

October 24th – The Mystery of Godliness

“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)

In today's verse, Paul is referring to the Gospel as the mystery of godliness. That's not to say that we can't know the Gospel – he's simply saying that no man would know the Gospel had God not revealed it to us. This mystery has everything to do with the earthly ministry of Jesus. First, he mentions the incarnation – “God was manifested in the flesh.” Jesus, who is completely and fully God, took on human flesh when He was born of the virgin Mary. “The Word became flesh” (John 1:14).

Paul then makes reference to the baptism of our Lord – “justified in the Spirit.” When Jesus was baptized, the Bible says that “He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him” (Matt. 3:16). This was the Heavenly Father letting the world know that Jesus is His Son. Next, Paul points us towards Christ's resurrection – “seen by angels.” When Jesus rose from the dead, it was an angel who rolled the stone away and spoke comfort to Christ's followers (Matt. 28:2ff).

Paul then points us to the preaching and receiving of the Gospel – “preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world.” Jesus Himself said that “this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations” (Matt. 24:14). It was men like Peter, Paul, Luke, Timothy, and many others who shared the Gospel everywhere and witnessed many professions of faith. And of course Paul concludes with the ascension – “received up in glory.” The two angels who witnessed Jesus's ascension left us with great hope – “this same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). Even so, come Lord Jesus!