There were epistles that were written as answers against heresies and innovations and schisms. For example, St. Paul warns the Corinthians: Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Cor. 1:10) This proves the importance of the one true dogma in the life of the Church.

The Gospel of St. John was written to prove the divinity of the Lord Christ against those who spread doubts about this dogma; he therefore at the outset affirms that the Lord Christ is Gods eternal Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the

Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1). And throughout this Gospel we find that each chapter confirms the divinity of the Lord from different angles.

And he seals his words in John 20:30-31: And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;
and that believing ye might have life through his name. By this he proves that Life is tied to His divine Person, and faith in Him as God, as Savior and Redeemer. The Bible affirms that this is an essential dogma in man's spiritual life.

The holy Bible warns against strange doctrines and false teachers, who teach doctrines that, differ from those that our Fathers received (and delivered to us). St. Paul tells his disciple Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:3-5 "If any man teaches otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; ... from such withdraw thyself."

Besides the Bible, we find the dogmas of monotheism, the Trinity, the incarnation, redemption,the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, the general resurrection and the life of the age to come are inscribed in the Creed that we believe in and live wherewith, and in our Liturgy by which we live at all time. We can find our dogma as life in the Divine Liturgy.

We find the history of salvation, and the Church living this salvation through the prayers of the Liturgy and communion of the holy Body and Blood. The prayers of the Liturgy speak to us about the divinity of Christ, of His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and eternal life. It explains to us how we live this (eternal life) through our abiding in God through communion of His Body and Blood.

He who believes in a true dogma will live a true spiritual life. He will live his daily life by this dogma as a daily living habit. There cannot be any spirituality without true dogma. We believe that works and faith are tied together and faith is what

introduces work. For example, many non- Christian religions like Buddhism and others ordain more rigorous fasts than Christianity, but what good are these without faith in the Lord Christ? Cornelius wrought many good deeds but these were only perfected after he believed on the Lord Christ.

For dogma, faith, spiritual life and all that an Orthodox offer, prayers, fasts, good deeds are all sanctified by the Holy Spirit, which makes him partake from the wells of salvation and obtain the earnest of eternal life.

Whatever is offered without the fellowship of the Holy Spirit becomes a moral work, a spiritual exercise of mere social benefit.

Orthodoxy teaches that the grace of God works through His gifts in the holy mysteries. And it believes that any spiritual strife is unprofitable without the participation of grace. Further, the grace of God does not work in man without man's own strife, even as St. John Chrysostom says: "Grace does not work in those who are reclining on their backs.

Orthodoxy allows us to live the life of ecclesiastical oneness through the sacraments. For example, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, we are united mystically with the Lord Jesus (and with each other). And in the (communal) prayers we are all united in spirit, thought and being.

For every believer according to his rank has a role; the priest, the deacons and the congregation, in unity offer prayers in oneness of heart and soul. The prayers of the hours (Agpeya) also unite us even if we were in different places, when we gather to pray to the Lord on a holy occasion. Orthodoxy teaches us to care for the whole creation. For we pray for the good weather and the fruits of the earth, for the waters of the rivers, for those who are travelling, for the sick and the departed. We pray for the widow and the stranger. We pray for our country, for the president, the chiefs, the counselors ... for all.

Orthodoxy teaches us to behave in a true Christian attitude towards men and the environment. For example, in the liturgy we pray for the widow, the orphan, the stranger and the sojourner. An orthodox who participates in these prayers cannot behave unseemly towards the widow, the orphan, the stranger and the sojourner. We also pray for waters of the river, for the good air and the fruits of the earth, etc. An orthodox Christian cannot pollute the river water, or destroy the trees or pollute the air etc.

How can I help those whom I serve to live an orthodox life, both as dogma and a spiritual life?

There are three principles:

1. By explaining that the relationship with the Lord Christ has to be a complete relationship that encompasses knowledge about His person, His teachings and what He has offered us. That we should seek to perform all that He asks of us in love, and live according to His commands.

2. Constant teaching: as we are told in the Didascalia: “abolish sins by teaching” We do this by teaching the dogmas and the rites of the Church, her sacraments and all that pertains to them in the Bible in a livable way.

3. Ecclesiastical reference: In addition to the teachings of the early fathers, who taught us the faith, we should study their commentaries and explanations and to return to the mind of the church exemplified by her contemporary fathers that can explain the difficult matters.

4. The main concepts of Christian Dogmatic Theology:

- There is only one God
- God is a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- God is perfect
- God is omnipotent

- God is everywhere
- God knows everything
- God **created** the universe
- God keeps the universe going
- God intervenes in the universe
- God loves everyone unconditionally (though people have to comply with various conditions in order to achieve salvation)
- Human beings can get to know God through prayer, **worship**, love, and mystical experiences
- Human beings can get to know God through God's grace - that is through his love and his power

God the Son

- God lived on earth as Jesus
- Jesus was both wholly God and wholly human
- Jesus was born to a human woman, Mary, but conceived of the Holy Spirit
- Because Jesus was wholly human, he was subject to pain, suffering, and sorrow like other human beings
- Jesus was executed by crucifixion but rose from the dead at the *Resurrection*
- Jesus's life provides a perfect example of how God wants people to live
- Jesus died on the Cross so that those who believe in him will be forgiven all their sins

God the Holy Spirit

- After the Resurrection, Jesus remained on earth for only a few days before going up into Heaven

- Jesus promised that he would stay with his followers, so after he went to Heaven he sent his Spirit to guide them
- The Holy Spirit continues to guide, comfort, and encourage Christians

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has five pillars through which she addresses and demonstrates her basic religious belief. They are called pillars of the Church because these pillars are the most essential elements for the survival of the Church in which the apostolic Church supported and are the main instruments brace the faithful in religious teachings as mainstay upkeep buildings. These mysteries have Biblical foundation (1Cor. 14:19).

- ## 5. The Main elements of Dogma

5.1 The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity (ምስጠረ ሥላሴ)

Many times, non-Christians ask: how can Three be One? THE BELIEF IN ONE GOD!

The Holy Bible, in both Testaments, assures us in many occasions of the Oneness of God. When our Lord Jesus Christ was asked: "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered, "'the first of all the commandments is 'Hear O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is One,'" (Mk12:29). While we affirm the Oneness of God, we reject polytheism (i.e. multiplicity of divine beings) and the worship of idols. We refuse the teachings of Atheism or even the assumption of Agnosticism.

The Unique oneness of God

God is unique in everything. Even though the Holy Bible calls Him the "One God." however, this does not mean that He is subject to mathematical laws, because He is Infinite. God is One but surely He is greater than the number one. He is greater than all things in heaven or on earth. In other words, we have to redefine and comprehend the use of the term "One" not to mean a number among many. It defines a unique, single, unutterable identity of God. God cannot be made

subject to our numbering system; instead He is above all human systems. St. Clement of Alexandria said, "God is the One surpassing all oneness, and above unity itself." The Oneness of God is not a single selfish isolated entity. It is the Oneness of substantial unity that is remote from isolation.

