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## Faith Theology as a Non-Empirical Approach to Understanding Divine Truth: A Study of Abstracted and Concreted Realities

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to explore the concept of "Faith Theology" as a theological methodology that engages both “abstracted and concreted realities” of understanding divine truth, demonstrating how faith enables access to both. It emphasises non-empirical, faith-based knowledge as the epistemological foundation for understanding God's nature, will, and relationship with the universe. Drawing upon Hebrews 11 and a broad scriptural foundation, Faith Theology is presented in this study as a legitimate mode of theological inquiry for understanding God’s nature, will, and cosmic relationship. This paper distinguishes between spiritual truths, not visible to the human eye (abstracted realities), and the physical manifestations of those truths (concreted realities). It presents a robust framework for faith-centred theological inquiry, and the epistemological premise upon which faith theology rests. The paper adopts a sola scriptura research methodology, employing scriptural review method. A sola scriptural research holds that Scripture alone is the only authoritative and reliable voice in matter of doctrine, faith, and practice. Thus, it is relevant to this study to establish a biblical framework for the practice of faith theology as a mode of epistemological inquiry in Christianity and in all biblical and theological studies or education. The findings reveal that Faith Theology is the foundation upon which Christian theology or Christianity is built and the practice of our theology should rest on three epistemological premises of Faith Theology. The study concludes and recommends that Scripture alone is sufficient for accessing divine truths through faith.

**Keywords:** *faith theology, non-empirical approach, divine truth, abstracted reality, concreted reality, epistemological inquiry, theological methodology, scriptural review.*

## 1.0. Introduction

The discipline of theology is concerned with knowing God. Theology as a concept of knowing God has a varied strands that offer different views in an attempt to study God, His nature, will, and relationship with created universe. Such theological strands, among others, are practical theology, theoretical theology, systematic theology, historical theology, etc. Today, theological discourse goes beyond the popular ones mentioned here. The stand of this study is that all Christian theologies must be grounded in Scripture. According to Dele Ilesanmi (2025), “Without the Bible, our theology is considered *atheology* (the study or theory of the absence of a living God).”<sup>1</sup> In the study of theology, methodologies range from empirical and rational approaches to those grounded in revelation. While empirical theology may use natural revelation or historical analysis, this paper presents "Faith Theology"<sup>2</sup> – a new theological strand – as a distinct approach that relies on faith as its primary epistemic tool, which other branches of theology fail to recognise. This paper intends to fill this gap. Therefore, in this research, Faith Theology offers a distinct epistemological path – one that relies on a non-empirical evidence or scientific validation but on faith as a mode of knowledge or epistemological inquiry. This makes this study a ground-breaking, unique work.

The concept of Faith Theology is based on Hebrews 11:1, which defines faith thus: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” This theological inquiry recognises divine truth as both unseen (abstracted) and manifested – seen – (concreted). This theological strand addresses both invisible spiritual truths and their visible expressions, as discerned through Scripture. The study seeks to define Faith Theology, establish its biblical foundations through scriptural review method, and differentiate its

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<sup>1</sup> Ilesanmi, Dele “Building on Sola Scriptura: The Ultimate Rule for Doing Theoretical Theology” in

<sup>2</sup> “Faith Theology” is a term coined and developed by this author, Dele Alaba Ilesanmi, 2025.

twofold engagement with divine truth: *abstracted realities*<sup>3</sup> (unseen, conceptual) and *concreted realities*<sup>4</sup> (seen, historical or experiential).

## 2.0. Conceptualising Faith Theology

*Faith Theology* is the study of both the *abstracted* and *concreted* realities of divine truth, grounded in non-empirical, faith-based knowledge, in order to understand God's nature, will, and relationship with the universe. As Hebrews 11:1 states, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Faith is the means by which we perceive *unseen yet real truths* and the *unseen actions* – invisible power and activities – (abstracted realities) behind *visible events* (concreted realities). This definition builds on the biblical understanding of faith as knowledge of unseen realities in spiritual realm. Faith Theology does not reject physical reality or empirical theology<sup>5</sup> but holds that divine truth is primarily perceived through spiritual revelation, not sensory or empirical data. The definition of faith theology by this author not only draws a crucial theological distinction, but theologically rich, intellectually thoughtful, and anchored in Scripture. *Abstracted reality* in this definition means divine truths only accessible by faith, not directly observable or measurable while *concreted reality*, as it is used in this definition, means observable events or divine truths result from unseen, invisible divine truth. The *abstracted reality* is unseen but real truths and the *concreted reality* is visible effects of unseen truths. In other words, *abstracted realities* refer to divine truths that are not directly observable—such as God’s eternal nature, His sovereignty, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. *Concreted realities* are the visible outcomes or manifestations of these unseen truths—such as the creation

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<sup>3</sup> This concept “Abstracted realities” is coined and developed by this author.

