

1 Timothy 3:14-16

- the mystery of godliness is great -

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Introduction

- ❖ **What is the key to our piety or the secret of our devotion to God?** What is the secret of the Christian community, the church, and the individual Christian?
 - That is the mystery of godliness. And the mystery is the contents of a song of devotion to Christ.
- ❖ This is a companion to 1 Timothy 2:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:8-15, and 1 Timothy 3:1-13.¹
- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the First Letter to Timothy. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Context

- ❖ Overview of the First Letter to Timothy and its urgency:

1:1, 2	Greeting
The proclamation of the Gospel endangered.	

¹ <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/files/pub/word/1%20Timothy%202.1-7.pdf>

1:3-11	Warning against false teachers of the Law
1:12-17	The Gospel of Grace poured out on Paul
1:15	Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
1:18-20	Timothy, stay faithful to this Gospel, fight the good fight.
Instructions for the congregation	
2:1-15	About prayer and behaviour: godliness and holiness
3:1-13	About elders, deacons, and women
3:14-16	Concluding remark: behaviour within the household of God and “the mystery of godliness.”
Specific instructions for Timothy	
4:1-16	“Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching” (4:13)
4:9, 10	“This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.”
Instructions for the congregation	
5:1-6:2	About men and women in general, (younger) widows and elders in particular “without partiality” (5:21), and slaves.
6:3-10	About false doctrines and financial gain
Final instructions for Timothy	
6:11-21	“Fight the good fight of faith” (6:12; see also 1 Timothy 1:18, where Paul expresses the same thought with different words). Summary of instructions, “guard what has been entrusted to your care” (6:20).
6:21	Greeting

❖ What are the signs of the urgency of this letter?

- “As I **urged** you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer” (1 Tim 1:3).

- “I **urge**, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—“ ((1 Tim 2:1).
- “Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction (...), so that by following them you may fight the good fight” (1:18).² This is an indication that Timothy was **engaged in a conflict**³ and had to deal with several (serious) problems. Paul concludes his letter: “Fight the good fight of faith”⁴ (6:12), indicating a more personal struggle of Timothy.
- This urgency and the importance of salvation are also stressed by two trustworthy-sayings. There is a third one (3:1) following his remark on the salvation of women.
- ❖ Paul uses in 1 Timothy 4-6 about 30 imperatives (second person).
 - There are thirteen third-person imperatives, which need to be translated with "must," which has more force than “should” (1 Tim 2:11): “the *third person*” imperative is normally translated as “*Let him do*, etc. This is easily confused in English with a permissive idea. Its force is more akin to *he must*, however, or periphrastically, *I command him to...*”⁵
 - He uses also expressions like: “I want” (2:9; 5:14), “I do not permit” (2:11); “I charge”⁶ (5:21); “I charge”⁷ (6:13). In the last two cases, Paul writes: “in the sight of God.”
- ❖ What was the reason for this urgency?
 - Paul writes about several problems, which he is aware of (by correspondence?):
 - There are false teachers active (1 Tim 1:3-11; 4:1-5; 6:3-5), who for instance “forbid people to marry” (1 Tim 4:3).
 - Some people have wandered from the faith (1 Tim 1:6; 6:21; see also 1 Tim 6:10). Others have shipwrecked their faith (1 Tim 1:19-20).

² “**στρατεύη** ἐν αὐταῖς τὴν καλὴν στρατείαν” (Compare note 5.)

³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 947).

⁴ “**ἀγωνίζου** τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς πίστεως”

⁵ Wallace, D. B. (1996, p. 486 and note 97).

⁶ διαμαρτύρομαι

⁷ παραγγέλλω

- Paul addresses the behaviour of men and women (1 Tim 2:8-15), the position and behaviour of older and younger widows (1 Tim 5:1-16), and the pitfalls for people who want to be rich (1 Tim 6:5-10, 17-19).
- He devotes one short paragraph to slaves (1 Tim 6:1-2).
- ❖ Finally, Paul deems it necessary to visit Ephesus again (1 Tim 3:15, 16).

Form and structure

- ❖ An outline of 1 Timothy 3:14-16:

<i>Conclusion of the preceding two chapters</i>	
<i>(Verse 14, 15)</i>	<p>Although I hope to come to you soon,</p> <p>I am writing you these instructions so that,</p> <p>if I am delayed,</p> <p>you will know</p> <p>how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household,</p> <p>which is the church of the living God,</p> <p>the pillar and foundation of the truth.</p>
<i>A song of praise</i>	
<i>(verse 16)</i>	<p>Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">He appeared in a body,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">was vindicated by the Spirit,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">was seen by angels,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">was preached among the nations,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">was believed on in the world,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">was taken up in glory.</p>

Technical, hermeneutical and historical notes

Background: Timothy and Ephesus (context 1, 2, 3)

