

“Mystery of Messiah” (1 Tim. 3:14-16)

1. Mode of Christ (14-15b)
 - a. Context of Commands: Paul began w/ instructions (commands/prerequisites) and transitions to warning. In between (here), he supplies the impetus from where we find ourselves and for which we carry forward.
 - b. Conduct of Character: Our condition, position, and instruction is a result of our salvation – which is communicated in our doctrine. Read 4:16! Life and doctrine are inseparable. What a person believes determines how he behaves.
2. Mission of Christ (15c)
 - a. Position:
 - i. Firstly, “House of God” and “Church of the living God” indicate our position in God through Christ. The household of God is a relational community.
 - ii. In the OT, the house of God indicates the Tabernacle and Temple as well as connotes the faithful assembly of God’s people and in the NT, God’s household is explicitly stated as believers who have the “living God” dwelling with them (Eph. 2:19-22). Said passage also mixes the metaphor with the Temple as both convey our position in Christ.
 - iii. Furthermore, the final eschatological Temple is the place where God dwells with man – where divinity meets humanity. This is only in Christ – who then builds His Temple Body by dwelling in individual believers making us the living Temple (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16-18; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Tim. 3:14; 1 Pet. 2:5).
 - b. Purpose:
 - i. Why did Jesus come? To build the Temple of the LORD (Zech. 6:12-13).
 - ii. Church described as “pillars” and “foundation” of truth. Jesus cryptically projected such in Matt. 16:18-19.
 - iii. The Body of Christ i.e. Temple, is the agency by which the truth is upheld (as a pillar). And she is the “foundation” of entrance into the Kingdom i.e. by confession of Christ by faith, Jesus builds His living Temple (Mat. 16:18-19).
 - iv. Therefore, the key to the Kingdom is to understand and believe the message →
3. Message of Christ (16)
 - a. Greatest Piety (16a)
 - i. Paul stated that w/o a doubt and ‘beyond all question,’ the greatest mystery coincides with the greatest piety.
 - ii. Timothy was pastor (or overseer) in Ephesus where the motto “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” was chanted for two hours (Acts 19:34). See also “great Artemis” in vv. 27-28 & 35. But the greatness and mysterious godliness of all is whom Paul is about to refer in the quoted hymn, which describes the revealed plan of God in the person of Jesus.
 - b. Godliest Person (16b-g)
 - i. Incarnation (16b) This person of salvation is the sinless substitute who offered Himself by taking a body in order to sacrifice (Heb. 10:5; Jn. 1:14; 1 Jn. 1:2-3 “manifested.” He is the one Man by which we are saved (1 Tim. 2:5-6; Acts 4:12 refers to “Jesus in v. 11). Incarnation = greatest mystery. The Trinity and humility.
 - ii. Vindication (16c) Although the syntax is not explicitly clear re: in spirit or in the Spirit or even before or after the resurrection, we can maintain safety in general observation of both dual possibilities. Ro. 1:4 declares “according to the Spirit” that Jesus is the Son of God who was resurrected and is Lord. Or e.g. in Mat. 3:17 where

“Mystery of Messiah” (1 Tim. 3:14-16)

a “voice from heaven” confirmed Him as “My beloved Son.” And though He was cursed for us (Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21), He was exalted even in His burial (Isa. 53:9b; Mat. 27:59-60).

- iii. Observation (16d) “*Horaō* (**beheld** means “to see,” “to visit,” “to observe,” or “to be attendant to.” Throughout our Lord’s earthly ministry, the **angels** observed Him, and attended to Him. They were there at His birth, announcing it to Joseph and the shepherds. They ministered to Him at His temptation, and strengthened Him in Gethsamane. At His death and resurrection, which is the focal point of this passage, **angels** observed Him. The fallen angels saw Him [1 Peter 3:18–20] ... An angel rolled away the stone at the door of His tomb (Matt. 28:2). Angels appeared to the women, affirming that Jesus had risen (Luke 24:4–7). Finally, two angels attended Christ’s ascension (Acts 1:10–11). Angels were involved in our Lord’s earthly life from beginning to end. That, too, signified divine approval of the incarnate Messiah.”¹
- iv. Proclamation (16e)
 1. Pattern: in this 6 versed hymn, a binary pattern emerges viz. heaven and earth. There are three pairs: The first pair include the flesh (incarnation) and Spirit’s vindication. The last pair involves the “world” and heaven “up in glory.” The present pair include heavenly and earthly preaching i.e. angelic and mankind.
 2. Pervasion: mystery preached to all peoples and nations (Ro. 16: 25-26 cf. Lu. 2:3). Messiah for all the nations! Jesus affirmed the O.T.’s prophesies about the King of all nations.
 3. Person: This hymn is about the person and work of Jesus the Son of God. 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2; 15:1-4.
 4. Persistence: We must never alter the message of Jesus’ person and work! Churches have become lazy, distracted, deceived, etc. At first, they could maintain, “we preach Christ crucified.” Then, “we preach Christ.” Then, “we preach.” And then, “we.”
 5. Prerequisites: Jesus’ righteousness, His divinity, His humanity, His sacrifice, death, resurrection, and ascension.
 6. Precedence: Lu. 24:44-48. The Gospel makes no sense without understanding the Law, righteousness, sin, and justice. Many (including me) get saved by hearing the Gospel of Jesus with little to no understanding of the OT. However, we learn and grow in the Gospel and can better articulate it in different scenarios when we have a handle on the revelation of God’s Word – His redemptive history.
- v. Affirmation (16f)
 1. Others’ faith spurs on my faith. Would you believe if no one else did? But our faith is not without evidence! The affirmation is a result of both revelation and illumination.
 2. Revelation is necessary and so is illumination. Revelation is available to all but none can respond without illumination of the Spirit. Jn. 3:27; 6:44-45, 65; Lu. 24:25-31.
 3. We trust the Word and the Spirit and faithfully preach the truth (Ro. 9:14-17).
- vi. Glorification (16g)

¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1995). *1 Timothy* (p. 141). Moody Press.

“Mystery of Messiah” (1 Tim. 3:14-16)

1. Jesus’ ascension has always remained mysterious to me as His physical ascension was accompanied with no fan fair (Acts 1:11). However, Dan. 7:13-14 predicted the event as cosmic and ultimate. Some think the Dan. 7 refers to Jesus second coming but that is in the future and He has already ascended to the throne and reigns on high, albeit mostly via providence. I can’t help but think we might participate and enjoy a ceremonial coronation after His return, even though His return is another descending viz. bringing heaven and the dead in Christ back to the New Creation.
2. Nevertheless, we wait not to recognize His kingship and glory – as John wrote, “we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14:b-c).

PC:

The Mystery of piety (godliness) is the mystery of the person and work of Jesus. It is a mystery in that it was hidden and only cryptically foreshadowed in the Old Testament. It is also a mystery in that even beholding His revelation, one must receive His illumination in order to embrace Him. It is also a mystery in that no one could ever dream, plot, devise, conjure, or procure such a profound mission, message, meaning, or movement to make members of a manifest mystery into a marvelous miracle. [The ‘M’ words just kept flowing.] It is something that is indescribable, yet we experience it and even proclaim it. And because we proclaim this mystery which is revealed in Scripture by proclaiming the Scripture, it continues to manifest, vindicate, exalt, proclaim, and glorify the God Man Jesus Messiah as it illuminates the contrite and transforms their lives. What a glorious mystery. What a glorious Savior!