



**Faith Baptist Church of Cabot, Arkansas**  
**Pastor's Mid-Week Bible Study**  
**December 2, 2009**

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**Lesson Eleven – The Mystery of Godliness**  
**1 Timothy 3:14-16**

These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 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.

### Introduction

These three verses are the driving force behind this letter to Timothy. The Apostle Paul's overriding concern was that the Ephesian church conduct itself in a manner befitting their reason for existence as the pillar and ground for the truth. Paul wanted nothing in the church to cloud the now revealed mystery of Godliness.

### Exegesis

- ❖ Conduct in the house of God
  - Necessary behavior

“Ought” means “necessary”. Everything Paul addresses in this letter is needful, from dealing with false teachers, to praying men, to orderly women, to proper Bishops and Deacons. Why? Because “great is the mystery of Godliness...” A disordered and worldly church hinders the Gospel through ungodly behavior. So the house of God is to be set in order so that the Gospel of God might be clearly seen and heard.

- The house of God

“House” here speaks of the household or the family that lives in the house. The local church is a family of believers related in Christ through His Gospel. The church should conduct itself as a family, not as a profit seeking business nor as a status seeking club. The church is God's household. He is our perfect Father.

Paul further defines the “house of God” with two phrases. First, “the church of the living God.” The word “church” indicates a group that is called out and visible. The local church is called out by the living God. And though He is unseen, He is actively involved in His church so that His church becomes a visible expression of His Kingdom on the earth.

The second phrase is that the house of God is the “pillar and ground of the truth.” Both “pillar” and “ground” speaks of something that supports or holds something up, like a column. The local visible church is to visibly hold up the truth to its community

through its message and its manner of life. The church doesn't create the truth, the church demonstrates and declares the truth.

❖ The mystery of Godliness

➤ The mystery of Godliness defined

“Mystery” speaks of that which was once concealed but has now been revealed.

“Godliness” speaks of possessing a correct reverence for God that results in a change of life. Paul's point is that God has revealed to us how lives are changed so that (1) the church at Ephesus (and any church) is without excuse for improper behavior and (2) the church at Ephesus (and any church) must not let anything hinder the proclamation of this revealed mystery through their message and conduct.

➤ The mystery of Godliness revealed

- Manifested in the flesh: God took on human form as the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14)
- Justified in the spirit: in the flesh He was hated and despised by lying men, but in the Spirit He was vindicated and proven right culminating in His resurrection.
- Seen by angels: the first witnesses of His resurrection and the hosts who welcomed Him in His exaltation.
- Preached among the Gentiles: part of the mystery was that salvation was not just for Jews, but for the whole world.
- Believed on in the world: received by people of every tongue and tribe.
- Received up in glory: the Son and His work were accepted with approval and exaltation by the Father.

### Application

1. As a church family, this epistle instructs us to:
  - Remain true to the faith of the Father. (1:3-7)
  - Reject the teachings of false teachers, teachings that detract from the Father and divide the family. (1:3-20)
  - Relate to one another according to the Father's will: men and women in the church in proper relation to one another and the Father; bishops and deacons overseeing and serving the family. (2:1-3:13)
  - Recognize and confront the error of our day. (4:1-16)
  - Respect the family according to the Father's will. (5:1-6:2)
  - Rest in the contentment of Godliness. (6:3-10; 17-19)
  - Race after righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. (6:11-15)
  - Rejoice in the Sovereign King of kings and Lord of lords. (6:15-16)
2. As a church family, we belong to God.
3. As a church family, the message we have for our world is the same message that makes us what we are – the Mystery of Godliness.