❖ Timothy⁸

- A missionary associate, fellow worker, and trusted emissary of Paul over an extended period. Timothy is mentioned after Paul in the prescript of various Pauline letters as a co-sender of those letters (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Philemon 1; 2 Thess 1:1; Col 1:1). He is variously identified as "our brother" (1 Thess 3:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Philemon 1), as "fellow worker" (1 Thess 3:2; Rom 16:21), and as Paul's "beloved and faithful child in the Lord" (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2) who enjoys a special relationship with this apostle (Phil 2:20–22; 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2; 2:1).
- According to Acts Timothy was a native of Lystra in Asia Minor (16:1, 2), the son of a Jewish woman and a Greek father (16:1). 2 Timothy names his mother as Eunice and his grandmother as Lois, both of whom are described as Christian believers (1:5).
- At Lystra during Paul's second missionary journey, Timothy is chosen by Paul to accompany him, probably because "he was well spoken of by the brethren" of that area (Acts 16:2–3).
- Timothy along with Silas (= Silvanus) accompanied Paul through Asia Minor to Troas and then went over to Macedonia. At Philippi, they became involved in a conflict (Acts 16:6–40; 1 Thess 2:2).
- The significance of Timothy is underscored by his being named as the recipient of two pastoral letters. The letters also pick on the theme of the uniquely close relationship between Paul and Timothy, who is referred to variously as "true child of the faith" (1 Tim 1:2; cf. 2 Tim 1:2), and "my son" (1 Tim 1:18; 1 Tim 2:1).
- According to a later tradition preserved by Eusebius, Timothy, the disciple of Paul, was the first bishop of Ephesus.

❖ The City of Ephesus:⁹

- The city was an important administrative and commercial hub of the Roman province of Asia. Nowadays the remnants of the magnificent city theatre can still be viewed. It had a seating capacity of 24,000 people (Acts 19:30-41). The temple of

⁸ Excerpt from: Gillman, J. (1992, pp. 558-560).

⁹ Arnold, C. (1993). Ephesus. In *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (pp. 249-253). Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

Artemis was famous and already classified in the ancient world as one of the seven wonders of the world. Numerous other gods and goddesses were worshipped.

- The City of Ephesus in the New Testament:
 - Paul visited Ephesus for the first time only briefly on his way to Jerusalem (Acts 18:18-22). After he had left the city, Priscilla and Aquila continued to preach the gospel (Acts 18:24-28).
 - Paul visited the city for a second time and stayed there for more than two years (Acts 19): **“This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.”** More churches were probably established during these years (Rev 2-3) in the Roman province of Asia.
 - Paul must have encountered severe conditions while he was in Ephesus. In his letter to the Corinthians, he wrote: **“If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus** for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die’” (1 Cor 15:32). The majority of recent scholars postulate that Paul was in prison one or more times while he was in Ephesus.
 - Paul met the Elders of the church on the beach of the city of Miletus (Acts 20:13-38) when he travelled to Jerusalem.
 - Jews from Asia recognized Paul when he entered the temple in Jerusalem: **“Some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple.** They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him” (Acts 21:27; 24:19).
 - Later, Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3) to support this church through teaching and instructions.
- Finally, the apostle John received his Revelation of Jesus Christ and sent it to the seven churches in Asia, the first being Ephesus (Rev 1:11; 2:1-7). According to old church traditions, John stayed probably at the end of his life in Ephesus.

Background: the Roman-Greek household and the church of Christ

- ❖ The household was the basic unit in Roman-Greek society. The stability of the city was seen as dependent upon the management of the household> A similar thought is found in 1 Timothy 3:4, 5.
- ❖ The household consisted of the members of the immediate family and included slaves, freedmen, servants and labourers, tenants and business associates. This is reflected in instructions found in the letter to the Ephesians 5:21-6:10, Colossians 3:18-4:1