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<sup>5</sup> Adekoya, Richard defines empirical theology as an aspect of practical theology that addresses the need to examine the context of religious belief by drawing on the methods of social science and expressive science when considered important. See *Spectrum: Journal of Contemporary Christianity and Society*, Vol.1 (1), 2016.

of the universe, miracles, and historical divine interventions. These two levels of faith theology are deeply connected to the nature of faith as a mode of knowledge or theological inquiry.

Faith Theology can be a method of theological inquiry that is built on Scripture and faith as epistemological tool to discover divine truths. Faith Theology holds that divine knowledge is revealed and received through faith, not empirical proof. Scripture, as divine revelation, becomes the ultimate source of truth, interpreted by faith rather than experimentation or observation (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### **3.0 Scriptural Review**

#### **3.1 Faith as a Mode of Knowledge, Not Empirical Proof**

According to Hebrews 11:1, faith is not mere belief, but a kind of spiritual evidence: “...the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” This positions faith as a valid cognitive tool—a spiritual epistemology. The Greek word for “substance” (*hypostasis*) implies assurance or reality; “evidence” (*elenchos*) implies proof or conviction. In other words, faith is perceived as real fact, the evidence, of what is not revealed to the senses. It is the proof of what we cannot see. For example, the Message Bible describes faith as “the fundamental fact of existence,” emphasising that, the trust in God is faith, which is “the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living.” (Heb 11:1 MSG). This distinguishes our fathers of faith and set them above others. Such fathers of faith are Abraham, Noah, Moses, David, Zacharia, etc. Faith, as a spiritual epistemology, has the potency to part way the Red Sea, subdued kingdoms, stop the mouths of lions, and quench the violence of fire. Hebrews 11:1-40 encapsulates the potency of faith as a valid cognitive tool to understand divine truths. Thus, faith is a valid knowledge in Christianity, theology (biblical theology, practical and theoretical theologies), biblical studies, biblical education, biblical research studies, etc.

In biblical theology, understanding is tied to faith, not empirical observation. Faith Theology affirms that all true knowledge of Scripture begins with faith in the God who speaks. The structure of reality is intelligible only by accepting God's unseen creative power (abstract reality). For example, the Bible says, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God ..." (Hebrews 11:3). There are spiritual realities known by faith, *not observable* by human senses but *revealed* in Scripture. Abstracted Realities are divine Truths beyond the senses or empirical data while concreted realities are manifested in divine actions (power). Faith Theology does not isolate these two categories of realities but integrates them. For example, belief in the resurrection of Jesus (a concrete event) confirms the abstract truth of Christ's divinity and the promise of eternal life. Indeed, each concreted reality points to a deeper abstracted truth that requires faith to fully understand. It is through the **Spirit of faith** that we receive the illumination necessary for biblical insight: "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God...they are spiritually discerned*" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

What is more, Faith Theology affirms that divine truth is known through revelation in His word, not through empirical or scientific proof. Its foundation is based on faith in what God has revealed in Scripture, rather than observable, testable evidence. Faith Theology is belief in what is revealed by God, not belief based on human proof. Belief based on God's revelation is certain and valid, but belief based on human proof is susceptible to change and error – human behaviours are not stable and human knowledge is limited – therefore, it cannot be regarded as valid knowledge. Faith Theology does not seek to prove God empirically; it is rooted in trust in divine revelation (Scripture, the work of the Spirit); and it is essential for accessing abstracted and concreted realities of divine truth. *Abstracted Realities in Scripture* are abstracted realities are divine truths that are not observable or measurable, but real and authoritative. For example, God's eternal nature, the Trinity, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, justification by Faith, heaven and eternal life, etc. On the other hand, *Concreted Realities in Scripture* are physical or historical events that manifest divine truths, such as creation, incarnation, miracles of Jesus, resurrection of Jesus, the church as the body of Christ, etc. Faith, as an epistemological tool, validates both abstracted and concreted realities.