Let us Consider the Relation between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The God of us Christians is known to us as "Father, Son & Holy Spirit".

The Lord Jesus Christ commanded the apostles and disciples to baptize people, in the "Name of The Father and The Son and The Holy Spirit".

Mat 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Also St Paul writes a wonderful essay about The Son, in his epistle to the Hebrews, chapters 1&2,

Heb 1:1-2 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, {2} has in these last days spoken to us by [His] Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; Also the Lord Jesus, spoke clearly about The Holy Spirit, as God. And St Peter while admonishing Hanania and his Wife Sapphaira, told them in no uncertain terms, that they were lying to the "Holy Spirit", Who is God.

THE TRINITARIAN BELIEF

The Word "Trinity"

The word "Trinity" is a summary of a Biblical fact, to summarize that the God we worship is a Triune God, with three "Hypostasis", where "Hypostasis" is a Greek word signifying a person, who is indivisible from other persons. This is to say that the Father and The Son and The Holy Spirit are three "Hypostasis", in one God Head.

(A) THE NECESSITY TO BELIEVE IN A TRIUNE GOD?

Sometimes people may wonder, why should the Christians insist to evangelize and to believe the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, while such doctrine is causing them a lot of ridicule and arguments with the likes of the Jews, the Muslims and The Jehovah's witnesses?

(A.1) A None Triune God is deficient and inactive.

(A.2) The teaching of the Trinity is the key to our Salvation and Sanctification.

(A.3) The Trinity is a Biblical teaching.

A.1 None Triune God Is Deficient and Inactive.

1 God is independent

This is to say, He is the "reason and the cause for everything", He exists in fullness without the need of any creation or other being. He is self-sufficient and almighty. If this is true about God, then how could we explain that God is Love! or mercy or powerful, if He is independent of all other creatures. If "God is Love", and He does not need me or the angels to express His love, did this mean, that at some stage, God was "Not Love"? This is also not true, because God is unchangeable.

If God is a Triune God, i.e., "Father, Son and Holy Spirit", then God the Father in His Love to God the Son, has fulfilled his loving attribute without being dependent on any creature/s.

2. God is Effective

A solid unitary God, could be resembled to a painting or a photograph of a flame, it looks like fire, but is cold and not effective.

God is effective by His "LOGOS", i.e. The Son. God is Alive by His Spirit, i.e. The Holy Spirit.

The difference between you and your portrait, that you are alive with your "spirit", effective through your "mind". You are still one person, but still have these other

indescribable spiritual gifts of God which make you on God's own image of effectiveness and livelihood.

A.2 Without The Trinity We Have No Salvation or Sanctification

If the Son was not equal to God in everything, then His atonement on the Cross is not enough to fulfill God's own Justice. If the Holy Spirit is not God then our fallen nature cannot be sanctified to match God's requirements of holiness. As we have been ousted and rejected by God as a result of our sin, to sanctify this fallen nature you need God to do it.

A.3 The Trinity Is a Biblical Teaching

A.3.1 The Oneness Of God is described as a Unity and not just "one".

In the story of Abraham and his great test by God. He was commanded by God to as follows:

*Gen 22:2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your **only** [son]Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land*
of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

The word "**ONLY"** is a translation of the Hebrew word "**YACHID".** In Arabic [Wahid].

The Bible from the beginning to end consistently teaches us that there is only one God.

*Deu 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD [is] **one**!*

The Hebrew word "ONE" used here is most significant. It is NOT "YACHID" as used to signify

"Isaac The Only One", But rather the Holy Scripture used the Hebrew word "ECHAD".

"ECHAD" means **"Unity or the United One".** In Arabic [ETTEHAD] or [WEHDA].

OTHER BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

In Genesis 1:5 & Genesis 2:24

Gen 1:5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were ONE [YACHID] day.

Gen 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall

become one [ECHAD] flesh.

It is evident that the writer of Deuteronomy 6:4 means to indicate that God is a united one. The obvious implication is that there is more than one Hypostasis in the one God.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was in the beginning with God. {3} All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

As seen from the above St John indicates that the Son is God, and Was with God, and is also the Creator.

A.3.2 Each of the three Hypostasis The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are very clearly displayed in the Bible as God.

The Bible clearly teaches that while God is one, He exists in three Hypostasis. But not as three separate persons in the human sense but the "Three Hypostasis" are in one "God Head", or in one coherent none separable coexistence.

They are of such a nature that they can enter into personal relations. The Father speaks to the Son and vice versa, The Father sends forth The Holy Spirit, The Holy Spirit searches the Depth of God.

(B) THE TRINITARIAN MYSTERY

The real mystery of The Trinity is that each one of the Hypostasis possesses the whole of the Divine essence, and that each Hypostasis has no existence outside or apart from the other Hypostasis.

The three are not subordinate in being the one to the other, though it may be said that in order of our recognition and concept the Father is known first, then the Son then the Holy Spirit. This is only relative to our way of conceiving God.

(C) TRINITY FROM THE SCRIPTURES

To carry on from the previous argument, the Old Testament contains some indications of more than one Hypostasis in God:

C.1 God Speaks In The Plural.

Gen 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

Gen 11:7 "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

C.2 The Angel of Jehovah is displayed very clearly as a Divine Person:

Gen 16:7-13 Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. {8} And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." {9} The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." {10} Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." {11} And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you [are] with child, And you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has heard your affliction. {12} He shall be a wild man; His hand [shall be] against every man, And every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." {13} Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, YouAre-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said,

"Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"

Also refer to Gen 18:1-21, Gen 19:1-22.

C.3 The Son And The Holy Spirit are spoken of as distinct Hypostasis:

Isa 48:16 "Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I [was] there. And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit Have sent Me."

Isa 63:10 But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, [And] He fought against them.

C.4 Moreover there are some passages in which the Messiah is speaking and mentions two other Hypostasis

Isa 48:16 "Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I [was] there. And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit Have sent Me."

Isa 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD [is] upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to [those who are] bound;

Isa 63:9-10 In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old. {10} But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, [And] He fought against them.

C.5 The Clearer Revelation Of The New Testament

Due to the progress of revelation from the Old Testament to the New Testament, The New Testament contains clearer proofs.

C.5.1 The Strongest Proof Is Found In The Facts Of The Redemption

The Father sends the Son into the world, and the Son ascends to Heaven to enable

the Holy Spirit to be sent.

C.5.2 There Are Many Places Where The Three Hypostasis Are Expressly Mentioned

Mat 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

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

Luke 3:21-22 When all the people were baptised, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptised; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. {22} And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, ["The] Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

1 Cor 12:4-6 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. {5} There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. {6} And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

1 Pet 1:2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

(D) THE HYPOSTASIS OF THE FATHER

The Name "FATHER" is frequently applied in Scripture to the Triune God.

D.1 As The Creator Of All Things

1 Cor 8:6 yet for us [there is] one God, the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom [are] all things, and through whom we [live].