- ❖ The householder had full authority over the members of the household. He was the father of the family (1 Tim 3:2) but in a few cases, the householder could be a woman: Lydia in Philippi (Acts 16:15, 16) and possibly Phoebe in Cenchrea (Rom 16:1, 2).
- ❖ The householder had obligations and legal responsibilities. The household provided a sense of security and social stability. The members of the household were supposed to be loyal. This loyalty had several aspects, such as economic, social, relational, psychological, and religious.
- ❖ The Roman-Greek householder was responsible for the family worship of the household gods. This all changed of course when a household was converted to Christianity (Priscilla and Aquila, Rom 16:5, 1 Cor 16:19; Stephanas, 1 Cor 1:16; Lydia and the house of the jailor, Acts 16:14-16, 34). In other cases, it was only the husband or the wife who became a Christian (1 Cor 7:12-14; 1 Pet 3:1-5).
- ❖ Christians didn't have their own places of worship, like the Jews in their synagogues. It was a natural development that they met at the homes of their affluent members, also to share their meals, and especially the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34).
 - Some of these homes could accommodate a congregation of between 100 and 200 people. It is evident from the comments of Paul on slaves and masters, and on proper conduct for wealthy Christians (1 Tim 2:9, 10; 6:1-7, 17-19), that such places of gathering in view in the references to "households" (1 Tim 3:15; 2 Tim 1:16; 4:19; Tit 1:11; ? 1 Tim 5:13).¹⁰
- ❖ The image of the church as a household sheds light on the Christian community and how it functions as a social unit. Although Paul didn't change roles in society, within the community of Christians, masters and slaves became each other's brothers (Philem 6), and men and women became co-heirs of the gift of life (1 Pet 3:7) summarized in Galatians 3:28, 29: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The Christian church is a "household of faith" (Gal 6:10; ESV) and "household of God" (Eph 2:19).
- ❖ Within this new context, the ministry and the minister must be understood (1 Tim 3:1-7; 5:1, 2). The people of God are "God's household, a living and growing family whose life together requires mutuality of service and care, recognition of responsibilities, and a sense of identity, belonging and protection."¹¹

¹⁰ Ellis, E. E. (1993, p. 662). *Pastoral Letters*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

¹¹ Towner, P. H. (1993, p. 417-418). *Households and Household Codes*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

- As a place of Christian instruction, the home had to be protected from serving as a channel for the propagation of false teaching (2 Jn 10; 2 Tim 3:6).¹²

Lexicographical comments (1 Tim 3:14-16)

Verse 15

- ❖ “to conduct oneself” = “**ἀναστρέφω**”: 3. **to conduct oneself in terms of certain principles, act, behave, conduct oneself, live.**¹³ In the preceding two chapters, this behaviour is described by various terms, of which some need special attention. See below.
- ❖ “household” = “**οἶκος**”: see above.

Verse 16

- ❖ “godliness” = “**εὐσέβεια**”: **awesome respect accorded to God, devoutness, piety, godliness.**¹⁴ (Also: 1 Timothy 2:2)
 - **“It denotes a manner of life. It is the honouring of God the Creator and Redeemer of all men.”**¹⁵
 - Paul uses a similar word in 1 Timothy 2:10: “**θεοσεβεια**”: **reverence for God or set of beliefs and practices relating to interest in God, piety, godliness.**¹⁶
- ❖ “mystery” = “**μυστήριον**”: 2. **that which transcends normal understanding, transcendent/ultimate reality, secret.**¹⁷ It refers to the activity of God and its impact on God's people. The same word is also used in 1 Timothy 3:9: “the deep truths of the faith” (NIV) / “**the mystery** of the faith” (ESV).

This conduct is described in 1 Timothy 2 and 3:

- ❖ “peaceful” (1 Tim 2:2) = “**ἡρεμος**”: **quiet, tranquil, of life.**¹⁸

¹² Oster, R. E., Jr. (1992, Vol. 1, p. 943). *Christianity: Christianity in Asia Minor*. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.).

¹³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 72).

¹⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 412).

¹⁵ Foerster, W. (1964–, Vol. 7, p. 183).

¹⁶ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 452).

¹⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 662).

¹⁸ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 439).

- ❖ “quiet” (1 Tim 2:2) = “ἡσύχιος”: **quiet, well-ordered**. Here it means probably: **without turmoil**.¹⁹ (See also below 1 Tim 2:11, 12).
- ❖ “holiness” (NIV) / “dignified” (ESV) (1 Tim 2:2; 3:4) = “σεμνότης”: **a manner or mode of behaviour that indicates one is above what is ordinary and therefore worthy of special respect**; a. of a human being *dignity, seriousness, probity, holiness*.²⁰
 - “σεμνός” (1Tim 3:8, 11): *worthy of respect/honour, noble, dignified, serious*.²¹
- ❖ “good” (1 Tim 2:3) = “καλός”: 2. **pertaining to being in accordance at a high level with the purpose of something or someone, good, useful**. b. of moral quality *good, noble, praiseworthy, contributing to salvation*.²² c. in any respect *unobjectionable, blameless, excellent*.²³
- ❖ “modestly” (1 Tim 2:9; 3:2) = “κόσμιος” / “κοσμίως” (Adv.): **pertaining to being in accord with accepted standards of propriety**, *modestly, decorously, observing decorum*.²⁴
 - Paul demands this virtue of an overseer and Christian women. It is not specifically Christian but already found in the classical Greek world and the popular ethics of Hellenism along with αἰδώς (“decency”) and σωφροσύνη (“propriety”).²⁵
- ❖ “decency” (1 Tim 2:9) = “αἰδώς”: This term expresses the opposite of considering or treating something in a common or ordinary manner; **respect for convention**.²⁶
- ❖ “propriety” (1 Tim 2:9; 3:2) = “σωφροσύνη”: **one of the four cardinal virtues**; YY
 - 1. generally **soundness of mind, reasonableness, rationality**;
 - 2. **practice of prudence, good judgment, moderation, self-control** as exercise of care and intelligence appropriate to circumstances.²⁷

¹⁹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 440, 441).

