

“WITHOUT CONTROVERSY”

INTRODUCTION

A. **1st Timothy 3:16**

1. The “*mystery of godliness*” is described as being “*without controversy*”.
 - a. This is not to say that no one denies these things, only that among those who believe, these things are commonly understood.
 - b. The Greek word behind the term translated “*without controversy*” is “*confessedly*”.
 - i. It indicates common consent.
 - ii. None doubt or disagree.
 - c. Considering that the immediate context (**1st Timothy 3:15**) places the setting in the church...
 - i. We conclude that it is here, within “*the house of God*”, “*the pillar and ground of the truth*”, that agreement is reached concerning this great mystery.
 - ii. The words contained herein express the **fulfillment** of the apostle’s hope for the church.
 - α. **1st Corinthians 1:10**
 - β. **Philippians 2:1-2**
2. What is this great mystery upon which all in the church agree?
 - a. It is “*of godliness*”.
 - b. “*Godliness*” refers to God-likeness, that effort we put forth to be like God.
 - i. Only Christ perfectly embodies the quality of godliness.
 - α. **Colossians 1:15**
“He is the *image* of the invisible God...”
 - β. **Hebrews 1:1-3**

Christ is “the brightness of [God’s] glory and **the express image of His person.**”

- ii. Thus, this mystery concerns itself with Him.
 - c. The mystery, once hidden, is now openly revealed.
 - i. **Colossians 1:24-27**
 - α. “The word of God” is that mystery (25).
 - β. “**Hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints**” (26).
 - γ. The value of the mystery is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (27).
 - ii. **1st Corinthians 2:6-9**
 - α. “God ordained before the ages” (7), and “God has prepared” (9).
 - β. “For **our** glory” (7), and “for those who love Him” (9).
 - iii. **Ephesians 3:1-11**

“When you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (4).
 - d. How is the mystery great?
 - i. Although the mystery is great-big, being “unsearchable” (**Ephesians 3:8**), that is not the meaning of its greatness as set forth here.
 - ii. The “mystery of godliness” is great in the same sense in which the Ephesians vainly chanted, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” (**Acts 19:28**).
 - iii. Thus, we joyfully proclaim, “**Great** is the mystery of godliness!”
- B.** Let us mediate upon the great “mystery of godliness.”

I. "GOD WAS MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH"

A. John 1:1, 14

Yes, God was manifested in the flesh.

B. Galatians 4:4-5

He was born of a woman in order to redeem those under the law.

C. Hebrews 2:14-18

He had to be made man to sympathize with man.

D. Philippians 2:5-9

He is now supremely exalted because He was humbled to live as a man.

II. "JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT"

"Justified" here indicates that He was affirmed to be right or vindicated.

A. Matthew 3:13-17

As He began His ministry Jesus was justified by the Spirit when He lit upon Him in the form of a dove.

B. Romans 1:1-4

According to the Spirit He has been declared to be the Son of God due to His resurrection.

III. "SEEN BY ANGELS"

A. 1st Peter 1:10-12

Angels have always had an interest in the progress of the gospel.

B. Hebrews 1:6; Luke 2:8-14

Thus, they worshipped when Christ was born.

C. Matthew 4:11

Angels came to His aid following His temptations by the devil.

D. Luke 22:41-43

Angels rendered Him aid again following His agonizing prayer in the garden.

- E. **Matthew 28:2-7**
Angels announced His resurrection.
- F. **Acts 1:9-11**
Angels were on hand when He ascended to explain how He would return.
- G. **1st Thessalonians 4:13-16**
Angels will accompany the Lord when He returns.

IV. "PREACHED AMONG THE GENTILES"

- A. **Genesis 12:1-3**
As early as Abraham, God promised to bless **all** the families of the earth.
- B. **Isaiah 2:2**
Isaiah prophesied that **all nations** would enter the Lord's house.
- C. **Matthew 28:19**
Jesus commanded that His gospel be preached to **all nations**.
- D. **Acts 2:36-39**
As Peter preached, the promise of salvation in Christ is for all who are afar off.
- E. **Ephesians 2:11-16**
Christ's blood is able to reconcile Jews and Gentiles.
- F. **Romans 1:16**
The gospel is available to all.

V. "BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD"

- A. **Mark 16:15-20; Romans 10:18**
The apostles went everywhere in the world preaching the gospel.
- B. **Colossians 1:3-6, 23**
Such preaching was effective. Worldwide, people believed.

VI. "RECEIVED UP IN GLORY"

A. John 17:1, 4-5

As Jesus' death loomed near, He knew the time of His glorification was at hand.

B. Luke 24:25-26

After He died and was raised, He spoke of the glory to come following His suffering.

C. Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Hebrews 1:3-4

When He ascended, He was received up to heaven, the most glorious position of all.

D. Colossians 3:1-4

We can join Him in glory when He comes if our minds are fixed on heaven.