Heb 12:9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected [us], and we

paid [them] respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

D.2 As The Father of Israel

Deu 32:6 Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? [Is] He not your Father, [who] bought you? Has He not made you and established you?

Isa 63:16 Doubtless You [are] our Father, Though Abraham was ignorant of us, And Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O LORD, [are] our Father; Our Redeemer from Everlasting [is] Your name.

D.3 The Father of Believers

Mat 5:45 "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Mat 6:6 "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who [is] in the secret [place]; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Mat 6:9 "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Mat 6:14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

D.4 As The First Hypostasis of The Trinity

In a deeper sense it is applied to the First Hypostasis of the Trinity to emphasize His

relationship to the Second Hypostasis *John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the

bosom of the

Father, He has declared [Him].

John 8:54 Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.

John 14:12-13 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater [works] than these he will do, because I go to My Father. {13}" And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

D.5 The Father Is The Source Of Fatherhood

This is the origin of all fatherhood. The earthly fatherhood is but a faint reflection.

D.6 The Distinctive Characteristics Of The Father

The distinctive characteristic of the Father that He "Generates" or "Gives Birth" to the Son **from all eternity.** This is why the Creed states "**Begotten Not Made".**

The works ascribed to The father are those of planning the work of redemption, creation and providence, and representing the Trinity in the Council of Redemption.

D.6 Liturgical Evidence

St Basil's Liturgy"

"O Great and eternal God Who Created Man in In-corruption"

" And by the Life-giving manifestation of your Only-Begotten Son, Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, You destroyed that death which was introduced to the world by the envy of the devil".

(E) THE HYPOSTASIS OF THE SON

The second Hypostasis in the Trinity is called the "Son", or "Son of God." . He bears this

name, as the only Begotten of the Father,

E.1 The Only Begotten Son

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the
Father, He has declared [Him].
John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
Gal 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

E.2 But Also As the "Messiah" Chosen Of God

Mat 8:29 And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God?
Have You come here to torment us before the time?"
Mat 26:63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"
John 1:49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"
John 11:27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

E.3 His Special Immaculate And Virginal Birth, Through The Operation Of The Holy Spirit

Luke 1:32-35 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. {33} "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." {34} Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" {35} And the angel answered and said to her, ["The] Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

E.4 His Characteristic As The Second Hypostasis Of The Trinity That He Is Eternally Begotten Of The Father,

Psa 2:7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You [are] My Son, Today I have

begotten You.

Acts 13:33 "God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'

Heb 1:5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"?

By means of Eternal generation the Father is the cause[1] of the personal existence of the Son within the Divine Being. The works more particularly ascribed to Him are works of mediation. He mediated the work of creation.

E.5 The Son As The center of redeemer

John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made

[1] Being the "Cause" does not mean that The Father Created the Son, but due to the our limited human

understanding the word "cause" is the closest to the meaning.

that was made.

Heb 1:2-3 has in these last days spoken to us by [His] Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; {3} who being the brightness of [His] glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and mediates the work of redemption.

Eph 1:3-14 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly [places] in Christ, {4} just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, {5} having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, {6} to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. {7} In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace {8} which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, {9} having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, {10} that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him. {11} In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, {12} that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. {13} In Him you also [trusted], after you

heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, {14} who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

(F) THE HYPOSTASIS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Through the Bible the Holy Spirit stands out as a Hypostasis, and not just a mere force

F.1 The Holy Spirit As A Divine Hypostasis Speaks And Calls!

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

F.2 The Holy Spirit As A Divine Hypostasis Hears!

John 16:13 "However , when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own [authority], but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

F.3 The Holy Spirit As A Divine Hypostasis Teaches!

John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

F.4 The Holy Spirit As A Divine Hypostasis Counsels

John 14:16-17 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever; {17} "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

F.5 The Holy Spirit As A Divine Hypostasis, He Knows The Future

Acts 21:11 When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his [own] hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver [him] into the hands of the Gentiles.' "

F.6 The Holy Spirit As A Divine Hypostasis May Be Lied To!

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the

Holy Spirit and keep back [part] of the price of the land for yourself?

F.7 The Holy Spirit As A Divine Hypostasis Forbids!

Acts 16:6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.

F.8 The Holy Spirit As A Divine Hypostasis May Be Grieved!

Eph 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of

redemption.

F.9 The Holy Spirit As A Divine Hypostasis Intercedes!

Rom 8:27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit [is], because He makes intercession for the saints according to [the will of] God.

(G) THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

The Holy Spirit Is Personal, Not Just A Force!

Only a person can do what the Holy Spirit does. The Bible clearly speaks of the Holy spirit as a Hypostasis "Person". the Bible also teaches that the Spirit is God.

G.1 St Peter Calls The Holy Spirit God

In the first Church in Jerusalem Annanias and his wife Sapphira sold some property and

brought only a part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full price, St Peter said: *Acts 5:3-4 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back [part] of the price of the land for yourself? {4} "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."*

St Peter leaves no doubt about the matter: The Holy Spirit is God.

G.2 The Holy Spirit Identified As Jehovah

The Holy Spirit is identified in the Scriptures with the Lord (Jehovah).

The Lord told the prophet Isaiah In Acts 28:25-26 the Apostle Paul states that it was the Holy Spirit who spoke these words through Isaiah:

Isa 6:9 And He said, "Go, and tell this people: *'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'*	*Acts 28:25-26 So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, {26}" saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not* *perceive;*

The Jews in the desert put the Lord Jehovah to the proofIn Hebrews the Holy Spirit Says:

Exo 17:2 Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?"	*Heb 3:9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years.*

In Jeremiah The Lord Jehovah declares Jehovah to the proof In Hebrews 10: 16 the Holy Spirit Says:

Jer 31:33 "But this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.	*Heb 10:16 "This [is] the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"*

Thus, there are three "Persons" Hypostasis mentioned in the Scriptures who shares equally the divine name of God. It is in their divine Name that we are to be baptized.

Again and again the Bible differentiates between the Father, Son, and Spirit. While the

Scriptures ascribe specific works to each of the three Hypostasis in the Godhead.

(H) THE THREE HYPOSTASIS ARE ONE GOD

H.1 Each Hypostasis Is Called The One Lord

LORD

Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth	***Son, Lord of Glory***	***Holy Spirit***
Mat 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of	James 2:1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory, with	2 Cor 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and

heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from [the] wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.	partiality. Eph 4:5 (NKJV) one Lord, one faith, one baptism;	where the Spirit of the Lord [is], there [is] liberty.

THE ONE SPIRIT	***The Spirit of God The Father***	***The Spirit of Christ The one Spirit***
Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.	Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.	Eph 4:4 [There is] one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;

THE CREATOR

The Father Creates	***The Son Creates***	***The Spirit Creates***
1 Cor 8:6 yet for us [there is] one God, the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom [are] all things, and through whom we [live]. Mal 2:10 Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another By profaning the covenant of the fathers?	Heb 1:10 And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.	Psa 104:30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth.