²⁰ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 919).

²¹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 919).

²² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 504).

²³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 505).

²⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 561).

²⁵ Sasse, H. (1964–). *κοσμέω, κόσμος, κόσμιος, κοσμικός*. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.).

²⁶ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 24).

- “**Propriety**” indicates a life characterized by balance and self-control which is linked to the Christ-event (1 Tim 3:16) and the change of life which faith in Christ produces. “Applied specifically to women (1 Tim 2:9), “propriety” (σωφροσύνη) might suggest chastity and sexual purity as a form of self-control.”²⁸
- ❖ “profess” (1 Tim 2:10) = “ἐπαγγέλλομαι”:
 - 1. **to declare to do something with implication of obligation to carry out what is stated, promise, offer.**
 - 2. **to claim to be well-accomplished in something, profess, lay claim to, give oneself out as an expert in something.**²⁹
- ❖ “worship (NIV) / godliness (ESV)” (1 Tim 2:10) = “θεοσέβεια”: **reverence for God or set of beliefs and practices relating to interest in God, piety, godliness.**³⁰ See also Genesis 20:11, Job 28:28.
 - Women who confess Christianity must substantiate this confession of their religion by good works.³¹
- ❖ “quietness” (1 Tim 2:11) = “ἡσυχία”:
 - 1. **state of quietness without disturbance, quietness, rest** (2 Thess 3:12).
 - 2. **state of saying nothing or very little, silence.**³²
 - These two descriptions complement each other. The silence (2) is meant to avoid or to stop disturbance (see also Acts 22:2).
- ❖ “submission” (1 Tim 2:11; 3:4) = “ὑποταγή”: **the state of submissiveness, subjection, subordination, as opposed to setting oneself up as controller, subordinating herself in every respect.**³³

²⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 987).

²⁸ Marshall, I. H., & Towner, P. H. (2004, p. 449), referring to Spicq.

²⁹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 356).

³⁰ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 452).

³¹ Bertram, G. (1964–). *θεοσεβής, θεοσέβεια*. In G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.).

³² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 385).

³³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 1041).

- In the NT the use of “submission” is only found in the Pauline letters. In 1 Cor 14:34, it means "submission" in the sense of renunciation of initiative (compare 1 Tim. 2:11).³⁴
- ❖ “to have authority over” = “**αὐθεντέω**”: **to assume a stance of independent authority**, *give orders to, dictate to*.³⁵ To control in a domineering manner—‘to control, to domineer.’
 γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω ... αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρὸς ‘I do not allow women ... to dominate men’ 1 Tim 2:12. ‘To control in a domineering manner’ is often expressed idiomatically, for example, ‘to shout orders at,’ ‘to act like a chief toward,’ or ‘to bark at.’³⁶
- ❖ “holiness” (1 Tim 2:15) = “**ἁγιασμός**”: **personal dedication to God**, *holiness, consecration, sanctification*.³⁷ What is expressed is not the state but the conduct of women.³⁸
- ❖ “temperate” (1 Tim 3:2, 11) = “**νηφάλιος**”:
 - 1. **pertaining to being very moderate in the drinking of an alcoholic beverage**, *temperate, sober*.
 - 2. **pertaining to being restrained in conduct**, *self-controlled, level-headed*.³⁹

Exposition

Summary 2:1-3:13

- ❖ Paul is concerned about the church and its position in de society. Therefore he wants the members of the church to pray so that they as Christians "live peaceful and quiet lives In all godliness and holiness" (2:2).

³⁴ Delling, G. (1964–). *τάσσω, τάγμα, ἀνατάσσω, ἀποτάσσω, διατάσσω, διαταγή, ἐπιταγή, προστάσσω, ὑποτάσσω, ὑποταγή, ἀνυπότακτος, ἄτακτος (ἀτάκτως), ἀτακτέω*. In G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.).

³⁵ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 150).

³⁶ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, Vol. 1, p. 473).

³⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 10).

³⁸ Procksch, O., & Kuhn, K. G. (1964–). *ἅγιος—ἀγιάζω—ἁγιασμός ἀγιότης—ἀγιωσύνη*. In: G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.).

³⁹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 672).

