

**STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD – BY ERIC D. SMITH**

**CHAPTER 4 - THE MYSTERY OF GOD MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH**

*“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: 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 Timothy 3:16*

Not understanding the true identity of Jesus has proven throughout the centuries to keep new believers from following through with one of the simple steps involved in salvation – taking on the name of Jesus in water baptism. Without understanding this mystery that Paul is communicating to Timothy, some believers have only titles called over them in water baptism and not the NAME of Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 declares, *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”* Peter commands the people in Acts 2:38 to *“be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . . .”* Paul actually re-baptizes the followers of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-6), this time using the name of Jesus since the name was not used in water baptism before the crucifixion of Jesus..

Paul describes this mystery as *“the mystery of godliness”* (1 Timothy 3:16). The word which is translated into the English word “godliness” is from the Greek word *eusebeia*. *Strong’s Concordance* defines this word as piety towards God. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines piety as “showing reverence for deity and devotion to divine worship”. Paul, therefore, is declaring that a mystery exists in the Christian’s WORSHIP of their God.

Paul is ready to explain this Christ that the Christians worship. Paul declares six truths unto Timothy about our God that is now forever documented for ages to come. He tells us that *“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 Timothy 3:16).

**Questions, Discussions and Notes**

1. When a believer does not understand the true identity of Jesus, what usually happens when it comes to water baptism?
  
2. Is it a scriptural practice to re-baptize someone who has not been baptized in the name of Jesus?
  
3. Is Paul telling Timothy that since great is the mystery of godliness, that the Christian can never understand God or who Jesus is?
  
4. List the six truths that Paul tells Timothy about our God. God was:
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_
  - F. \_\_\_\_\_

Paul specifically uses the Greek word *theos* in 1 Timothy 3:16. It was God that was manifested in the flesh. Both the Old Testament and New Testament writers reinforce the fact that there is just one God and it was this only God of Heaven that came down in flesh form to become our Savior. This is the truth about God that Paul spoke about in 1 Timothy 3:16 when he said that God was manifest in the flesh. *Strong's Concordance* defines the word *manifest* as "to make visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way." This action of "manifestation" was able to make visible (in the form of a human) something that had been invisible (the Spirit).

When Paul speaks of the invisible God in another passage to the Colossians, it is very interesting that he speaks of Jesus as being the image of the invisible God, and speaks of Jesus as being the creator of all things and that in Jesus should ALL fullness dwell. (Colossians 1:14-19)

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**\*\*Correction Note** - On page 33 of the book, the Hebrew word for LORD is *YHWH*.

5. John 4:24 tells us that God is a Spirit. Like the *pneuma* that Jesus speaks of in John chapter three, are we able to see a Spirit? If not, then how can we see the manifestation of God? Explain your answer.
  
6. Jesus is "*the image of the invisible God*". What English word do we get from the Greek word that is often used in computer or phone terminology? (On page 31)
  
7. Since Paul and other Old and New Testament writers know that we are not supposed to worship another man, why does the Christian worship Jesus?