

LIVING AND SERVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S ECONOMY CONCERNING THE CHURCH

Message One

Living and Serving according to the Heavenly Vision of God's Economy

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 1:4-5; 3:2, 9; 5:26-27; Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Thes. 5:23; Acts 26:18-19

- I. The one thing, the unique thing, that should be focused on, stressed, and ministered in the Lord's recovery is the heavenly vision of the eternal economy of God; the central subject of the Bible is the economy of God, and the entire Bible is concerned with the economy of God—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 8-9, 16-19; Acts 26:18-19:**
 - A. "God's economy and plan is to make Himself man and to make us, His created beings, 'God' so that He is 'man-ized' and we are 'God-ized'" (*A Deeper Study of the Divine Dispensing*, pp. 51-52).
 - B. God's eternal economy is for Him to become man that man might become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—John 1:1, 14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 21:2, 10-11.
- II. Our becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead was initiated by God the Father in eternity past by His choosing us to be holy, predestinating us unto sonship; the divine sanctification for the divine sonship is the center of the divine economy and the central thought of the revelation in the New Testament—Eph. 1:4-5:**
 - A. To be sanctified is to be made holy, which is to be separated unto God and saturated with God as the Holy One, the One who is different, distinct, from everything that is common—1 Pet. 1:15-16.
 - B. He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy in order for us to become God in nature (Eph. 1:4); God is the only One who is holy; for us to be holy, we need God in His holy nature dispensed into us, and this holy nature becomes the holy element with which the Holy Spirit sanctifies us (2 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 12:14).
 - C. He predestinated us unto sonship even before we were created in order for us to become God in life (Eph. 1:5); for us to become sons of God, we must be born of God by the dispensing of God's life into our being (John 1:12-13; 3:6; 1 John 5:11-12):
 1. Ephesians 1:4-5 reveals that God chose us to be holy for the purpose of our being made sons of God; to be made holy is the process, the procedure, whereas to be sons of God is the aim, the goal, so that our whole being, including our body (Rom. 8:23), may be "sonized" by God (Rev. 21:2, 9-11).
 2. Hebrew 2:10-11 reveals that the resurrected Christ as the Captain, the Author, of God's salvation is leading many sons into glory by sanctifying them.
 3. The divine sanctification is the holding line in the carrying out of the divine economy to sonize us divinely; every step of God's work with us is to make us holy by the Spirit's sanctification—1 Thes. 5:23; John 17:17; Eph. 5:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:3b; Heb. 12:4-14; Rom. 8:28-29; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19; Rev. 2:7a; Psa. 73:16-17, 25-26; Rev. 21:2, 10.
- III. The divine, dispositional sanctification is carried out by Christ as the life-giving, sanctifying, and speaking Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 1 Thes. 5:23; Eph. 5:26:**
 - A. Christ as the life-giving Spirit sanctifies the church by cleansing her according to the washing of the water in the word; according to the divine concept, water in Ephesians 5:26 refers to the flowing life of God, typified by flowing water (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4; John 7:37-39; Rev. 7:17; 21:6; 22:1, 17); we are now in such a washing process in order that the church may be holy and without blemish.
 - B. The Greek word for *washing* in Ephesians 5:26 is literally "laver"; in the Old Testament the priests used the laver to wash away their earthly defilement (Exo. 30:18-21); day by day, morning and evening, we need to come to the Bible and be cleansed by the laver of the water in the word.
 - C. Paul uses the Greek word *rhema* when he speaks of the word with its washing process (Eph. 5:26); *logos* is God's Word objectively recorded in the Bible; *rhema* is the word of God spoken to us on a specific occasion (Mark 14:72; Luke 1:35-38; 5:5; 24:1-8).