THE LORD DWELLS

The Father and Son make their Home In the man of Christ	***Christ dwells in your Hearts***	***The Spirit of God dwells in you***
John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. *2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among [them]. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."*	*Eph 3:17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,*	*Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

The truth of the Scriptures is

· There are three distinct Divine Hypostasis.

· These Three are equal in their characteristics, but they are one Being.

· They are properly called God, whether separately or collectively.

· They are not three separate Gods, but only one eternal God- Father, Son, and Spirit.

How Can Three Be One?

Belief in the Son and the Holy Spirit is not indicative of polytheism, nor is it an attempt at extending the Father's substance. The Son said, "I am in the Father and the Father in Me," (Jn 14:10). "He who has seen Me has seen the Father," (Jn 14:9). Each Person (Hypostasis) in the Holy Trinity fills the other two and is contained in them, but is still somehow distinguishable from the others. Just as we can differentiate the human mind from the human soul although it is not an addition to it nor can it be separated from it. Unity here does not imply adding. Our faith in the Holy Trinity does not contradict the Oneness of God. We do not believe in three divine essences (ousia) but in a single Divine essence.

To understand this Divine mystery, we can say that the Divine essence has been in existence since eternity. This eternal existence is a rational existence as well; in other words, it has Mind, Wisdom or Logos (Word) born of His own existence. So the Mind of the Divine nature does not have an essence other than that of the Father but it is born out of the same essence of God. So when we call the Divine Being "Father" and the Logos "Son." we are affirming that the Son is the Word of God. This does not mean that the Father and the Son are two essences or we then

would believe in two gods. Athenagoras said that the Eternal God has the Logikos (Mind) eternally existed in Him.

The Divine Being (the Father) is eternally alive. His life proceeds from Him and is not external to His being. Existence is distinguishable from life but neither is separate from the other and neither has a separate Divine essence because life belongs to this Divine Existence Himself. • It is essential to believe in the Living Rational Being, of a simple, single, eternal essence.

The three Persons are eternally inseparable and none of them ever existed without the others. They are like fire that has a flame and emits light and heat at the same time. Thus we understand that the Oneness of God is not partitionable into a trinity, instead all three Persons of the Trinity unite without a loss in Each's identity. St. Dionysus of Alexandria

- **The Holy Trinity And Their Types**

Belief in the Holy Trinity is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith. It is a hidden, incomprehensible mystery that touches our lives here on earth as well as in the heavens. The Church Fathers put forth much effort in trying to explain this mystery. Human language falls short of expressing the Divine, and the entirety of nature lacks a true example of the existence of a single essence in three distinguishable persons. To perceive this mystery we may say that God is the only Being whose Self-existence is a necessity.

This Self-existence is what we call the Divine essence, which has two groups of attributes and precepts. Certain attributes are personal and concern God's own Being. Other attributes concern His relationship to the creation. The three personal attributes are: Being, Reason (Logos) and Life. These attributes are not an addition

to God's essence as if they were originated from outside of Him; instead they are from eternity inseparable from His divine essence Itself.

There was no time in which the Divine Substance existed without Reason or without Life. The Father is the Cause, the Son is the same essence (being the Logos or the Word) attribute and the Holy Spirit is Life. It is worthy to note that the three Persons (hypostasis) are not separated, but have the same essence and their work is inseparable.

- **Examples From Creation**

First of all, any of the following examples can at best partially explain the mystery and help shed some light unto it. It has to be understood that any of these examples explain only one aspect or another of the mystery. Secondly, to understand this mystery we need Divine grace that gives us communion with God i.e. communion with the Father in His Son through the Holy Spirit. 1. The creation of man is in the image of God (Gn 1:27; 5:2) whose soul exists, rational and alive. While being a single human, its existence is different from its reason and its life. The three are inseparable from each other.

2. God promised to protect His church saying: "For I, says the Lord, will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst" (Zec 2:5). Fire has three self attributes similar to the Persons of the Trinity: flame, light born out of the flame and heat proceeding from the flame. But we have to notice that these are not persons in themselves since none of them fills the other two. Through light, we can understand light and through heat, we can understand heat.

3. The sun is a planet that emanates rays of light and heat while being a single sun. We call the planet itself "the sun" and we call its rays of light "the sun" and similarly we call its heat "the sun."

4. God is likened to an apple. It was said: “Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my Beloved among the sons” (Songs 2:3). The apple has the substance that we eat, its taste and the aroma we smell. The apple can be recognized through its taste or its smell.

In Ethiopic Haymanote Abew , the mystery of Unity and Trinity of the Triune God is described in the following way:.

> *They are one in divinity. There are three persons in the same divinity. According to Gregory, when he learned about the Trinity, God is no different from the three persons. We do not believe in any other religion, just as there is no worship of many gods. We do not say three gods. But if we say that He is special, we do not say that he is divinely divided. If we believe that the Holy Trinity is unique in its divinity, then we are worshiping a religion derived from Satan, just as the Jews are separated from God. But we are thus teaching that the three persons are one in nature. We worship only one God. We believe in one God where all three persons are one.* [2]

> *ይትወሐዱ በሣለስት ወይሤሌሱ በግብር በከመ ይቤ ጎርጎርዮስ ኃ ባቤ ሣለስት እስመሣለስትስ አኮ ውዱእ ውእቱ እምእሉ ሠለስቱ አካላት ከመ ኢይባእ ተጋብኦ ተ አሜልክት ወኢነ አምን ካልአ እምዝንቱ ወኢንብል ፫ተ አሜልክተ እሳህ ንቤ ፍሉጥ ውእቱ ንከውን ዐላውያነ ወኢንብል ሣለስተ ፍሉጠ ወኢናሜጽ ድካመለ ሣለስት ወሶበሂ ንፈሲ ቅድስተ ሥላሴ ፍሉጣነ ሣለስት ከመአ ካለቲሆሙንትአ መን እምተ ሰይጣናዌ ከመአይሁድ እለ አልቦሙአምላክ ንሕነሰ ሰበክነ ከሣዘ ወንሰግድ ለ፭ዱ አምላክ ለባሕቲቱ ወንትአመን በ፭ዱ ሣለስት ዘሠለስቱ አካላት፡ ፡`

These verses are the most common parts that articulate us about the Holy Trinity:

In the Old Testament Gne. 1:26; 2:18; 3:22; 11:7; 18:1 -8; Ps. 33:6; 146: 5; Isa. 6:3,8, In the New Testament Mt. 3:16-17; 28:19; Jn. 14:26; 2Cor.14:13; 1Pet. 1:2; 1Jn. 5:7-8.