Moreover, faith responds to revelation, not empirical proof to reinforce theological claims about divine truths. In the framework of Faith Theology, faith is not grounded in empirical evidence or scientific verification. Rather, it is grounded in the revelation of God through Scripture and the witness of the Holy Spirit. This reinforces the claim that faith responds to what is revealed, not to what is proven. Hebrews 11: 1 is a foundational verse that clarifies that faith itself functions as a kind of spiritual evidence and epistemology. It acknowledges things that are real but invisible (abstracted realities). Theological truths such as God's nature, His will, and His works are not subject to laboratory testing—they are accepted by faith in God's Word. Faith is not produced through observation or rational deduction; it is a response to the revealed Word of God. The source of faith is God's self-disclosure, not human experimentation or reasoning. The Bible asserts, “*So then* faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom 10:17). In the framework of Faith Theology, faith is produced by responding to the word of God, which ultimately results in valid knowledge.

In the context of Faith Theology, it is impossible for the natural man to understand the spiritual knowledge. In 1Corinthians 2:12-14, Paul contrasts *natural knowledge* with *spiritual knowledge*. The truths of God are discerned, evaluated spiritually, not through empirical means. Faith is the mode by which one gains access to divine realities and knowledge. Indeed, it is practically impossible to access divine knowledge or realities through empirical or scientific tools without the application of faith theology. Empirical evidence that validates scriptural revelation has an underlying application of faith theology in it. Thus, faith theology is the fulcrum upon which spiritual knowledge and understanding revolves.

Furthermore, Faith Theology provides the epistemic foundation for theology, supplying the faith-based structure that allows for reflection on divine nature, will, and actions in relation to the universe. Faith is produced by revelation, not by experimentation, which gives birth to genuine knowledge. For instance, the Bible says, “*So then* faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom 10:17). Faith Theology is a spiritual epistemological tool for theological inquiry because the things of God...are spiritually discerned or evaluated (1Cor 2). In John 20:29, Jesus affirms the two levels of Faith Theology: abstracted realities and concreted realities: “Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed [concreted reality]: blessed are they that have not seen,

and yet have believed [abstracted reality].” Given this passage, Jesus affirms faith in revelation over proof by sight. This statement by Jesus affirms the legitimacy—and even superiority—of faith in the unseen, as opposed to reliance on physical proof. Faith, not sight, is the path to divine blessing, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

In similar development but profound theological insights, the concreted reality (visible creation) can serve as a faith-inviting pointer to the abstracted reality (God’s power and nature). For example, in Romans 1:20:

There are things about God that people cannot see—his eternal power and all that makes him God [abstracted reality]. But since the beginning of the world, those things have been easy for people to understand. They are made clear in what God has made [concreted reality]. So people have no excuse for the evil they do (ERV)

In this passage, it is clear that concreted reality – the visible – (creation, the handiwork of God) reveals the abstracted reality (the invisible cause), the Uncaused cause (God). This natural revelation is suffice for people to believe that God exists because this natural knowledge is beyond what human beings can produce. Indeed, faith is required to acknowledge and respond to this revelation. Therefore, people have no excuse for the evil they do than to have faith in God who created all things. Our theology requires faith before knowledge and understanding about the living God can be produced with the help of the Holy Spirit. Again, this passage confirms that concrete realities (trees, stars, oceans, human life) are faith bridges to abstract theological truths.

In a more theological profundity, *Concreted Reality Theology* serves as the handmaiden of *Abstracted Reality Theology*, assisting the human mind in grasping the invisible truths of God through visible manifestations. *Abstracted Reality Theology* (*the study of divine truths that are invisible*) deals with invisible, spiritual truths, such as God's nature, His eternal will, and divine attributes (e.g., holiness, sovereignty, etc.). On the other hand, *Concreted Reality Theology* (*the study of divine truths that are visible*) interprets visible or historical manifestations (e.g. creation, miracles, incarnation) as pointers to those invisible truths. To say, *Concreted Reality Theology*



serves as the handmaiden of *Abstracted Reality Theology*, just as philosophy was called the "handmaiden of theology" in medieval thought, it means Concreted Reality Theology, as the study of the seen realities, points to or embodies unseen truths – the Abstracted Theology. This places visible revelation in service of invisible reality, which is a deeply biblical and theological pattern (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:18; Hebrews 11:3). As important as both faith theological strands may look, Concreted Theology is the servant of Abstract Theology. The abstracted realities are eternal but the concreted realities are temporal, transient. This is illustrated in 2Corinthians 4:18:“While we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” Pastors English Study Bible (PESB) explains this verse thus:

This was the reason why Paul could endure all that came to him, why all hardships were light and momentary in his eyes. But how can we fix our eyes on what is unseen? It is by the spiritual understanding God gives (v 6), and it is by faith that the unseen, eternal things of God are real (Heb 11:1). In 2 Cor 5:7 he expresses the same thing in different words. With our physical eyes we see the world and our troubles and difficulties. With the eyes of our faith and our spiritual understanding we can look into the face of Christ (2 Cor 4:6) and into eternity. And living our lives with our eyes fixed on unseen things, on eternal things, will have a profound effect on how we live.<sup>6</sup>

Though temporary, concreted realities support and illustrate abstracted truths — they serve as divine signs or expressions that help humans understand what cannot be seen – the abstracted realities. In essence, concreted realities interpret the unseen source, point to divine attributes, and help to grasp who God is. This nexus cannot be undermined in Faith theology. For instance, this mirrors how Jesus used parables or how the incarnation makes the invisible God known through a visible Person – our Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14, Col.

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<sup>6</sup> Emphasis in this quotation is mine.

1:15). The Bible affirms, how the visible (concreted reality) reveals the invisible (abstracted reality), that “No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who himself God and in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.” (John 1:18 NIV). This Son of God, Jesus, praised those who believed without seeing (John 20:29). This, perhaps, accounted for the “Hall of Faith” list to be full of the Old Testament believers of faith.

There are biblical examples of those who practised Faith Theology as a non-empirical approach to understanding divine truth. Many of these people are mentioned in the “Hall of Faith” in Hebrew 11, notably:

- i.** Abel – Offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain (v.4)
- ii.** Enoch – Translated that he should not see death (v.5)
- iii.** Noah – Prepared an ark to the saving of his house (v.7)
- iv.** Abraham – Obeyed, went out, sojourned, and offered up Isaac (vv.8–19). He believed God before seeing the promise (Genesis 15:6).
- v.** Sarah – Judged God faithful who had promised (v.11)
- vi.** Isaac – Blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come (v.20)
- vii.** Jacob – Blessed the sons of Joseph and worshipped (v.21)
- viii.** Joseph – Made mention of the departing of Israel and gave commandment concerning his bones (v.22)
- ix.** Moses – Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chose affliction with God's people, forsook Egypt (vv.23–29). He also endured “as seeing him who is invisible” (Heb 11:27)
- x.** Rahab the harlot – Perished not with them that believed not (v.31)

Others “faith theologians” mentioned (without full detail), but grouped together in verses 32 – 38, are Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, David, Samuel, The prophets. The Bible goes further to mention their deeds – how they overcame by faith: “Who through faith subdued

kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” In addition, the descriptions of the sufferings and endurance of unspecified or unnamed heroes of faith are also given (vs 35-38).

### **3.2 Two Levels of Faith theology in Scripture**

Faith Theology, as earlier defined, is the study of both abstracted and concreted realities of divine truth grounded in non-empirical, faith-based knowledge to understand God’s nature, will, and relationship with the universe. Given this definition, **a two-level framework of Faith Theology** can be identified: abstracted reality theology and concreted reality theology.

#### **(a) Level 1: Faith in Abstracted Realities**

This level concerns divine truths that are entirely unseen, conceptual, or spiritual in nature. They are accepted purely by faith and have no direct empirical evidence – yet they are real. For example:

##### *i. God's eternal nature*

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” (Psalm 90:2). God was there before creation, the Psalmist was not there, and will still be there when the present creation passes away. The knowledge of Psalmist in this verse came by revelation, not by empirical evidence or scientific verification. This is not observable, but wholly revealed to him by God Himself. Creation added nothing to God, the passing away of creation will take nothing from Him because He remains God from everlasting to everlasting (Deut 33:27; Ps 93:2; 102:24, 27; Jer 10:10; Rom 1:20).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Pastors English Study Bible for more information.

## ii. *God as Spirit*

“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:24). God has no physical form that we can see and touch, but He is a real living Entity that cannot be denied. God is a Spirit that cannot be seen by physical eyes – He is invisible (John 1:18; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; Heb 11:27).