- “Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody” (1 Tess 4:11, 12).
- “The mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory” (1 Tim 3:16).
- This quiet live means: not being disturbed (See above).
- “Holiness”: This Christian lifestyle pleases God (1 Tim 2:4) because it supports the proclamation of the Gospel (1 Tim 3:15). This is good because God "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:5):
 - “the truth.
 - For there is one God (1)
 - and one mediator between God and men, (2)
 - the man Christ Jesus, (3)
 - who gave himself as a ransom for all men" (4)

See for further information: 1 Timothy 2:1-7.⁴⁰

- ❖ In verse 8-15, Paul urges men and women to pray, worship, and learn in a quiet = not disturbing manner.⁴¹
- ❖ “Here is a trustworthy saying.” These words form a transition to the next subject in which Paul gives instructions about overseers, deacons and women (deaconesses?) (1 Tim 3:1-13).

Verse 14, 15

- ❖ “I hope to come to you soon.” The situation in Ephesus is calling for urgency. See above.
 - Meeting someone face to face is often better than communicating by letter. There is always a time lapse between sending and receiving the letter, and when a letter is misunderstood, the receiver cannot ask the sender, nor the sender can give some additional clarification of what he wrote.
- ❖ “These instructions.” This refers primarily to 1 Timothy 2:1-3:13. Other instructions are found in 1 Timothy 4:1-6:21. For these instructions, it is not necessary to wait for the arrival of Paul.

⁴⁰ <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/files/pub/word/1%20Timothy%202.1-7.pdf>

⁴¹ <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/files/pub/word/1%20Timothy%202.8-15.pdf>

- “how people ought to conduct themselves”:
 - Propriety, one of the four cardinal virtues.
 - With modesty, decency, temperate.
 - Quietness, not causing disturbance.
 - Holiness, personal devotion to God.
 - Worthy of respect.
 - For more information, see the lexicographical comments above.
 - Overseers and deacons need a good testimony (1 Tim 3:5, 7, 10, 12).
- ❖ “If I am delayed” “can also have the meaning ‘in case I am delayed’; the Greek construction seems to suggest that it is not very likely that there will be anything to hinder Paul’s forthcoming visit. This clause may also be expressed as ‘If something delays me’ or ‘But in case I cannot come (or, go) to you as soon as I want to.’ ”⁴²
- ❖ “in God’s household which is the church of the living God”. See for a similar connection between household and the church 1 Timothy 3:4, 5:
 - The overseer “must manage his own family (household; ESV) well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?)”
 - For the household-metaphor see above.
- ❖ “the church of.” The church is not the property or a project of man.
 - “church” = “ἐκκλησία”: 3. **people with shared belief, community, congregation.** a. of the Old Testament Israelite *assembly, congregation* (Dt 31:30; Judg 20:2; **Heb 2:12** (= Ps 22:23); to hear the law (Dt 4:10; 9:10; 18:16); **Acts 7:38**). b. of Christians in a specific place or area. The term ἐκκλησία (church) apparently became popular among Christians in Greek-speaking areas for chiefly two reasons: to affirm continuity with Israel (Old Testament) and to allay any suspicion, especially in political circles, that Christians were a disorderly group).
 - This observation is important given the context of 1 Timothy 2 and 3: Christians should not cause disturbance but be worthy of respect.

⁴² Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1995, p. 79).

- The “church” can refer to: a specific Christian group *assembly, gathering* (Mt 18:17; 1 Cor 11:18; Rom 16:5; 1 Tim 5:16) and to **the global community of Christians, (universal) church: Mt 16:18.**⁴³
 - What Paul writes about the church in Ephesus applies to the worldwide community of Christians.
- ❖ **“the living God.”** See also Mt 16:16; Rom 9:26; 1 Tim 4:10.
 - This expression contrasts God with the lifeless idols as objects of worship in the Roman-Greek world. “For there is one God” (1 Tim 2:4). There are no other gods beside God. See also Acts 14:15.
 - Because God is only living God, he is the source of life, who has sent Christ into this world to save men (1 Tim 2:4-6). There is “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”
 - As the living God, he is actively working in the world among people. And people are responsible to him ⁴⁴ (1 Tim 2:7). See also Heb 9:14.
- ❖ **“the pillar and foundation of the truth.”** See also 2 Cor 6:16. “Pillar” is part of the construction of buildings.
 - **“foundation.”** = **“ἑδραίωμα”**: **that which provides a firm base for something,**⁴⁵ This word is only used in the New Testament and by later Christian writers. The adjective = **“ἑδραῖος”**: **pertaining to being firmly or solidly in place, firm, steadfast;**⁴⁶ is used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand **firm**. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”
 - **“Pillar”** and **“foundation”** might function as a hendiadys⁴⁷ which means that two different words express one thought. A “pillar and foundation offers a more striking image than a “firm pillar.”

⁴³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 303, 304).

⁴⁴ Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1995, p. 79).

⁴⁵ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 276).

⁴⁶ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 276).

⁴⁷ “The typical result of a hendiadys is to transform a noun-plus-adjective into two nouns joined by a conjunction. For example, sound and fury (from act V, scene 5 of Macbeth) seems to offer a more striking image than ‘furious sound’.” (Hendiadys. (2021, January 06). Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hendiadys>).