[2] ሃ ይሣሞት አበው() ዘዲዮናስዮስ ምዕራፍ ፬ ፤ ፭

QUESTIONS FOR REVISION

1: Can we discover the Doctrine of the Trinity from Nature?
2: Are there three separate individuals in God?
3: Is one Hypostasis subordinate to another in God?
4: How can we prove The Trinity from the Old Testament?
5: What is the strongest proof of the Trinity?
6: What New Testament passages best prove The Trinity?
7: In what different senses is the Name "Father" applied to God?
8: What works are more particularly ascribed to each one of the Hypostasis?
9: In what different senses is the Name "Son" is applied to Christ?
10: What is the special Characteristics of each Hypostasis?
11: How can you prove that The Holy Spirit is a Person, and not just a force?
12: How did St Peter indicate beyond doubt that the Holy Spirit Is God?
13. Prove that the Holy Spirit, The Son And The Father are dwelling in us?
14. Prove that the Holy Spirit Is The Creator?
15. Why do Christians insist on a Triune God?
16. Produce some examples from the Scriptures for the Trinity

5.2. Doctrine of Christ (Christology) (ምስጢረ ሥጋዌ)

Mystery of incarnation means the mystery of the descending of God the Son who is one of the Trinity from heaven and taking up flesh and rational soul from the Holy Virgin Mary. This is the mystery of God becoming man and man becoming God. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us." (Jn. 1:14).

Christology deals with the doctrinal understanding of the Church regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ. The purpose of the incarnation of the eternal Word is obviously the salvation of the whole creation. His incarnation marked the perfection of Divine Revelation. Church understands and explains the doctrine of the person and work of Christ without neglecting the soteriological nature and doctrinal Orthodoxy. The fathers of the Church viewed the Doctrinal Orthodoxy as fulfilled in keeping the faith correct which brings salvation.

5.3 New Testament Understanding of Christ

The whole Christological understanding of the Church is deeply rooted in the New Testament. So a proper understanding of the Christological themes and ideas present in the New Testament is an essential step in learning Doctrine of Christ.

5.3.1. Hopes, concepts and their fulfilment

The early form of Christian Kerugma presented Christ in the light of Old Testament and Jewish expectations and messianic concepts. The Acts of the Apostles call Jesus the servant (Acts. 3:13; 4:27), the Holy and Just one (7:52; 22:14; 2:27; 13:35), the Author of Life (3:15) leader and saviour (5:31). Here the reference is not to the suffering servant, but to Moses, the great prophet. (3:22; 7:37).

In his temptation Jesus underwent the experience of Israel (Deut. 8:2). The figures of servant Moses (Deut. 9:9) and of Elijah the prophet (1kings. 19:8) also carry some prophetic references to Jesus. Jesus is referred to by the John the Baptist as the one who is to come (Mt. 3:11; 11:3). See also the exclamation of the crowd, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.” (Jn. 6:14)

5.3.2 Synoptic Christology

One of the simple ways in which we can examine the synoptic Christology is by examining the titles used for our Lord in the synoptic Gospels and trying to understand their meaning of the many titles, we will just take three, Son of man, Son of God and Lord

5.4 . Son of Man

This title appears seventy times in the synoptic Gospels. If we take St. Mark, the earliest Gospel, Son of man appears fourteen times in the sayings of Jesus Himself. Our Lord preferred this title in speaking of Himself to similar title ‘Son of God’. It is used frequently in prophesying His Messianic Suffering, death and resurrection [Mk. 8:37; 9:9,12, 31; 10:33ff, 45; 14:21, 41). Sometimes it reflects a present Messianic sense (Mk. 2:10, 28) and sometimes it is used with an eschatological connotation (8:38, 13:26; 14:62). Most of the New Testament scholars notice a connection between this title and the idea of pre-existent Son of

man spoken in Dan. 7:13, 14. This Son of man of the synoptic Gospels is the second Adam to St, Paul. Both these expressions show that Christ is the cosmic man and not just a man.

5.5. Son of God

This title appears 45 times in the New Testament as an exclusive name for Jesus Christ. The only other occasion is in Lk. 3:38 where Adam is spoken of as the son of God. While 'Son of man' is the title that is exclusively found in the lips of Jesus, this is addressed to Him "by the possessed man" (Mk. 3:11) by unbelieving Jews (Mt. 27:40) and by Caiaphas (Mt.26:63). St Luke introduces the terminology in words of Annunciation (Lk.1:35). It is a favourite title of St. Matthew to describe our Lord as he inserts it is the confession of Peter (16:16), the walking on the sea (14:33) at the shouting of the crowd at the time of crucifixion (27:40) and finally in the Trinitarian baptismal formula (Mt. 28:19). Like the first man Adam (Lk. 3:38), the new man comes directly from God. But he is not only as Adam was, simply the recipient of the divine breath of life. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary (Lk. 1:35; Mt.1:18). He is the eternal word and Son of God. Jesus is at the same time Son of Adam (man) and Son of God. St. John puts more meaning into this title by specifying Him as 'the only begotten Son of the father, full of grace and truth. (Jn. 1:14; 3:16)

5.6 . The Lord

Another important title used in the New Testament to denote Jesus Christ is *Kyrios*, which means Lord. Sometimes the same word is used to demote God, the Father also. (Lk.2:29; Acts. 4:24; 2Pet. 2:1; Jude 4; Rev. 6:10). As applied to Christ it is the highest confession of His person (1 cor.12:3).

As a creedal expression the early Christians proclaimed 'Jesus is Lord'. The prayer *Maranatha* had already become the prayer addressed to Jesus (1cor. 16:2). The title *Kyrios* is the translation of the Hebrew word *Adonai*, into Greek, which is used in LXX. The word is used in the Old Testament to denote Yahweh. The same title is given to Jesus, ascribing His divinity.

Biblical expose' of Jesus the perfect God and perfect Man

The Lord Jesus & The True Man	The Lord Jesus & The God
Did not Know the Day of Final Judgment *Mark 13:32 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*	He knows Every Thing *John 21:17 He said to him the third time, "Simon ,son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.*
Prayed *Luke 22:41-42 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done."*	Answers Our Prayers *John 14:13-14 "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that t the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*
Was Weary *John 4:6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.*	He Grants Rest *Mat 11:28 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*
He was Troubled *John 13:21 When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."*	Believe in Him Removes Trouble *John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.*
The Father is Greater Than Him *John 14:28 "You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.*	Declared Himself Equal to The Father *John 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.*
Died *John 19: 30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*	Raised Himself and Raises others From Death *J ohn 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.*
Was Hungry *Luke 4:2 being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.*	Fed the Multitudes *Refer to John 6*
Said "I Thirst" *John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"*	The Source of Living Water *John 7:37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.*

5.7 . Jesus Christ, the Word (Λογος)

The ancient Greek word *λογος*, usually translated as *word*, has a wide variety of meanings and is common to all periods of Greek literature. In mathematics, it means *ratio* or *proportion*. But in Greek *logos* also means *computation* or *reckoning*. Other meanings are *explanation, argument, theory, law or rule of conduct, hypothesis, formula or definition, narrative, oration, conversation, dialogue, oracle* or *proverb*. The specific meaning can be derived only from the context in which the word appears. However, it should be remembered that the primary meaning of *logos* is derived from the verb *legein* means *to join together* or *gather* and also *to say*. So, *logos* is*saying* that is, a *meaningful word.* It is the inward thought and the outward expression of thought in speech.