## iii. *The Trinity*

“Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” (Matthew 28:19; cf. 2Cor 13:14). Trinity is seen as one being in three distinct persons or three distinct persons in one living God. This is a conceptual or theoretical reality revealed in Scripture, but not experienced directly. It is theological truth.

## iv. *Heaven and the unseen realm*

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Corinthians 5:7) “...things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:18). Heaven is real, but not yet experienced. No one has ever experienced heaven except Jesus who came from it: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” (John 3:13). This appears at abstract, theoretical level, but real truth. Heaven is an abstracted reality, but real. Jesus who is the image (concreted reality) of the invisible God (the Abstracted Reality).<sup>8</sup> Indeed, heaven is purely an abstracted reality, entirely dependent on revelation and faith-based acceptance, but Jesus’ declaration in this passage has added more credence to the validity claim of reality of heaven.

## **(b) Level 2: Faith in Concreted Realities**

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<sup>8</sup> Col 1:15

This level discourses visible or historical realities—things that happened or exist—but whose divine significance or origin is accepted by faith. For example:

i. *Creation of the Universe*

The Bible declares, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” (Hebrews 11:3). The world is visible (concreted reality), but its divine origin is invisible (abstracted reality).

ii. *Incarnation of Christ*

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:14). Jesus was seen, but His divine identity is received by faith. The invisible (the Word, abstracted reality) produces the visible (the Word became flesh, concreted reality) (John 1:1, 14).

ii. *Miracles and signs*

Many miracles and signs were performed, particularly by Jesus Christ, such as healing of the man born blind (John 9:6–7), raising Lazarus (John 11:43–44), etc. All these events are concreted realities. They were observed, but faith sees God’s power behind them.

iii. *The Resurrection*

The resurrection accounts of our Lord Jesus Christ are a concreted reality. He was seen by witnesses, but understood as victory over death only by faith (Matt 28: 5-6; Luke 24: 5-6; Jn 20: 8-9). Faith is not only needed to believe the event that occurred, but to believe what the event means—its divine source, purpose, and spiritual significance. But the power behind the resurrection is a mystery that must be accepted by faith.

## Two Levels of Faith Theology in Scripture

Faith Theology operates in these two levels as explained earlier:

Level	Description	Type of Reality	Mode of Revelation
Level 1	Faith in Abstracted Realities	Unseen, conceptual, and spiritual truths, but real.	Through direct revelation (Word, prophecy, Holy Spirit)
Level 2	Faith in Concreted Realities	Seen events or outcomes with unseen causes behind them.	Through historical manifestation interpreted by faith.

These two levels of Faith Theology discussed in this paper reveal how Scripture consistently calls believers to trust in what is not empirically verifiable, whether: It has never been seen (Level 1), or It has been seen, but its source and significance remain unseen (Level 2). Indeed, both levels work together to form a complete theology of faith, showing that true knowledge of God is not gained by sight, but by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7).

### 3.3. Biblical Examples of Abstracted and Concreted Realities

These examples are tabulated here for easy and better understanding:

**(a) Abstracted Realities (Unseen, spiritual, conceptual, but real)**

<b>Abstracted Reality</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Scriptural Basis</b>
<b>God's Eternal Nature</b>	God's uncreated, everlasting being. No empirical proof, but accepted by faith. Eternality is an abstract concept, not empirically accessible, but real truth.	<i>"From everlasting to everlasting, you are God."</i> (Psalm 90:2)
<b>The Trinity</b>	The triune nature of God. Conceptual revelation of Father, Son, and Spirit — not visible, but foundational to Christian belief. One God in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a revealed truth, not seen but believed.	"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)
<b>The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit</b>	The unseen presence of God in believers. A personal, invisible presence of God. Spiritual presence, not visible, but deeply real.	<i>"...for he lives with you and will be in you."</i> (John 14:17)—
<b>Heaven and the afterlife</b>	Unseen, eternal realities. Described but unseen realities known by faith. Future hope, unseen, accepted by faith.	"We have a building from God, eternal in the heavens..." (2 Corinthians 5:1) or "...a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."
<b>Justification by Faith</b>	Legal righteousness granted through belief. A legal-spiritual truth — invisible but accepted based on trust in God's Word. A spiritual/legal status, not physically measured.	"Therefore, being justified by faith..." (Romans 5:1)
The Kingdom of God	A spiritual domain beyond observation	Luke 17:20–21 – "The kingdom of God does not come with observation... it is within you."

