

1 TIMOTHY VERSE BY VERSE  
SESSION 9 | 1 TIMOTHY 3:16-4:3

Note “These things” of verse 14 concern the things in verses 16 and following, and they are things about behaving in the house of God (v. 15), which is the Temple. They are not directly applicable to the church age.

### 1 TIMOTHY 1:16 | THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

In verse 16 Paul expresses something that is **without controversy**, a term that comes from the single Greek word ὁμολογουμένως [homologoumenos], literally, *saying the same thing*. The word must be translated as an adverb modifying **is**, the verb. Thus there *may* be controversy about the greatness, but there is no controversy about the existence of the confession to follow. This makes some to believe that the words beginning with **God was manifest** were an ancient hymn which was well known (likely among Jews\*).

Paul then speaks of **the mystery of godliness**. It is important to recognize that *this is not the Pauline mystery*, which was never **without controversy**, even in Paul’s day. Paul was continually having to defend his apostleship because they rejected his mystery. In the end, he was left virtually abandoned (2 Tim. 1:15). It would be impossible to argue that the Pauline mystery was *homologoumenos*.

What is this **mystery of godliness**? It is the “secret of pious living.” One cannot live a *godly* life without understanding God. This “ancient Jewish hymn” (our assumption) is a “creed” that expresses the Jewish\* belief in God.

- He **was manifest in the flesh** - all Jews believe that God will *appear* in the flesh through the Messiah - see Isaiah 9:6, etc.
- He was **justified in the Spirit** - clearly **justified** is not the same as *saved*. Rather, it is *declared (judged) by the Spirit to be God manifest in the flesh* - see Isaiah 61:1, which is considered so Messianic that when Jesus spoke the words of Himself the Jews sought to kill Him.
- He was **seen of angels** - This is a manner of saying that one must believe that God is *above*, a *heavenly* Being - see Proverbs 68:17. (An alternative interpretation: that the word **angels** is a reference to *prophets* as *messengers*, who saw Messiah in advance).
- He was **preached unto the Gentiles** - it was always expected by the Jews that Messiah would become a “household name” around the world - see Isaiah 11:10, etc.
- He was **believed on in the world** - see Jeremiah 33:9, etc.
- He was **received up into glory** - see Psalm 110:1.

Further proof that this **mystery of godliness** is not the Pauline mystery: *everything mentioned is prophesied in the Old Testament*.

\*Is this really a Jewish hymn that expresses the Jewish belief in God? After all, it sounds *so Christian*.

- The reason it *sounds Christian* is because Christians and Jews *believe in the same God*. Christians believe that Jesus *fulfilled* the Jewish belief in Messiah and is Messiah, someday coming to reign. Christians furthermore believe that God is offering a free-grace gift to all based on faith alone.
- If this is only a *Christian* hymn and not a *Jewish* hymn, we have some questions:
  - Was **godliness** not revealed prior to Jesus fulfilling these words?
  - Were there no godly people prior to the Messiah's ascension?
  - Why does **godliness** for the Christian not even mention the death, burial, and resurrection, or matters of faithful living?
  - Why is it said to be **without controversy** when, even at the date of this writing, the Christian faith was very new and very controversial?
- I think that every bit of evidence points to the fact that this was a widely known Jewish hymn.

## 1 TIMOTHY 4:1-12 | FORTHCOMING CHALLENGES

- Verse 1 –
  - This verse clearly teaches about a last day's apostasy. The interpretive question is: *which last days?*
  - The revelation comes from **the Spirit** who **speaketh expressly**. The latter phrase uses both the word *lego* and *rhetos* (a cousin to *rhema*). Thus, the words of the Spirit were clear, both in meaning and in "style."
  - The words concern the **latter times**.
    - While they are often taken to be applied to the last days *of this dispensation*, I am not convinced that this dispensation has *any discernable timetable whatsoever* (and thus the rapture is said to be imminent).
    - The phrase itself seems to match descriptions of the last days before the Second Coming, both in terminology and in description (compare 2 Pet. 3:3, 1 Jn. 2:18, Jude 18, etc.)
    - If these are the last days of the church-age, then not only do we have "signs of the rapture," but also the active work of **seducing spirits** and **devils** (demons). Such demonic activity is clearly associated with Israel's offer of the Kingdom, but not with the church (see *The Silence of God, Updated for the 21st Century Reader* by Sir. Robert Anderson, updated by Corey D. Evans).
  - These **latter times** will be characterized by a departure **from the faith** and an acceptance of **seducing spirits** (that is, *wandering spirits*) and **doctrines of devils** (that is, demonic teaching).
    - Note that the English word *demon* is a transliteration of Latin and was not commonly used until after the 1600s.
    - Note also that **seducing spirits** can be *spiritual beings* but are more likely the *wandering spirits within an individual's character*.

- Paul does *not* say that apostasy, seducing spirits, and demonic doctrine *will not be present* until the last days, only that the last days will see a rise in these things. When we see them ebb and flow today, we should not take them as *signs of the end*.
- Verse 2 –
  - Paul continues his description of **the latter times** (v. 1), saying that during these days there will be a proliferation of those **speaking lies in hypocrisy**. The phrase **speaking lies** is a single Greek word, ψευδολόγος [pseudologos], literally, “fake words.” The reason they speak these words is because their **conscience** has been **seared with a hot iron**.
  - When a society gets to this point, there is little that can be done to remedy the problem. In this dispensation, that society will implode (typically to be overtaken by tyrants). In the last days, that society will be met by the coming Lord.
- Verse 3 –
  - Since the family, led by a husband and wife, is the foundation of any lasting society, it could be that in the last days *marriage will literally be forbidden*, or at least there will be a movement to do so.
    - This is a natural “final step” in socialism: *even a person’s reproductive capabilities belong to the state*. Such has been true in China.
    - While it may be fruitless speculation, I would suppose the ultimate reason for this prohibition is that *the mind, the body, and the soul* will belong to the state. Marriage is simply not compatible with totalitarianism.
    - Note that Marx was in favor of abolishing the family.
  - Finally, the last days will be filled with a teaching to **abstain from meats**.
    - Though the Greek word βρῶμα [broma] is “food,” the next verse shows that **meats** are in consideration.
    - This is not a teaching of abstaining from *some* meats, but from all meat.
    - More discussion on this will be included in the next two verses.