- In the ancient world, pillars supported the pediment of temples. These were often triangular and contained the tympanum, which was decorated. The coin⁴⁸ shows a stylized image of the temple of Artemis (Latin: DIAN) in Ephesus (EPHE)(Acts 19:23-41).
- The temple imagery is also used in 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21–22; Revelation 3:12.
- **“the truth”**: “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time” (1 Tim 2: 5, 6; see also 1 Cor 8:6; Tit 2:14; 1Pet 1: 18, 19).
- “The truth” is used in 1 Timothy six times, in 2 Timothy six times and in Titus two times “as a technical term to refer to (a) the Christian faith as a system of belief, (b) an organized body of Christian teaching or doctrine (1 Tim 1:10; 4:6, 11), or (c) the total content of the gospel. All three are possible in this context. However, we should consider the background of the Pastorals, particularly the problem of false teachers and the danger of heretical teaching. In that case the first two alternatives seem to fit the context much better.”⁴⁹
 - “Considering the situation of the church during the time of the writing of the Pastoral Letters, it was very important to emphasize the role of the

⁴⁸ (n.d.). Retrieved from http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/greece/paganism/artemis.html

⁴⁹ Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1995, p. 48, 49).

church as the guarantor of the truth in the midst of conflicting claims and erroneous teachings”⁵⁰ (1 Tim 1:3-11; 6:3-5).

- Arichea and Hatton advise: In many languages it will be helpful to begin a new sentence at *the pillar* and say, for example, “This church supports the true teachings, just as the foundation and post (or, pillar) support and insure the stability of a house” or “These believers support the true teachings just as the foundation and post insure that a house stands firm (or, doesn’t fall down).”⁵¹

Verse 16

- ❖ **“Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great.”** The godliness is the behaviour of a Christian, seen by other people; the mystery is the hidden powerful motivation. **“the key to our piety or the secret of our devotion to God.”**⁵²
 - **“great”** “This expresses the idea of being ‘great’ in the sense of wondrous, sublime, or important.”⁵³ For “mystery” see above.
 - In the Greek-Roman world godliness was “*reverence towards the gods or parents, piety or filial respect.*”⁵⁴ The presence of the gods was made visible by statues, temples, festivals, sacrifices, votive offerings. The godliness of Christians is different. They don’t worship images. It must have been a mystery to other people that Christians worshipped an unseen God (Acts 17:16-34; Paul in Athens). It denotes a life that shows a pious attitude toward God and his creation; it is a gift of God (2 Pet 1:3) and extends to the entire life of the Christian (1 Tim 2:2; 4:8). Such piety is at the centre of the Christian faith (1 Tim 3:16; 6:3); it stands in contrast to ‘godless and silly myths’ (1 Tim 4:7) and to ‘irreligion and worldly passions’ (Tit 2:12).⁵⁵
 - “Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, **train yourself to be godly.** For physical training is of some value, but **godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to**

⁵⁰ Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1995, p. 80).

⁵¹ Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1995, p. 80).

⁵² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 412).

⁵³ Marshall, I. H., & Towner, P. H. (2004, p. 522).

⁵⁴ Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996, p. 731).

⁵⁵ Stuehrenberg, P. F. (1992, Vol 2, p. 184). *Devout*. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.).

come” (1 Tim 4, 7, 8). An example of godly behaviour is found in 1 Timothy 5:4: "But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion (= **godliness**) into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, **for this is pleasing to God.**" See also Titus 2:11-15.

- Godliness “expresses a strongly Christian concept of the new existence in Christ that combines belief in God and a consequent manner of life.⁵⁶
- Pliny the younger,⁵⁷ governor of Bithynia (110-113 C.E.) discovered that Christians “were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn **and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god**, and to bind themselves by oath, not to do some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food — but ordinary and innocent food.”⁵⁸
 - The combination of singing a hymn and binding themselves by oath is interesting.

❖ What is the character of this text?

- It is a song to glorify Christ. This song consists of six lines.
- Line 1 **(A)** and 6 **(A')** are opposites: “appeared in a body” versus “was taken up in glory.” The humiliation of Christ versus his exaltation.⁵⁹
Line 2 **(B)** and 3 **(B')** form together a pair, as do line 4 **(C)** and 5 **(C')**. (B') and (C') describe the result of the vindication by the Spirit and the preaching among the nations.
- **(A)** He⁶⁰ appeared in a body,⁶¹

⁵⁶ Marshall, I. H., & Towner, P. H. (2004, p. 144).