**(b) Concreted Realities (Observable outcomes of divine action)**

<b>Concreted Realities</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Scriptural Basis</b>
<b>Creation of the Universe</b>	Creation is seen, the Creator is not. Physical universe as the product of unseen Word. In other words, what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen. Thus, creation is visible; its divine origin is known by only faith – valid knowledge.	In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1); Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Hebrews 11:3).
<b>The Incarnation of Christ</b>	God became (man) flesh — the invisible Word became visible.	John 1:14 – “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”
<b>Miracles of Jesus</b>	Physical signs of divine authority. Physical events like healing the blind or raising Lazarus are seen, but their divine cause is not. Observable events pointing to divine power—physically seen, spiritually understood.	Healing the blind man(John 9:6–7); Raising of Lazarus (John 11:43–44)
<b>The Resurrection</b>	A visible, historical event with spiritual implications. Historically witnessed but believed in by faith as proof of divine power. A real, historical event, but its full meaning is grasped by faith.	“He is not here, but is risen!” (Luke 24:6; Acts 1:3)
<b>The Church as the Body of Christ/Formation of the Church</b>	A visible community representing a mystical, spiritual truth. The visible body representing an invisible reality. A visible community with a mystical identity. The spiritual truth behind it is not seen, but known by faith.	Now you are the body of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:27)



These events are observable and historical but cannot be fully explained apart from faith in the unseen **God** who caused them.

#### **4.0. Scriptural assumptions or principles (or theological presuppositions) underlying Faith Theology**

1. Faith is the means of knowing the unseen: Hebrews 11:1 – “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” This verse is the cornerstone of Faith Theology. It affirms that faith accesses realities that are real, though they are not empirically observable. There are unseen, divine truths that are epistemologically accessible by faith alone, not by sight or empirical proof. Faith reveals the unseen realities. Thus, faith is a valid form of theological knowledge.

2. The visible reveals the invisible: Romans 1:20 says, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made...” (NIV). Creation (a concreated reality) reveals something about God (an abstracted truth). Creation reveals God indirectly (Rom 1:20). Thus, God uses visible, material realities to communicate invisible, spiritual truths. In other words, concreated reality points to abstracted divine truth.

3. Scripture is the authoritative source of divine truth: 2 Timothy 3:16–17 says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Faith Theology relies heavily on Scripture as the lens and source for interpreting divine truths. All knowledge of God’s nature, will, and works—whether abstract or concrete—is revealed in and must align with Scripture. In other words, revelation – not reason – is the source of all knowing (Rom 10:17) because Scripture is the foundation of divine truth.

4. Revelation is both general and special: General Revelation (e.g., nature) – Romans 1:20; Special Revelation (e.g., Scripture, Christ) – Hebrews 1:1–2. Faith Theology acknowledges that God reveals Himself in both creation and Scripture, but the truths must be interpreted theologically by faith. God has revealed Himself in multiple layers, which must be discerned through spiritual understanding.

5. Spiritual truth is spiritually discerned, not naturally evaluated because the natural man is an unspiritual person. Thus, he or she lacks the spiritual insight to discover and assess the spiritual truths. God's Word Translation puts it rightly in 1 Corinthians 2:14 affirms this: "A person who isn't spiritual doesn't accept the teachings of God's Spirit. He can't understand them because a person must be spiritual to evaluate them." (GW). In other words, to succinctly put, Faith Theology requires a faith-informed, Spirit-enabled epistemology to understand divine truths. Thus, divine truths, especially abstracted realities, are not accessible by human reason alone, but through spiritual illumination.

6. Faith precedes knowledge and understanding: The book of Isaiah 7:9 says, "...If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." In this author's view, If you do not believe or have faith, you will not be blessed and understand and your knowledge will not be full. This is because "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29). In Faith Theology, belief is the doorway to comprehension—not the result of empirical confirmation or scientific verification. Thus, Faith is the precondition for understanding God's truths. It precedes knowledge and understanding. In other words, faith is epistemologically prior.

7. Abstracted reality produces concreted reality: God's self-disclosure often takes visible, incarnate form to reveal invisible, eternal truths. The Bible says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." (John 1:1, 14). This unifies abstracted and concreted realities. In this case, the Word (abstracted reality) transformed to produce the flesh (concreted reality). Christ is the ultimate concreted reality of an abstracted divine truth (the eternal Logos). Faith theology is required to know this. In brief, God uses concreted reality to manifest the abstracted reality.