5.7.1 . Logos in Greek Philosophy

Logos had a long, distinguished, and very complex career in Greek philosophy. That career began with the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclites (ca. 500 BC).The principal idea of Heraclites is that *everything changes* and nothing remains in a permanent state. He has seen that, in spite of the constant change, there is a stable order. It is a kind of law immanent in all things and determines the constant change in the universe. He called it as the Universal Reason, *logos*, which is a sort of world-governing and all-pervading reason. For this *Logos* is the ult imate cause of all becoming in the universe.

For Plato (429–347 BC) *logos* is the inward dialogue of the mind as it flows from the mind through the lips. In its philosophical sense, *logos* was associated with discourse or rational explanation rather than with the Heraclitean concept of an ordering principle of the material world. Plato's *Republic* uses this term to refer the rational part of the soul. Rational discourse or explanation plays an important role at what Plato considers the higher levels of being, that is, at the level of the essence (*ουσια*) or idea of things, and can lead to real knowledge.

Aristotle (384–322 BC) also used logos in several different ways. He often used the term *logos* in the sense of definition. He also used it to mean proportion or ratio. Aristotle often used the same term to refer the guiding principles of discourse. In *Politics*, Aristotle used the

same word but obviously meant that what distinguished human beings from lower animals is reason (*λογος*). *Logos* is, also, presented as the source of unique *'αρετη* (moral excellence) of man.

In Stoicism the *logos* is conceived as a rational divine power that orders and directs the universe and it is identified with God and nature. Within the cosmic order determined by the *logos* are individual centers of potentiality, vitality, and growth. These are *seeds* of the logos (*λογοι σπερματικοι* or *seminal logoi*). All these *seminal logoi* are contained within the supreme universal *logos*. Then the *logos* became divine reason governing the world. The *Logos* is present everywhere and seems to be understood as both a divine mind and at least a semi physical force, acting through space and time. Later Stoics thought the *logos* to be the soul of the world. *Logos* is the soul of the world or universe and there is a universal *logos* and individual *logos*. Individual *logos* is the part of universal *logos* and there is no difference. Individual *logos* is the individualization of universal *logos*.

5.7.2 . *Logos* in Hellenistic Jewish Speculation

Aristobulus (fl.150 BC), an Alexandrian Jewish exegete, claimed that Moses called the whole genesis of the world the words (*logoi*) of God. For Aristobulus both wisdom (*σοφια*) and *logos* served similar cosmological ordering functions. It was in the works of Philo of Alexandria that *logos* found its full flowering in Hellenistic Jewish literature. He considered the *logos* belonged to the world of ideas also connected *logos* with the expression of the ideas. According to Philo, the *logos* is a mediating principle between God and the world and can be understood as God's Word or the Divine Wisdom, which is immanent in the world. Philo explained the *logos* as God's first born Son (*protogonoshuios*) which emphasizes pre-existence and eternal nature. But we could not see a suggestion that the logos could become incarnate. However, the *logos* has a distinct personality and it is described as the image of God, through whom the whole universe was framed. Further, when the Old Testament describes the appearance of the angel of Yahweh to the patriarchs, Philo's explanation is that in fact it was the *Logos*. We can say that these philosophical ideas concerning *Logos* culminated in the presentation of the Christological doctrines in St John's Gospel. Apart from the imperfect and partial truths of the philosophical explanations, St. John has presented

the doctrine of *Logos*, the eternal Son of God and His incarnation. So the Church owned him by giving the title the Theologian.

5.7.3 *Logos* in the Prologue of the Gospel According to St John

In the prologue of the St John's Gospel, Jesus Christ is identified with the *Logos* made incarnate (Jn 1:1-3, 14). We may note three main characteristic of Jesus Christ as seen in his *logos* doctrine. Firstly, there is a clear reference to the pre-existence of the *Logos* (Jn.1:1). His divinity and equality with God the Father are undoubtedly explained. Secondly there is no deference between the creative power of *Logos* and the creative power of God. The participation of *Logos* in the Economy of Creation is clearly specified (1:3). And, the third characteristic is the relationship of *Logos* to humanity. This is summed up in the incarnation of the *Logos* who became flesh (Jn.1:14**).** The reality of the humanity of incarnate *Logos* is very well emphasized here.

5.7.4 . The Virgin-Birth and Resurrection

Parthenogenesis (Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:26-38) is one of the most important aspects in the salvific earthly ministry of God the word. Miracle of virgin Birth is necessary for understanding the content of incarnation. Like us God the Son came to the world through a womb, but unlike us He came from the Father. In the same way, He died like all of us, but He rose again on the third day unlike us. These two absolute miracles therefore bear witness to the super most miracle of the incarnation and they must remain inseparable till the end of history.

5.7.5. Pre-existence of Christ

Many of the New Testament portions bear witness to the pre-existence of Christ. Christ is called the first born of all creation (col.1:5). This idea is reflected also in Heb. 1:6, "God brought His first born in to the world ", Heb 2:10, "For whom and by whom all things exist" Heb 10:5 points to the fact that Christ entered into the world at a point of time. Phil. 2:6-11 speaks about the coming of the pre-existent son. St. John also speaks about the pre-existence of Christ. John the Baptist witnessed Jesus' pre-existenceby saying, "This was he of whom I

said, ‘He who comes after me ahead of me because he was before me” (Jn.1:15, 30). The Lord himself too testified His pre-existence(Jn. 8:58).

5.7.6 . Why God Incarnated?

God created Adam and Eve without sin and death. "God did not make death.” But, man, through his transgression brought on himself misery and suffering as well as sin and evil, and was condemned to death - death of body and soul, grave and hell (Gen. g:319-24). "For God did not make death, he takes no pleasure in destroying the living. Do not court death by the errors of your ways, nor invite destruction through the work of your hands. To exist for this he created all things the creatures of the world have health in them, in them is no fatal poison, and Hades has no power over the world. But the godless call for death with deed and word, counting him friend, they were themselves out for him; with him they make a pact, working as they are to belong to him" (Wis. 1:12-26; Rom. 6:23). "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Thes. 5:9). Adam and Eve disgraced and impoverished themselves they were expelled from the Garden of Eden. They brought suffering and misery and were subject to the dominion of the devil. Death reigned from Adam to Christ, even to them that had not sinned. (Rom. 5:12-14). They knew that, all that happened due to their transgression and violation of the commandment of God. They regretted and repented. They cried to their creator seeking mercy. God in his forgiveness along with his judgment, hearing their cry, observing their tears and accepting their repentance, was pleased to redeem them, and gave them promise. (Isa. 63:8; Heb. 2:14-16).

When the appointed time has come forth, God sent his only begotten son, according to the promise. God the Son descended from heaven and was born from the Holy Virgin Mary. He was born so that all who believe in Him would be saved.

