

The Mystery of Godliness Revealed

Introduction

1 Timothy 3:16 “And without controversy **great is the mystery of godliness:** God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.”

1. The phrase “without controversy” means there is and can be no doubt. No one should have ANY doubt about Jesus Christ being the Christ (Anointed).

A. He fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah.

1) Jesus said:

Matthew 5:17-18 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

2. Did Jesus really fulfill all the Law? This is an important question because if He did, then He truly is God’s Son, sent to fulfill a specific purpose.

Luke 24:44-48

A. What are the chances that every single prophecy (over 300) would come true, except that it was actually Jesus that came and fulfilled them?

3. This morning, let us study within the passage of 1 Timothy 3:16, that mystery of Godliness.
 - A. The word “mystery” means “that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those who are illumined by His Spirit” (*W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*).
 - 1) So, the prophets and apostles have revealed that which was ONCE a mystery. The revelation of this mystery are those things contained within this verse.
 - B. Let’s examine each part of this “mystery of Godliness” which is so important for us to understand in order to have a more fervent zeal for God’s Word unto us!

God

1. This simply means “deity”. The subject of this verse is Jesus Christ. He is God!
 - A. John wrote:
John 1:1-3, 14
2. The apostle Paul informs us that though Jesus:
Philippians 2:6-8
 - A. In Hebrews 1:8, God the Father calls His Son, God!
 - B. In Acts 20:28, we learn about “the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” which is a clear reference to Jesus the Christ.
 - 1) Jesus is God - He is not the Father, but God the Son.

God Was Manifested in the Flesh

1. Jesus was manifested, which means made known, in the flesh. God the Son took upon Him human flesh (Phil 2:6-8).

A. In human flesh, Jesus became able to understand what it is like to be human. We are told in Hebrews 4:15:

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

B. So Jesus knows what it is to suffer in the flesh, because He humbled himself unto God the Father and came to earth in fleshly form.

1) He gave up the glory of heaven to come to earth to suffer and die for you and me!

God Was Justified in the Spirit

1. To justify one means to declare and prove him to be what he claims to be, and to disprove all false accusations that may be made against him” (E.M. Zerr Commentary).

A. Jesus was once and for all time:

Romans 1:4...declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

God Was Seen of Angels

1. **Angels have always had an interest in things pertaining to man's salvation. Peter wrote:**
1 Peter 1:10-12
2. **Angels were present at various times while Christ was on the earth. In Matthew 4:11, after Jesus was tempted by the Devil it says "angels came and ministered unto him."**
 - A. **In Luke 22:38-43, as a result of His prayer to the Father before His betrayal, false accusations, crucifixion, and death, it says "Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him."**
 - B. **On the day of His resurrection it says:**

Matthew 28:2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

- 1) **Jesus was indeed "seen of angels."**

God Was Preached Among the Gentiles

1. **Jesus is the Savior of ALL who will OBEY His gospel!**

- A. **Jesus instructed His disciples to:**

Matthew 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,

- B. **By the time the apostle Paul wrote to the saints in Colosse, he could tell them that the gospel "was preached to every creature under heaven" (Col 1:23)**

- 1) **So the Jews and Gentiles had an opportunity to learn what to do to escape ungodliness and worldly lust.**

God Was Believed on in the World

1. **As the apostles went everywhere preaching the gospel, many believed and obeyed the gospel. In Thessalonica, when the gospel was preached, “some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.”**

A. When the unbelieving Jews realized what was happening, they went to the rulers of the city and said:

Acts 17:6...These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

1) **So we see that many people were believing the saving gospel and Jesus was being believed on in the world.**

God Was Received up Into Glory

1. **After Jesus made it possible for sinful humans to escape ungodliness and have their sins washed away in His blood (Rev 1:5), He returned to His Father in heaven.**

Acts 1:9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

A. This fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel 7:13-14 which says:
Daniel 7:13-14

2. **Jesus returned to the glory of His Father, which He left earlier to come to earth, so that man could have forgiveness of sins through His shed blood!**

John 17:4-5 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Conclusion

1. One verse says it all

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

2. **We have expanded on seven items, and in light of this, no one has any excuse for not believing and OBEYING Jesus Christ.**

3. **Do you believe?**

4. **Have you obeyed?**

5. **If not, why have you not obeyed? It would be a sad, sad thing to know these facts and then have to answer this question from God at the judgment saying: *“no I did not obey - even though I did know of and believe in Christ”.***

6. **If you have fallen away from God, why not return to Him in humble obedience today?**

A. **He wants to save you and everyone else!**

B. **Don't let God down, after all, He didn't let you down.**

7. **He is offering you one more chance to obey His will!**

