

THE MYSTERY OF OUR DEVOTION

1 TIMOTHY 3:16

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. (read verses 14-16) The mystery (revealed secret) of our devotion is Christ. This is made clear as our verse continues.
- B. The church acknowledges (or confesses) this greatness of Christ through our adoration and worship of Him.
- C. Christ is the "mystery of our devotion" for two reasons:
 - 1. If He had not been revealed to us we would not have known Him.
 - 2. Also, it is beyond our feeble earthly abilities to understand Him completely (Eph. 3:14-19).
- D. The immeasurable greatness of Christ is the subject of Paul's next six lines. This is a familiar theme in the NT as we can see from such passages as: Acts 10:34-43; Rom. 8:31-39; Phil. 2:5-11; 2 Thes. 1:7,8 and Heb. 9:24-28.

II. DISCUSSION

- A. Some commentators believe these six lines are taken from an early hymn of the church. It is easy to hear the poetic nature of these lines as they are read aloud. (read lines)
- B. It is my purpose to examine these six lines by comparison and contrast.

- 1. The comparison:

SPIRIT	ANGELS	GLORY	HEAVENLY
FLESH	NATIONS	WORLD	EARTHLY

- 2. The contrast:

WEAK FLESH	VS	STRENGTH-IMPARTING SPIRIT
HEAVENLY ANGELS	VS	EARTHLY NATIONS
WORLD BELOW	VS	GLORY ABOVE

- 3. The thought begins "below" with Christ's humiliation in the flesh, it moves progressively through the remaining five lines to His final exaltation above.

- C. Now we will examine the six lines individually:

- 1. "manifested in the flesh." - By God coming to earth in the form of man, we are allowed to draw closer to Him. "In the flesh" in our language suggests a closeness, a personal relationship.
- 2. "vindicated by the Spirit" - Jesus Christ had his perfect righteousness and the validity of his claims established through the Spirit. The Spirit is the power who proved Jesus to be what He claimed to be.
- 3. "Seen by angels"
 - a. His birth - Lu. 2:9-14
 - b. His triumph over Satan - Mt. 4:11.
 - c. His resurrection - Mt. 28:2-7.

- d. His ascension - Acts 1:10,11.
- e. His return to heaven - Rev. 12:12.
- 4. "preached among the nations" - Jesus Christ belongs to all who will follow Him, regardless of race or ethnic background. The gospel knows no man-made borders.
- 5. "Believed in by the world" - This had been foretold by the prophets, Amos 9:11,12; Micah 4:12. In a span of seventy years Christ had been carried to the ends of the earth.
- 6. "Taken up in glory" - As the story of Christ began in heaven, so it also ends there.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Jesus Christ lived on this earth as a servant, he was branded by man as a criminal, he was crucified on a cross and rose from the dead with the nail prints still on Him, but in the end is glory.
- B. If I Tim. 3:16 is not from a hymn, well it could be. To have a perfect description of His earth life, surrounded by the allusion to His "pre" and "post" eternity in one short verse shows us the economy of the scriptures, another proof of their infallibility and inspiration.
- C. He has made arrangements for us to share this glory. He has prepared a place for His believers to live with Him through eternity. Are you willing to take the steps to take advantage of this arrangement?

Let's stand and sing "An Empty Mansion"

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