

1Tim 3:14-16 – THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

I. Introduction:

A. Previously:

1. Leading ones must have a prayer life, all other brothers to follow
2. Charge sisters to remain in faith, love and holiness with sobriety
3. Elders have been established
4. Deacons have been appointed

B. Now, Paul presents an extremely high standard for the church (vv. 15 – 16)

1. Church should function as the house of the *living God, the pillar and the base of the truth. And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh*

II. The House of the Living God (v. 15)

A. “Know how one ought to conduct himself”

1. Paul’s instructions on how to take care of local church

B. “the church is the house of God”

1. The Greek word denotes house, and can be translated household
2. Household, family of God is the house of God
3. House and household are one thing – the assembly of the believers (Eph. 2:19, Heb. 3:6)
4. Reality of this house, as the dwelling place of the living God, is in our spirit (Eph. 2:22)

III. The Pillar and Base of the Truth (v. 15)

A. Pillar holds and supports the building

B. Base holds the pillar

C. Truth refers to the reality and the contents of God’s New Testament Economy

1. Economy is composed of two mysteries:
 - a. Christ as the mystery of God (Col. 2:2)
 - b. Church as the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:4)

IV. The Mystery of Godliness (v. 16)

A. “And” implies that Paul (in v. 16) is still speaking about the church (in v. 15)

1. The church is the house, the pillar, the base, and the mystery of godliness

B. Godliness, not merely piety, but refers to the living God in the church

1. God as life lived out in the church
2. Godliness refers to God expressed

C. “Who”

1. Transition from “the mystery...” to “who” implies that Christ as the manifestation of God in the flesh is the mystery of godliness (Col. 1:27; Gal 2:20)
 2. “Who” vs. “Which” implies the mystery of godliness is a person and not merely a matter
- D. “In the flesh” means in the likeness, or fashion, of man (Rom. 8:3; Phil 2:7-8)
1. Christ appeared to people (2 Cor. 5:16), yet He was God manifested in a man
- E. “Vindicated in the Spirit”
1. The Greek word for vindicated also means justified
 - a. Christ in His human living was not only vindicated as Son of God by the Spirit (Matt. 3:16-17; Rom 1:3-4)
 - b. But was also justified, proved, and approved as right and righteous by the spirit (Matt. 3:16-17; Rom 1:3-4)
 2. Appeared as man, but lived in the Spirit (Luke 4:1, 14; Matt. 12:28)
 3. And offered himself to God through the Spirit (Heb. 9:14)
 4. His transfiguration (Matt. 17:2) and His resurrection are all vindications of the Spirit
 5. In resurrection, He became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45, 2 Cor. 3:17) to dwell and live in us (Rom. 8:9-10) for the manifestation of God in the flesh
- F. “Seen by angels”
1. Angels saw the incarnation, human living, and ascension of Christ (Luke 2:9-14; Matt. 4:11; Acts 1:10-11; Rev 5:6, 11-12)
- G. “Believed on in the World”
1. Christ, as embodiment of God in the flesh has been believed on, received as Savior and life (Acts 13:48)
- H. “Taken up in glory” refers to Christ’s ascension into glory (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Phil 2:9)
1. According to the sequence of historical events Christ’s ascension (Acts 1) preceded being preached among nations (Acts 2)
 - a. Listed here as last event of Christ being manifestation of God in the flesh
 - b. “Taken up in glory” not only refers to ascension of Christ, but also rapture of the church
 - c. The church is the continuation of Christ’s manifestation of God
 - d. Head (Christ) has been taken up in glory, then the body (church) will also be taken up in glory
 2. This is the great mystery of godliness: Christ lived out of the church as the manifestation of God in the flesh