8. Scripture is authoritative: Faith Theology depends on biblical revelation because of its inerrancy, infallibility, and universality (2 Timothy 3:16–17).
9. Faith reveals the unseen (Heb 11:1). This is the foundation of abstracted reality theology.
10. Creation reveals the invisible divine nature (Rom 1:20). This is the basis of concreted reality theology anchored in faith.
11. God is spiritual and He must be spiritually known, approached, or studied (John 4:24). This is because spiritual truth required spiritual discernment (1Cor 2:14) and God's nature requires faith to perceive. Thus, faith-based interpretation is essential.
12. Faith without sight is honoured (John 20:29). Therefore, non-empirical belief is spiritually valid.
13. The seen comes from the unseen (Heb 11:3). This implies that abstracted and concreted realities are linked.

## **5. 0. Faith Theology's Epistemological Premise**

Faith Theology rests on three epistemological premises:

1. Revelation is the source of divine truth. Thus, it is prized over reason. This is because Scripture – the Bible – is God's revelation to humanity.
2. Faith is the means of accessing knowledge and understanding of divine truths. Therefore, faith is more valued than empirical evidence or scientific verification.

3. Proof is not required when revelation is trusted because the Bible is inerrant and infallible. Therefore, spiritual insight gained from Scripture is better than sensory experience.

This contrasts with empirical theology or evidential apologetics, which attempts to validate theological claims through external data. Faith Theology is a Non-Empirical Theology that is anchored in Scripture. It is important to note that Faith Theology does not oppose reason or history; rather, it asserts that some truths exceed human or scientific verification and must be accepted through divine self-revelation. Faith Theology instead trusts what God has spoken, even when it cannot be empirically verified. “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Corinthians 5:7). This verse reinforces that living and walking based on faith in God’s promises and guidance are better than relying solely on human understanding or visible circumstances. Indeed, there are historical or visible effects of divine activity – seen in time and space – but believed in through faith.

Faith Theology was presented as a legitimate mode of theological inquiry for understanding God’s nature, will, and cosmic relationship in this work.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

This study has been able to conceptualise Faith Theology with its twofold levels of engagement as a method of acquiring or accessing divine truths, theological or epistemological inquiry. In this research work, Faith Theology offers a compelling theological method by which believers and scholars can understand divine truth holistically. This is grounded in Scripture and guided by faith. It provides a framework for studying God's nature, will, and universal relationship that values both what is seen and unseen, concreted and abstracted, revealed and believed. Faith Theology offers a coherent and biblically grounded method of theological inquiry by distinguishing between abstracted realities (unseen truths) and concreted realities (seen effects), and anchoring both in faith as described in Hebrews 11. This

new strand of theology affirms that God can be known—not through empirical data, but through faith grounded in divine revelation – the Bible. Additionally, this study proves that Faith Theology stands as a model of theology and Christianity that honour the unique nature of divine truths. This is because God transcends the created order, the truth about Him cannot be fully captured or comprehended through empirical means or scientific inquiry. Instead, faith becomes the instrument of knowledge in biblical Christian theological studies, responding to what has been revealed—not to what has been proven.

What makes this study unique is that Faith Theology was presented as a legitimate mode of theological inquiry for understanding God's nature, will, and cosmic relationship, the scriptural principles underlying this concept, and the epistemological premise upon which it rests. These positions give this work a distinction from other traditional positions in theological inquiries as mentioned in this paper. Thus, lending more credence to the originality of this study. It is therefore believed that this research will expand the frontiers of biblical and theological education in churches and Christian theological institutions.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

It is important to recommend that the practice of biblical theology or any strand of theology that is biblically rooted should rest on three epistemological premises of Faith Theology:

- i. Revelation is the source of divine truth;
- ii. Faith is the means of accessing knowledge and understanding of divine truths; and
- iii. Proof is not required when revelation is trusted.

Faith Theology should be embraced by biblical Christian believers if the practice of Christianity is to be meaningful and relevant to their lives.

The study and practice of Faith Theology should be done along its twofold engagements: abstracted realities and concreted realities to make meaning of Faith theology.

Scripture alone should be embraced as the authoritative source of divine truth. It is sufficient for accessing divine truths. Biblical Christian believers and scholars should not rely on empirical theology and scientific validation to assessing divine truths. If the source of our revelation – the Bible – is trusted, empirical evidence or scientific proof is unnecessary.

## **References**

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