

“The Mystery of Godliness”

by Wayne Goff

“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 Timothy 3:16.

“The Mystery Of Godliness”

Probably used by *metonymy* here to refer to the truth (3:15). Obviously the truths enumerated in verse 16 are “great”!

“Manifested In The Flesh”

Undoubtedly the greatest of these great truths was that Almighty God, all-wise, eternal, invisible, all-powerful, came down in the form of lowly flesh to reveal God to man and to redeem him from eternal death! *“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 1:14.* *“Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”?’” ~ John 14:9.* He is named “Immanuel” which is translated “God with us,” **Matthew 1:23.** The chosen twelve saw, beheld, touched and handled God in the flesh and have testified of this to us, **1 John 1:1-2.**

“Justified In The Spirit”

But whose spirit — His own, or the Holy Spirit’s? If His own Spirit, then Jesus lived a sinless life and by the very power of it He is deemed as “justified” (see **John 8:46; Hebrews 4:16**). You and I, as sinful men, can never say that of ourselves! But we can rejoice in the Son of God Who did, and as such became the perfect sacrifice for sin, **John 1:29.**

If this refers to the Holy Spirit, then He is the One by Whom Jesus worked the miracles to prove His deity and work (**John 3:2; 5:36; 10:25, 38; Acts 10:38**). And by the Holy Spirit Jesus was raised up from the dead, **Romans 1:4; 8:11.** Either way, Jesus is vindicated and declared to be **absolutely right and just!**

“Seen By Angels”

The angels who *observed* the Old Testament prophecies (**1 Peter 1:10-12**) and *actively aided* God’s plan on earth (**Luke 2:8-145; Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43; Acts 1:10-11**; etc.) observed first hand “God in the flesh.” They are the eternal observers and witnesses to God and for God.

“Preached Among The Gentiles”

Jesus ordained by the power of His resurrected life that the “Good News” of the Gospel be preached to every nation (**Matthew 28:18**) and to “every creature” (**Mark 16:15**). It was a great day in the history of the Gentile world that God had now offered a spiritual, eternal, soul-saving relationship to those who had been “far off” in sin for so long! God sent the Holy Spirit upon the house of Cornelius to confirm His acceptance of the Gentiles on the same basis as the obedient Jew (see **Galatians 3:26-27**). When Peter and his Jewish witnesses saw the Gentiles speak in tongues, then they were astonished (**Acts 10:45**), and later declared “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life” (**Acts 11:18**). Indeed, as we often sing: “the gospel is for all”!

“Believed On In The World”

Both then and now, many people believe the Gospel message of God coming down to sinful man to save us from our dire predicament (**Romans 10:6-8**).

[concluded on page 370104](#)

370103