

INTRODUCTION

It is a thing we Christians confess without controversy: Great is the mystery of godliness!
There is truth that lay hidden from the creation of the world; in fact, from all eternity, regarding the gracious dealings of God with men, by which we may be saved from His wrath.

What we call “the church” is the pillar and ground of that truth

-keeping it safe from corruption

-holding it up for all to see

But what is that truth? What is that mystery, which for so long was concealed, but now is revealed through our Lord’s apostles?

TEXT

1 Timothy 3:16a

BODY

I. God

- A. The mystery is about God, about what He has done
- B. There are many things that have been called gods, or that are still called gods
- C. All of these so-called “gods” are fictional characters, or are mere men of history made larger-than-life in legends and myths, or are statues made by human hands, or are evil spiritual beings, demons, who are not divine, who are not truly gods
- D. But there is one true, living God
 - 1. whose being is eternal, without beginning or end
 - 2. who created all things
 - 3. who is worthy of all our worship, service, and obedience
 - 4. He is rightly called God, the Lord, Jehovah or YHWH, the Creator
 - 5. He is distinguished from all false notions of God by referring to Him as
 - a) the living God
 - b) the God of heaven
- E. This is who the Bible means here by “God”
 - 1. not Baal or Asherah
- F. God is one being, in whom are three persons, or in the theological term, three subsistences: the Father, the Word or Son, and the Holy Spirit
 - 1. so God is both one and three
 - 2. not that God is one and three *in the same sense*;
 - a) that would be impossible; that is a contradiction
 - b) nothing can be one and three *in the same sense*, including God
 - 3. but as to essence, there is one divine essence; as to persons, there are three divine persons
 - 4. so the word “Trinity” for referring to this truth that God is three in one; understanding from the Bible that God is one God in three persons, Christians long ago combined the words *tri* meaning “three” and *uni* meaning “one” into the theological term “Trinity”
 - 5. we read in the Bible about the three persons of God, and so we can distinguish them from each other
 - 6. but there is no dividing them from each other, because the three person of God are essentially one being, the one true and living God
 - 7. we marvel at this, and we worship God as the blessed Trinity, because no creature is more than one person in one being
 - a) each of us is one person in one being
 - b) only God is three persons in one being
- G. In this place in the Bible, the word “God” is being used to refer not to God the Father or God the Holy Spirit, but to the Word of God or Son of God
 - 1. traditionally, we speak of the Trinity in this order
 - a) the first person, God the Father
 - b) the second person, God the Son
 - c) the third person, God the Holy Spirit
 - 2. here in 1 Tim 3:16, the word “God” refers to the second person
 - a) the Word of God
 - b) the Son of God; God the Son

II. God Was Manifest

- A. The mystery is that God was manifest or manifested
- B. God is a pure spirit; so, we cannot perceive His essence by any of our senses
- C. So, for us to know Him, we need for God to manifest Himself to us, to make Himself known to us in ways our senses could perceive
- D. In the past, God had manifested Himself to us in various ways at various times
 - 1. when Adam and Eve sinned, God manifested Himself as someone walking in the garden
 - 2. God manifested Himself to Moses as a bush burning, but not being burned up
 - 3. God manifested Himself to Israel in the Exodus from Egypt as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night
 - 4. God manifested Himself by speaking to us at sundry times and in divers manners through the many prophets
- E. But, then, when the time had come, according to the plan He always had, God was manifest in a way greater than any of these

III. God Was Manifest in the Flesh

- A. God, specifically the Word of God, God the Son, the Son of God was manifest or manifested in the flesh
- B. That He was manifest in the flesh means He took on our human nature;
 - 1. while remaining God, He became also a man
 - 2. He did not cease to be God when He became a man
 - 3. He is now the only person who has in Himself two natures
 - a) the divine nature, which He always has had, from all eternity, as God the Son
 - b) human nature, which He has had since He was conceived in the womb of the virgin, Mary
- C. Yes, God was manifest in the flesh as a baby born to a woman without the action of a human father
 - 1. Mary, the mother, conceived and gave birth while she was a virgin; that is, when she had not known a man
 - 2. as the angel Gabriel explained to Mary: Luke 1:35 NKJV And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."
- D. Matthew 1:22-23 NKJV So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which is translated, "God with us."
- E. God manifest in the flesh is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

IV. That God Was Manifest in the Flesh Is Good News to Us

- A. God, manifest in the flesh, can obey God's law in perfect righteousness for us, on our behalf; can shed his own blood for us, on our behalf; and can show us the perfect example of how to live this life on earth
- B. God manifest in the flesh was, by the Lord's order to Joseph, named "Jesus" which means, "God saves," because He will save His people from their sins (Matthew 1;21)
- C. Romans 8:1-3 KJV There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
 - 1. there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus
 - 2. "For" that there is no condemnation is attributed to God sending His own Son in the flesh
- D. Hebrews 2:14-17 KJV Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.
 - 1. verse 14 he took part in our same flesh and blood
 - 2. by that, He could destroy the devil
 - 3. by that, He could be the high priest to make reconciliation or propitiation for us

CONCLUSION

God---in the person of the Son,
was manifest---was made known to us in ways we can perceive with our senses
in the flesh---by His taking on our human nature

Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh!

Jeremiah - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Matthew 1:23

James - Scripture Reading - John 1:1-14

Chris - Congregational Prayer

Lord's Supper - Romans 5:5-9

Benediction - Romans 16:25-27

Haven - Prelude

Allison - Trinity 718 "Leaning On the Everlasting Arms"

Rita - Trinity 736 "Jehovah Hear Thee"

Rita - Trinity 150 "All My Heart This Night Rejoices"

Erasmus Greek/Latin NT 1519

Deus manifestat est in carne

θεος

Spurgeon

“God was manifest in the flesh.”

In this Paul testifies not merely to our Lord’s birth, but to the whole of the divine manifestation in His life of 32 or 33 years.

“God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory,”

1 Peter 1:20 KJV Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

1689.2.3

...the Word or Son...of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided...the Son is eternally begotten of the Father...which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him.

1689.8.2

The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father’s glory, of one substance and equal with him who made the world, who upholdeth and governeth all things he hath made, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him f man’s nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, g yet without sin; being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her: and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; h and so was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures; so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one i Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

John 1:14 KJV And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Galatians 4:4-5 KJV But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Romans 8:1-3 KJV There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Hebrews 2:14-17 KJV Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 4:15 KJV For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Matthew 1:22-23 KJV Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Luke 1:26-35 KJV And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

1 Timothy 2:5-6 KJV For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