When it is said, that He became man, it is said to mean that he united to himself the body and soul of man. Then all the words of the prophets were fulfilled. (Isa. 7:14, 9:6; Mich. 5:2; Gal. 4:4).

Without separation of his Divinity from His humanity and His humanity from his Divinity, He became one person, one nature without change, without confusing, without separation and without division. "He is one son and one Christ before and after his Incarnation" (Cyril. Faith of the Fathers Ch. 78 part 48 Verse 9-18). St. Gregory of Nazianzium said, "He is the only God the Son who became man and the only man who became God in unity" (Faith of the Fathers Ch.61 part 4 verses 23). John Chrysostom has written that the union of the Divine Word honored the human body. The poverty in the nature of the flesh was abolished by the Unity of the word of God with the Flesh, and the flesh retained the glory of the word of God to itself by the unity. (Jn. Chrysostom, Faith of the Fathers Ch. 66 part 9 verse 18-19).

After birth, he grew like men, doing all human works except sin. He taught 33 years and 3 months in the world. For us men he died on the Cross, destroyed death by his death, and saved the world. He was laid in the tomb for three days and three nights; rose from the dead on the third day; appeared to His disciples, stayed on earth from forty days, gathering his disciples and teaching them the Book of the Covenant. On the fortieth day, while the disciples beheld, He ascended unto heaven to the father in glory praised by angels, sat at the right hand of His father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead, when everyone will be recompensed according to his work. (Jn. 3:13; 1pet. 3:22; Mt. 25:31; Eph. 4:8-10; Acts 2:30: 2cor. 5:14;

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

(1) Is Christ equal to Jehovah?

(2) Show the main areas of equality between Jehovah & Christ. For each area highlight 3 (Three) Biblical proofs.
(3) State from the Creed the equality between Jehovah and Christ.
(4) Some other religions misunderstand the concept of the "Son of God". They think that God. had a relationship with a woman. How to answer such claims?
(5) From the Coptic Liturgies, show three examples from each Liturgy, emphasizing the deity of Christ.
(6) The Trinity Is a belief beyond human comprehension, why should we insist on upholding such belief?

6. The Doctrine of Baptism (ምስጢረ ጥምቀት)

Baptism is the sacrament given to all who believe in the Mystery of the Trinity and the Mystery of Incarnation for the remission of sin, to obtain adoption from the Triune God, to inherit the kingdom of God. It is called mystery, because, when the priest recites the prayer of baptism over the water and blesses it, it will be changed and become the water that flowed from the right side of our Lord Jesus Christ and one can receive the invisible grace of the adopted sonhood of God (Jn. 19:34-35). Whosoever believes and is baptized, shall get remission of sin. "We believe in one baptism for the remission of sin" (Creed). Every person is born from God through baptism, and will be free from damnation. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (MK. 16:16; Acts 2:28). To be born of the Trinity is for inheriting the kingdom of God. Our Lord has taught baptism. "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man is born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (Jn. 3:5; Tit. 3:4-7).

There were prophecies and symbols foretold by the laws and the prophets about Baptism.

- **Prophecy:**

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." (Ezek. 36:25; Cich 7:19)

- **b. Symbols:**

Circumcision: - Circumcision in the Old Testament was practiced as a sign of baptism. It was given to Abraham as a token of the covenant.

Every one that was not circumcised on the eighth day after birth was to be cut off from his people, shared not from the promise, and /or shall have no portion from the Promised Land. The uncircumcised were not considered as the nation of God. (Gen. 17:7-14).

In the New Testament, circumcision was replaced by Baptism. Every one that is not baptized was not born of God and cannot inherit the heavenly kingdom. (Col. 2:11).

John the Baptist, at the end of the Old Testament and at the beginning of the New Testament was baptizing with water. (MK. 1:4-8).

The Ark of Noah and the crossing of Israelites across the Red sea were symbols of baptism. (1Pet. 3:19; 1cor. 10:2)

To fulfill the prophesy and to make the archetype real, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was baptized in the water of the River Jordan by the hand of John the Baptist. (Mt. 3:16; Mk. 1:9; LK. 3:21; Jn. 1:31). The Ethiopian Orthodox Church baptizes children, males on the fortieth day and females on the eightieth day. This signifies that the first persons obtained adoption from God. (Jublilee 4:2 - 15).

7 .The Doctrine of Eucharist (ምስጢረ ቁርባን)

Mystery of the Holy Communion is a supreme act of life through which we can hold intimate communion with God and that, which makes us one with God.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of Man, and drink his blood; ye have no life in you." "Who so eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life. My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed, for it is a real food. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelled in me, and I in him. "(Jn. 6:53-57).

There are prophecies and symbols given about the Holy Communion:

- **Prophecy**

• "Thou have put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine have increased." (Ps. 4:7)

• "Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out her seven pillars. She has killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth up on the highest place of the city." (Prov. 9:1-3).

• "The prime needs of human beings for living are water, wheat… and juice of grape." (Sirach 39:26).

These prophecies were foretold about Jesus Christ, the Lamb of Passover, who was crucified on the cross as to give his flesh and blood in the form of bread and wine.

- **b. Symbol**

When the children of Israel were liberated from the bondage and went out of Egypt, they were told to kill a lamb, eat the flesh, take the blood, and sprinkle it on the two side posts and on the upper doorpost of the houses, in order to get security from the plague of the firstborn. This was applied as a symbol of Jesus Christ the son of God, who was crucified and gave his flesh and bold as a ransom to the children of men. "This is the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (Jn. 1:29). Melchizedek, who is the archetype of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, the son of God, offered a sacrifice in the form of bread and wine. (Gen. 14:18).

To fulfill these prophecies and realize the symbols, examples, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Thursday evening at the Passover, took the bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said, this bread, which I give you, is my flesh. In the same manner, he took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "This is my blood which will be shed for you and for many people, for the new covenant, for the remission of sin. (Mt. 26,28; MK. 14:22; Lk. 22:19). This mystery is always performed in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

When the priest puts bread on a patent and the wine in a chalice and blesses them with the liturgical prayer, the bread and the wine are changed into the real flesh and blood of the son of God. This was made clear by the scholar St. Athanasius when he said, "we believe, that the bread and the wine are bread and wine before they are blessed by the priest, but after they are blessed by the priest the bread and the wine are changed to the real flesh and blood of the son of God." (Ath. Faith of the Father Ch. 28 part 14 verse 22).

Therefore, the Holy Communion, which the disciples received on Thursday evening, that which was crucified on the cross on Friday, and that which is being practiced at every corner to the end of the world is the same. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church believes and teaches that the flesh and blood is not simply a memorial or symbolic but real flesh and blood of the son of God. The pure sacrifice that the clergy offers is the same sacrifice that was given up on the cross on Calvary. (Jn. Chr. Liturgy 85).

