

1 Timothy 3:14-16

- A. The theme of this epistle is summarized here. It was written to guide the behavior of the minister in his oversight of a local church.
1. The Biblical method of propagating and preparing ministers is by one minister teaching and ordaining a fit candidate for the office. **2TI 2:2; TIT 1:5-9.**
 2. Scripture knows nothing of seminary training where aspiring preachers are taught, classroom-style, for assumed ministries.
 3. Under the Biblical system, if one preacher is doctrinally unsound, he misleads one preacher-candidate and corrupts one church. Under the seminary system, one bad instructor can mislead and corrupt multiple men and churches.
 4. Mind that these words are written to an ordained minister by his ordainer. The seasoned minister does well to coach the less experienced minister.
- B. "...the house of God, which is the church of the living God..." (v. 15).
1. Mind that Paul is speaking of one local church at Ephesus. **1TI 1:3.**
 - a. He calls it THE house of God, THE church.
 - b. A local church is of itself "...the WHOLE church..." (**ACT 15:22; 1CO 14:23**).
 - c. Scripture knows nothing of a heirarchical structure where separate congregations are only divisions or arms of "the Church."
 - d. Under the N.T., wherever the word "church" appears, it is speaking of a single, local congregation on earth under its ordained minister(s).
 - (1) The one exception to this is the redeemed family which is called "...the general assembly and church of the firstborn..." (**HEB 12:22-23**), but that church does not yet all assemble together.
 - (2) Whenever more than one congregation on earth is under consideration, the term is always "churches." **GAL 1:2, 22; REV 1:11.**
 2. It is a *spiritual house* made of *living stones* (**1PE 2:5**), a regenerate membership proven to be such by faith. **1JO 5:1.**
 3. The local church is God's house, the place where God has taken up residence for communion and fellowship with His people.
 - a. It is God's house as long as He is pleased to dwell there.
 - b. When sin drives Him away, it becomes "...your house...desolate" (**MAT 24:38**).
 - c. At some point, if it ceases being built according to his pattern of properly baptizing penitent believers, it of necessity becomes nothing but a religious club.
 4. The Holy Spirit indwells the local church in a manner exclusive of any other in fulfillment of **JOH 7:37-39**. See **ACT 2:1-4**.
 5. Saints, through baptism, are built together into such a house through the Spirit. **EPH 2:18-22.**
 6. The house of God is a spiritual conduit between God's kingdom on earth and the heavenly state. **GEN 28:17; HEB 12:22-24.**
 7. A person must be made part of the local church to enjoy this spiritual communion with heaven. **1CO 12:13.**
- C. "...the church of the living God..." (v. 15), not that of a dead saint or an angel. The church's Founder and Head is the resurrected and living God-man, Christ Jesus. **1TI 4:10; HEB 7:25.**
- D. "...the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth..." (v. 15).
1. The authority of the Scriptures do not depend upon the church, as Rome teaches. The church is built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, the prophets and the apostles through whom divine revelation came. **EPH 2:20.**
 2. The church is the ground of the truth in that it should support the truth.

- a. God's words are *committed* to the church. **ROM 3:2; 1TI 6:20.**
- b. commit: *trans.* To give to some one to take care of, keep, or deal with; to give in charge or trust, entrust, consign to (a person, his care, judgement, etc.).
- c. When a church departs from the truth, saints may depart from it (**2TH 3:6**). This would be impossible if the church is an absolute authority that determines truth.
- 3. As a proclamation might be affixed to a pillar, so the church should hold forth the truth of the Scripture for all to see.
- 4. As a pillar might be a witness (**GEN 31:52**), so the church should be a witness to the truth, even as Christ came to "...bear witness unto the truth" (**JOH 18:37**).
- 5. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth in the sense that God has chosen the church as a repository for the Scripture which was committed to it in trust. **ISA 8:16; REV 12:17.**
- E. There is one outstanding aspect of truth that the church should advance: "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness..." (**v. 16**).
 - 1. mystery: A religious truth known only from divine revelation; usually a doctrine of the faith involving difficulties which human reason is incapable of solving.
 - 2. The full revelation of the gracious plan of God that He Himself should become a man to satisfy righteousness and return to heaven was reserved unto the days of Christ's apostles. **MAT 13:16-17; ACT 2:30-33; EPH 3:1-11.**
- F. Paul highlights six things which are cardinal points of *the mystery of godliness*. **v. 16.**
 - 1. *God was manifest in the flesh.*
 - a. Jesus Christ is the Eternal Word incarnate. **JOH 1:1-3, 14.**
 - b. The word "God" is deleted from this verse in the RSV, NASB, NIV and the LB, and replaced with the pronoun "he" that has no clear antecedent.
 - 2. He was *justified in the Spirit.*
 - a. justify: To show (a person or action) to be just or in the right; to prove or maintain the righteousness or innocence of; to vindicate.
 - b. The Spirit vindicated Him by raising Him from the dead. **ROM 1:1-4; 8:11.**
 - 3. He was *seen of angels.*
 - a. Angels were present at His birth. **LUK 2:13-15.**
 - b. Angels ministered unto Him in His temptation and agony. **MAT 4:11; LUK 22:42-43.**
 - c. Angels witnessed Him ascending to heaven to be their Lord. **ACT 1:10-11; 1PE 3:22.**
 - 4. He was *preached unto the Gentiles.*
 - a. The Canaanite woman had heard of Him. **MAT 15:21-28.**
 - b. The Roman centurion had heard of Him. **MAT 8:5-10.**
 - c. Before long the Gentile world heard of Him. **COL 1:23.**
 - 5. He was *believed on in the world* by Jew and Gentile alike, a profound aspect of the mystery. **EPH 3:4-6.**
 - 6. He was *received up into glory* in answer to His prayer. **JOH 17:5, 24.**
 - a. glory: A state of exaltation and splendour. In one's glory: in one's highest state of magnificence or prosperity.
 - b. By virtue of His triumph over death, Christ has been highly exalted. **ACT 2:33; PHIL 2:8-9.**
 - c. Contrary to C.I. Scofield's footnotes, Christ has entered His glory. **1PE 1:21.**