GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

I Timothy 3:16(NASB) And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness:

He who was revealed in the flesh,

Was vindicated in the Spirit,

Beheld by angels,

Proclaimed among the nations,

Believed on in the world,

Taken up in glory.

“By common confession” translates a word meaning for everyone to say the same thing.

“Great” is *“mega.”*

“The mystery of godliness” is a very literal translation. “The mystery from which true godliness springs” (NIV) probably expresses what it means.

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Galatians 5:16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Ephesians 3:4-6 In reading this, then you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:14-17a For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

Ephesians 3:17b-19 And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:20&21 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we as or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

He Was Revealed in the Flesh

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling with us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Vindicated in the Spirit

The word translated “vindicated” is most often translated “justified” or “declared righteous.”

John 2:1818-22 The Jews then responded to him, “What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and are you going to raise it in three days?” But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

Romans 1:3&4 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Beheld by Angels

Angels told Joseph in a dream to not be afraid to take Mary as his wife (Matthew 1:20).

His birth was announced by angels (Luke 2:8-15).

An angel told Joseph in a dream to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt (Matthew 2:13).

An angel to Joseph to take Mary and Jesus back to Israel (Matthew 2:19&20).

Angels attended Jesus after He was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:11).

An angel strengthened Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke22:43).

Matthew 26:53 “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

Proclaimed among the Nations, Believed on in the World

“Nations” is *“ethnos”* in Greek, basically meaning people groups who are not Jewish.

Luke 24:46-48 He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

Matthew 24:14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

Acts 11:8 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

Acts 15:13-15 When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

Acts 15:16-19 “ ‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things – things known from long ago.’ It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.”

Taken up in Glory

Luke 24:50&51 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

Acts 1:9-11 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Things to Remember

The mystery of godliness is all about Jesus:

He was revealed in the flesh.

He was vindicated (justified) in the Spirit.

He was beheld by angels.

He was proclaimed among the nations.

He was believed on in the world.

He was taken up in glory.

What Jesus accomplished by His life and death and by sending the Holy Spirit to live in those who believe in Him makes true godliness possible for those who choose to walk in the Spirit.