8 . THE RESURRECTION (ምስ ጠረ ምውታን)

The General Resurrection is A Biblical Fact

The Scriptures, the Creed, the Liturgy and other Church rites teach us that at the Second Coming of Christ the dead will be raised up. The Old Testament clearly speaks of this essential and principal fact.

Isa 26:19 Your dead shall live; [Together with] my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew [is like] the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Dan 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame [and] everlasting contempt.

The New Testament contains more abundant proof of the resurrection and the Second Coming *John 5:25-29 "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. {26} "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, {27} "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. {28} "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice {29} "and come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

John 6:39 "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

John 6:40 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Saint Paul Expounds the Fact of the Second Coming and the General Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15

The teaching of the Common Resurrection is a basic teaching of the Gospel of Christ	Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, {2} by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you; unless you believed in vain.

Christ is Risen Indeed	{3} For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, {4} and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, {5} and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred

Th 4:13-17 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. {15} For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive [and] remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. {16} For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. {17} Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Rev 20:13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

The Character of the Resurrection

Bodily Resurrection, But With A New Type of Body

Scriptures teaches us to look forward to a bodily resurrection (but with a new type of body), similar to the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection in Christ will resurrect both the spirit and the body.

Rom 8:23 Not only [that], but we also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

1 Cor 6:13-20 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body [is] not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. {14} And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. {15} Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make [them] members of a harlot? Certainly not! {16} Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body [with her]? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." {17} But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit [with Him].
{18} Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. {19} Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit [who is] in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? {20} For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.
Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Will Happen to All

It will include both the righteous and the wicked, but will be an act of deliverance and glorification only for the former. For the latter the re-union of body and soul will issue in the extreme penalty of eternal death.

The Time of the Resurrection.

According to the Scripture the general resurrection will coincide with the return of Christ and the end of the world, and will immediately precede the final judgment:
John 5:27-29 "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. {28} "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice {29} "and come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the

resurrection of condemnation.

John 6:39 “This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

John 6:40 “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 6:44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:54 “Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 11:24 Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

Phil 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, {21} who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Rev 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. {12} And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. {13} The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. {14} Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. {15} And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Resurrection is the Mystery of life after death. All those who have departed from the time of Adam, and will pass away until the second coming of Christ, will be raised in the union of body and soul. The souls of the righteous shall abide in paradise and the souls of sinners in heads until the end of this world but on the last day, when our Lord and savior Jesus Christ shall come in His glory, to judge the living and the dead, the souls shall be united with their bodies on the day of resurrection and they shall rise from the dust of the earth. (Lk. 16:19-31).

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming; in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (Jn. 5:28).

Many passages could be cited from the old and New Testament books about the doctrine of death and the afterlife. The word of God is Deuteronomy 32:39 "I kill, and I make alive" shows the hope of resurrection. Isaiah the prophet says, "The dead men shall live. Together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for they dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." (Isa 26:19-20).

Daniel the prophet has written ". . . and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." (Dan. 12:1-3). Job said "for I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day, upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another," (Job. 19:25-27)

The teaching of the resurrection of the dead is not only told orally. It has been proved in practice when many among the departed came forth out of the grave and appeared in public. The prophets Elijah and his disciple Elisha raised the dead. (1Kgs. 17:21; 2Kgs. 13:21). Jesus Christ the Lord, and his disciples raised the dead in their ministry during the proclamation of the gospel. (Mt. 9:25; Lk. 7:15; Jn. 11:14). Likewise, the Apostles also raised the dead during their apostolic ministry.

On the day of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the graves were opened and bodies of many saints came out. (Mt. 27:52). All these prove the truth of the resurrection. All those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall come to life at the last judgment. Our belief in our resurrection is based on the resurrection of Christ. "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." (2Cor. 4:14). The church scholars Amoneos and Eusabios said, "Christ is risen, in order to make it known to us that our body shall arise" (preface of the Gospel).

Resurrection is for all human beings. Both the righteous and unrighteous arise. The final resurrection waits the last day at the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ shall come in His glory at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead. (Ps. 50:2; Mt. 25:31-32; Rev. 1:7).

At that time, he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet. The dead shall arise. The earth will restore that which was entrusted to it then he shall set the righteous on his right hand, but the sinners on the left hand. All arise carrying their works, which followed them from the earth; the righteous will be sanctified with the word of blessing, but the sinners will be rebuked with the word of accusation. The righteous shall shine as seventies as the sun, and inherit the kingdom following Christ, while the sinners shall go away into everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels. (Mt. 13:42-49; 25:31-43; 2Cor

5:10; Rev. 20:12). Thus, the religious teaching of the Ethiopian orthodox Tewahedo church is based on the five pillars of mystery mentioned.[3]

[3] Credit to Tibebu Dagnachew

9. Conclusion

Dogmatic theology in the defines, understands, investigates, interprets and teaches the Christian doctrines, Christian mysteries and Teachings of the Church as **Truths of Faith for life** guided by the Sacred activities in the histories of Revelation and Salvation. Christian faith is the starting point and is the anchor which unifies, propels and enriches the dogmatic teaching in the Church and society. Theology then seeks to find new ways of explaining and interpreting the Church's teaching to the changing contemporary world. Theology is concerned with how people can meaningfully understand and present their faith so that it becomes relevant and useful in answering the daily questions. Theology also seeks to converse and brings about better understanding of 'concealed' or 'hidden' or 'difficult' or 'distorted' or 'compromised' or 'falsified' or 'yet to be defined' beliefs of Christianity thereby apologetics raised by heresies.

Theology has also the task of (exposing and revealing erroneous, exaggerated or pretentious) theories or ideologies or trends that misrepresent and distort the Teaching of the Church, and then Theology either from Above and Below presents interpretation ,correction and transformation so that Faith and Morals can be renewed for deeper faith. A theologian must have a profound faith in the Church's teachings before he or she begins to study, investigate and interpret them.

Dogmatic Theology is the word, study, discourse, reflection, conversation and experience of God. As the Word of God, theology is founded on the following Scriptural texts: (a) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" *(Jn.1:1)* (b) "The Word of God became human and dwelt among us and we saw His glory – Emmanuel 'God is with us' *(Jn.1:14)* (c) Jesus Christ the Son of God 'is the center and the root of our salivation. *(Jn.14:6)* (d) 'All Scripture is the inspired Word of God and is used for teaching, for refuting,

for correction and for training in righteousness, so that all people may be competent and belong to God *(2 Tim.3:16)*; (e) 'Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel (Word of God) to all people and every creature; so that whoever believes and is baptized will be saved' *(Mark 16:15-16*). (f) Thus, the Church's Christian dogmas, morality and spirituality are built from these texts. The Church is the custodian of the revealed Truth because of its living God, a pillar and buttress of the Truth *(1 Tim. 3:15)* (g) and so the Apostles and Church leaders as Servants of Christ, are Stewards of the Mysteries of God through their activities. *(1 Cor. 4:1)* These texts summarize the origin, nature, mission, method and destiny of theology which may define and interpret the dogmas

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