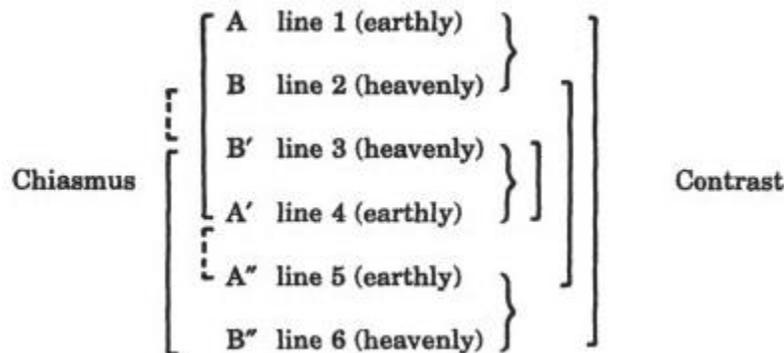
⁵⁷ Pliny the Younger. (2021, January 28). Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pliny_the_Younger

⁵⁸ Pliny's Letter to Trajan. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/pliny>

⁵⁹ O'Brien, P. T. (1993, p. 623). *Mystery*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

⁶⁰ Some manuscripts *God*. “The hymn is not without difficulty. As if to signal this, a textual problem occurs right at the beginning of the hymn. *The pronoun He translates a Greek word composed of two letters, o and s (which when taken together means “who”). In many manuscripts the first letter o (O) has become th (theta), thus making it*

- (B) was vindicated by the Spirit,
- (B') was seen by angels,
- (C) was preached among the nations,
- (C') was believed on in the world,



- (A') was taken up in glory.
- ❖ Arichea and Hatton: The above structure also has what is known as a double chiasmus, since there are two chiasmi in the structure: lines 1 through 4 (A-B-B'-A'), and lines 3 through 6 (B'-A'-A'-B'). These are shown by the lines on the left, in which the A group represents the earthly, and the B group the heavenly.⁶²
 - Both structures make visible how beautiful the poetry of this song is!
- ❖ A song is difficult to translate due to its succinct character. It is not a theological treatise or part of an argument. It is more like a common confession known by the heart.
- ❖ **“He appeared in a body,”** (See also 1 Tim 2:5; Jn 1:14; 1 Pet 3:18)

possible for the word to be read theos, which is the Greek word for “God.” Actually, beginning the hymn with the word “God” has its advantages in that the problem of ambiguity is eliminated. However, it is clear from the manuscript evidence that the original beginning of the hymn was “Who” rather than “God,” and this is what most translations follow. The pronoun “Who” is of course ambiguous, since it can refer either to God or more likely to Christ, as the content of the hymn indicates. Many translations retain the ambiguity here, perhaps because of the desire to retain the option of God becoming incarnate.” Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1995, p. 82).

⁶¹ Or in the flesh

⁶² Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1995, p. 83).

- ❖ **“was vindicated by the Spirit,”** This line is a bit complicated. What does vindicated mean in this context? Which Spirit is meant? Arichea and Hatton offer three possibilities.⁶³
 - (1) The Spirit refers to the Holy Spirit. The Contemporary English Version translates: “The Spirit proved that he pleased God.” The Holy Spirit is the agent by whom Christ was vindicated. In this case, the meaning of the Greek preposition “ἐν” in line two differs from line one. (2) The spirit can also refer to the spirit of Christ (compare Romans 1:4; 1 Pet 3:18). Line one and line two are in that case a contrasting pair, flesh and spirit. Again there are two options: the spirit can refer to his divine nature (2a), or his human nature (2b). See also Romans 8:3.
 - The focus is on “vindicated” or “justified.” See Romans 1: 3, 4. “Is proved to be right⁶⁴ in the spirit.” The passive refers to the work of God: “is justified (by God) in the spirit.”
- ❖ **“was seen by angels,”** Does this line refer to the resurrection of Christ (Mt 28:2–7; Mk 16:5–8; Lk 24:4–7; Jn 20:12, 13; compare Acts 9:17; 1 Cor 15:5-8)? Does it refer to the Ascension (Acts 1:9-11)? This has the advantage that line 1-3 refers to main moments: his incarnation, his resurrection, and his ascension. Does it refer to Christ’s ruling over the angels (Col 2:10, 15; 1 Pet 3:22; Heb 1:4-6)? Less likely is a more general reference to the angels at the various stages in the life of Christ, including his birth (Lk 1:14), the temptation (Mt 4:11).⁶⁵
 - **“Angels”** can be human **messengers** (Mk 1:2; Lk 7:24; 9:52; Jas 2:25; possibly Rev 2-3: “And he sent **messengers** on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him” (Lk 9:52). Angels as human messengers points to the apostles. This is supported by the fact that **“was seen by”** is found in Luke 24:23, 1 Corinthians 15:5-8. The transition from line 2 to line 4 and 5 becomes clear. Jesus was vindicated by God appeared to the apostles (including Paul; 1 Cor 15:7), who went out into the world and preached Christ among the nations (1 Tim 2:7).
- ❖ **“was preached among the nations,”** (Mt 28:19).
 - “preached” = “κηρύσσω”: 2. **to make public declarations, proclaim aloud.**⁶⁶ “Preached” must be seen in the context of mission.
- ❖ **“was believed on in the world,”**

⁶³ Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1995, p. 84, 85).

