

# The Mystery of Godliness

Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God`s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great.. He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

1 Timothy 3:14-16

Although I hope to come to you soon,  
I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed,

This was a temporary job for Timothy until Paul arrives.  
Do all our plans always work out?

James 4:13-15 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

you will know  
how (people) ought to conduct themselves in God`s household

how one ought to behave ESV

Here is something for Timothy to pass on.  
There are the right ways and the wrong ways.  
The word “should” applies to me and you.



## God`s household

It was firstly a reference to the tabernacle –  
But is then applied to God`s people



Numbers 12:7 ... my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house.

The Household is God`s :-

By creation.

By purchase and likeness to Him.

His extended family around the world.

His dwelling place.

which is the church of the living God,

Paul expands his definition of God's "household"

**The Church** - is the universal called-out congregation from diverse backgrounds into one body that is His possession.

**The Living God** – is the real and only God who is active so that a relationship is possible where we interact with Him.

The local church is a congregation of believers in local assemblies



the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Paul is using a building analogy

**A Pillar** supports the superstructure

**The Foundation** – is the basis where it starts

The Church is meant to be **based on** and **uphold** the truth of God

This Truth is about God and His message

Some things are absolute

*When a church ceases to hold to the Scriptures and the Gospel it ceases to be a church.*

Beyond all question,

The is no argument about it

*“When he says ‘without controversy,’ I suppose he means that there ought to be no controversy about these facts, though controversies have arisen concerning them, and always will, since the most self-evident truth will always find self-evident fools to contradict it.” (Spurgeon)*

What is coming next is one of those absolute truths



**the mystery of godliness is great**

What does he mean by the word “Mystery” ?

It is something that was not known before – a kind of secret,  
BUT it is also something that it is NOT possible to know NOW

UNLESS

it is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit by faith



the mystery of godliness is great

What does Paul mean here by “godliness”?

He is going to speak about Jesus, so it seems to say in this verse that godliness means “God-like-ness” ie. Showing what is God like.

Of course the usual use of the word refers to our behaviour and character taking on likeness to our Lord.

the mystery of godliness is great

It is great – this is a big mystery!

Seeing the invisible Lord!

1 Peter 1:8-9 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

He (who) appeared in a body,

There are some text variations here that are ultimately not that important, but we will just mention them.

Θς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:  
**God** was manifest in the flesh, KJV

Ος ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί

1 Timothy 3:16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:  
**He** (who) was manifested in the flesh,

He (who) appeared in a body,

Jesus appeared – Where did he come from?

He adopted human nature – but he was sinless

A real Mystery --- How could God's Son do it?

“God contracted to a span”



Philippians 2:6-7 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

was vindicated by the Spirit



The Spirit's work in the life and ministry of Jesus proved him to be who he said he was – God's Son and the promised Messiah

**At his baptism** – this was confirmation for John the Baptist

John 1:32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me .. said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

**His offering of himself on the cross**

Hebrews 9:14 ....Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God,

was vindicated by the Spirit



## By His resurrection

Romans 1:4 through the Spirit of holiness *he* was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

## At His exaltation – Pentecost

Acts 2:33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

A Great mystery!

was seen by angels,



When ?

**At Bethlehem** - the choir announcement

Luke 2:10 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

**In His temptation**

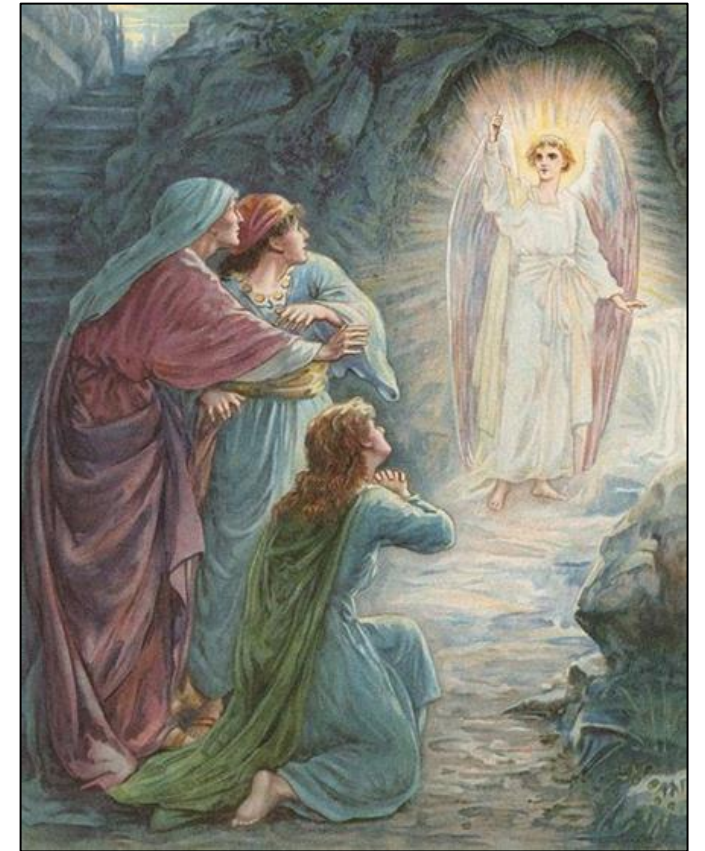
Matthew 4:11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

was seen by angels,

When ?

## They testified at the tomb

Luke 24:4-6 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! "

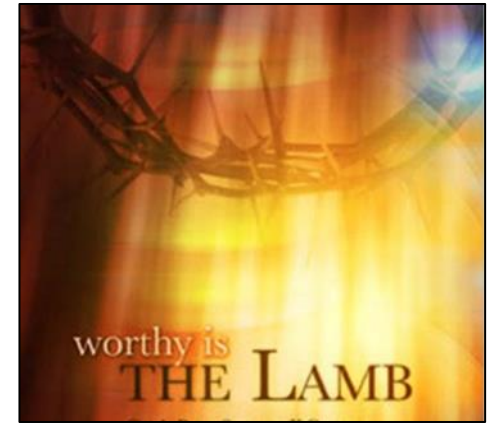




was seen by angels,

When ?

**He was welcomed before the angel host into heaven**



Revelation 5:11-12 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!"

A Great mystery – angels had never seen anything like this before

was preached among the nations

The Lord Jesus Christ is the subject  
of the gospel

1 Corinthians 2:1-2 When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.



was preached among the nations

A great mystery

**This 'weak' message of a crucified Saviour** spread throughout the world.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

**Uniting Jew and Gentile** - a great mystery

Ephesians 2:14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,

was believed on in the world,



A great mystery

**That sinful rebels should respond in faith.**

Romans 3:23-4 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

**He brings the Grace of God to save lost men and women**

Romans 5:10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

was taken up in glory.

A great mystery

**Where he is now**

Act 2:33 Exalted to the right hand of God,



**No more shame.**

Philippians 2:9-10 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

# This text appears to have been used as a song in the early church



The phrases have a poetic structure

He who was manifested in the flesh,  
Was justified in His spirit,  
Was shown to the angels,  
Was proclaimed among the nations,  
Was believed on in the world,  
Was taken up in glory.

He in flesh was manifested,  
By his Spirit was attested;  
Then for angels to behold,  
Among the nations to be told;  
And by faith accepted here,  
And in glory to appear.

It's a lovely summary about Jesus  
They sang it to praise the Lord  
So can we!