⁶⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 249).

⁶⁵ Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1995, p. 85, 86).

⁶⁶ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 543).

- “believed” = “πιστεύω”: 2. **to entrust oneself to an entity in complete confidence, believe (in), trust,** with implication of total commitment to the one who is trusted.⁶⁷
- ❖ **“was taken up in glory.”**
 - “was taken” by God.
 - “glory” = “δόξα”: 1. **the condition of being bright or shining, brightness, splendour, radiance.** c. The state of being in the next life described as participation in the radiance or glory, pertaining to Christ. See also Luke 24:26.⁶⁸
 - The last line is about Christ’s final triumph and exaltation (Acts 1:2; Mk 16:19) to refer to the ascension of Christ into heaven, there to reign with God his Father. “His ascension is into *glory*; that is, **at the ascension Christ was given the privilege of sharing in the very nature and greatness of God himself,** so that he, Christ, is also worthy of praise and adoration.”⁶⁹
 - Compare this song with Philippians 2:9-11:
 - **"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place**
 - **and gave him the name that is above every name,**
 - that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
 - in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 - and every tongue confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord,**
 - **to the glory of God the Father."** yy

Application

Remark

- ❖ It is advisable to read this letter a few times, to get acquainted with its contents.

⁶⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 817).

⁶⁸ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 257).

⁶⁹ Arichea, D. C., & Hatton, H. (1995, p. 86, 87).

- ❖ The first conclusion is: be careful while interpreting these passages. We are facing a serious hermeneutical problem because we lack first-hand experience. We only have access to the actual circumstances by inference.

Summary 1 Timothy 2, 3

- ❖ The main thrust of 1 Timothy 2 and 3 is the salvation of all men that they come to a knowledge of the truth:
 - “This is, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1Tim 2:3, 4).
 - “you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15).
- ❖ Train yourself in godliness!

Praise

- ❖ Praise Christ Jesus, he is the mediator between God and men. There is no other name. Without his coming into this world, his witness, his death on the cross, his resurrection, his sitting at the right hand of God, the Father, this world would have been at loss under the wrath of God.

Application: A Song of worship and devotion (Verse 16)

- ❖ A song sung with the mind, the heart and devoted to God, embedded in the Christian life will:
 - “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” (Col 3:1, 2).
- ❖ R.P. Martin summarizes his findings about worship in the Pauline churches: “The key, then, to worship in the Pauline churches is found in Paul’s central affirmations concerning the primacy of divine grace to meet the human and cosmic need and the pivotal role assigned to Jesus Christ, the once-crucified (*see Crucifixion*) and now risen (*see Resurrection*), ascended and glorified Lord as head of the church and ruler of all creation (Phil 2:6–11; compare 1 Tim 3:16). These twin assertions lie at the heart of Paul’s practice of worship, seen in his praises, prayers and confessions of faith and addressed in the kind of celebratory activity in which he expected his congregations to engage.”⁷⁰
 - Other examples are Philippians 2:6-11 and Colossians 1:15-21.

⁷⁰ Martin, R. P. (1993). *Worship*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

Application (*the church as the household of the living God; verse 15*)

- ❖ Listen to John Stott: “An even more vivid consciousness of the presence of the living God should characterize the Christian church today. For we are ‘the temple of the living God’, ‘a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit’. When the members of the congregation are scattered during most of the week it is difficult to remain aware of this reality. But when we come together as *the church (ekklēsia, ‘assembly’) of the living God*, every aspect of our common life is enriched by the knowledge of his presence in our midst. In our worship, we bow down before the living God. Through the reading and exposition of his Word, we hear his voice addressing us. We meet him at his table when he makes himself known to us through the breaking of bread. In our fellowship, we love each other as he has loved us. And our witness becomes bolder and more urgent. Indeed, unbelievers coming in may confess that ‘God is really among you’.⁷¹
 - Study the instructions of Paul in 1 Timothy 2 and 3.
 - What are the implications for the church in your own situation?

Application (*The church as a pillar and foundation of the truth*)

- ❖ John Stott: “Here then is the double responsibility of the church *vis-à-vis* the truth. First, as its foundation it is to hold it firm, so that it does not collapse under the weight of false teaching. Secondly, as its pillar it is to hold it high, so that it is not hidden from the world. To hold the truth firm is the defence and confirmation of the gospel; to hold it high is the proclamation of the gospel. The church is called to both these ministries.⁷²
 - Identify any false teaching or misconceptions.

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⁷¹ Stott, J. R. W. (1996, p. 104, 105).

⁷² Stott, J. R. W. (1996, p. 105).

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