- D. As the life-giving Spirit, Christ is the speaking Spirit; whatever He speaks is the word that washes us—Matt. 4:4; John 6:63; Rev. 2:7; 22:17a; cf. Isa. 6:9-10; Matt. 13:14-15; Acts 28:25-31.
- E. One thing that we always treasure is that the Lord still speaks to us personally and directly today; true growth in life depends upon our receiving the word directly from God; only His speaking in us has true spiritual value—Heb. 3:7-11, 15; 4:7; Psa. 95:7-8.
- F. The speaking of the indwelling Christ as the life-giving Spirit within us is the cleansing water that deposits a new element into us to replace the old element in our nature and disposition; this metabolic cleansing causes a genuine and inward change in life, which is the reality of dispositional sanctification and transformation.

IV. Acts 26:18 reveals the contents of our divine commission to serve according to the heavenly vision of God’s economy; we need to pray over these contents, asking the Lord to make them our experience and reality so that we can bring others into this experience and reality:

- A. “To open their eyes”—v. 18:
 1. We need to continually pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation to understand and to see more and more of Christ, the Body of Christ, and the divine dispensing for the divine economy—Eph. 1:17; 3:5; cf. Rev. 4:6; 3:17; Matt. 6:6.
 2. We cannot go on without new knowledge of the Lord and a new vision of Him—Acts 26:16; Phil. 3:8b, 10a, 13; cf. Deut. 4:25.
 3. Our commission is to “enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is”—Eph. 3:9.
- B. “To turn them from darkness to light”—Acts 26:18:
 1. Light is the presence of God; we need to be people who are full of light—Isa. 2:5; 1 John 1:5; Luke 11:34-36.
 2. We need to be luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life (Phil. 2:14-16); we need to tell out the virtues of the One who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9).
- C. “To turn them...from the authority of Satan to God”—Acts 26:18:
 1. The highest point in our spiritual experience is to have a clear sky with the throne above it; to have the throne above a clear sky is to give the Lord the preeminence in our being and the highest and most prominent position in our life—Ezek. 1:22, 26; Col. 1:18; cf. Ezek. 14:3.
 2. If we are under a clear sky with the throne above it, genuine authority will be with us to bring others under God’s authority—2 Cor. 10:4-5, 8; 13:3, 10.
- D. “That they may receive forgiveness of sins”—Acts 26:18:
 1. We need to go to the Lord to receive a thorough forgiveness of all our sins—1 John 1:7, 9.
 2. David begged God to blot out his transgressions, wash him thoroughly from his iniquity, and cleanse him from his sin—Psa. 51:1-2, 7, 9.
 3. If we confess our sins to receive God’s forgiveness, we will have the gladness of God’s salvation and be sustained with a willing spirit; then we can teach transgressors His ways, and sinners will turn back to Him—v. 13.
- E. “That they may receive...an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me”; this inheritance is the Triune God Himself with all He has, all He has done, and all He will do for His redeemed people—Acts 26:18:
 1. The Triune God is embodied in the all-inclusive Christ, who is the portion allotted to the saints as their inheritance—Col. 2:9; 1:12.
 2. We need to bring people into the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ in the church life so that they may enjoy Christ as we do and be sanctified dispositionally with the holy nature of God through the exercise of their spirit—Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 4:13.

V. Our being sanctified for the divine sonship ultimately consummates in the New Jerusalem as the holy city (Rev. 21:2, 10) and the aggregate of the divine sonship (v. 7); this is the ultimate consummation of God becoming a man in the flesh that man might become God in the Spirit to gain a great, corporate God-man (vv. 3, 22) for the corporate expression, the glory, of the Triune God (vv. 11, 23).

Message Two

The Full Knowledge of the Truth

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 2:4, 7; 3:15; 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:15, 25; 3:7; Titus 1:1

I. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the light of the truth—1 John 1:5-6:

- A. Truth is the shining of light, the expression of the divine light—John 8:12, 32; 1 John 1:5-6:
 - 1. Truth is the issue of light—John 1:4, 7, 9; 3:21; 8:32.
 - 2. Knowledge without light is doctrine, but knowledge full of light is truth—1 John 1:5-6; 4:6.
- B. The truths as revealed in the Scriptures have been lost, missed, misunderstood, misinterpreted, and wrongly applied throughout the ages—John 17:17:
 - 1. The goal of the Lord's recovery is to recover the reality, life, livingness, strength, power, and impact of the matters revealed in the Bible.
 - 2. The truth in the Lord's recovery is the consummation of the truth of the past nineteen centuries—2 Tim. 2:2.
- C. We need to have the truth wrought into us and constituted into our being—1 John 1:8; 2:4; 2 John 1-2; 3 John 3-4:
 - 1. To be constituted with the truth is to have the intrinsic element of the divine revelation wrought into us to become our constituent, our intrinsic being, our organic constitution.
 - 2. There is the desperate need of the living truth to produce the church, to help the church to exist, and to build up the church—1 Tim. 3:15.
 - 3. The solid truth that is constituted into us becomes in us a constant and long-term nourishment—4:6.
 - 4. If the truth is wrought into us and constituted into our being, we will be able to protect the interests of the riches of God's divinity and the attainments of His consummation—Rev. 21:12a, 17.
 - 5. The Lord's word, the truth, is in the Bible, but the Bible needs the proper interpretation—2 Tim. 2:15.
 - 6. We need to pay the price to learn the truth—Prov. 23:23.
 - 7. The truth is absolute in itself, and we must be absolute for the truth—2 John 1-2, 4; 3 John 3-4, 7-8.

II. God desires that we "all...come to the full knowledge of the truth"—1 Tim. 2:4:

- A. The Lord's recovery is to recover the full knowledge of the truth—v. 7; 4:3:
 - 1. The degradation of the church issued from the neglect of the truth.
 - 2. The Lord's recovery today is the full recovery of the divine truths in the holy Word—John 1:14, 17; 8:32.
- B. Paul was an apostle not only according to the faith but also according to the full knowledge of the truth—1 Tim. 2:4; Titus 1:1:
 - 1. Faith is to receive all God has planned for us, all God has done for us, and all God has given to us—1 Tim. 1:4; 2:7.
 - 2. In the books of 1 and 2 Timothy, Paul emphasizes the need of the believers to come to the full knowledge of the truth—1 Tim. 2:4; 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:25; 3:7.

3. The full knowledge of the truth is a thorough apprehension of the truth, a full acknowledgement of the reality of all the spiritual and divine things that we have received through faith—1 Tim. 4:3.
- C. All the believers need to come to and be in the full knowledge of the truth—v. 3:
1. Every believer has the capacity to come to the full knowledge of the truth—2:4.
 2. To have the full knowledge of the truth is to fully know the truth; knowing the truth in this way is a safeguard.
- D. All the believers need to know, experience, and be absolute for the subjective truths—John 8:32; 14:6:
1. The truths in the Bible have both an objective aspect and a subjective aspect—Rom. 8:34, 10; Col. 3:1; 1:27.
 2. The objective truths are for the subjective truths, and the subjective truths are for the producing of the church—2 John 1, 4; 3 John 3-4, 7-9a.
 3. The Lord desires to recover the subjective truths in the Holy Scriptures—the subjective aspect of the truth concerning the Triune God and the church—John 1:14; 14:16-20; 1 Tim. 6:15-16; 2 Tim. 4:22; 3:15-16.
 4. The Gospel of John is a book on the subjective truths for the producing of the church—4:14; 6:57; 14:16-17, 20; 3:15-16.
 5. The subjective truths are linked to the Spirit and life and are constituted with Spirit and life—Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:6:
 - a. The Spirit and life are the substance of the subjective truths; without the Spirit and life we do not have the subjective truths.
 - b. When we live by the Spirit and life, we have the experience of the subjective truths—Rom. 8:2, 4, 14.
 - c. The church life is an issue of our experience of the subjective truths; when we experience the subjective truths, the church is spontaneously produced—vv. 10-11; 12:4-5; 16:1, 4-5; 1 Cor. 1:9, 30; 15:45b; 6:17; 1:2; 12:27.
- E. We need to fully know and be absolute for the highest truth—Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; 12:4-5:
1. The highest truth is that in Christ God became man to make man God in life, nature, constitution, and expression but not in the Godhead so that the redeeming God and the redeemed man can be united, mingled, and incorporated together to become one entity—John 1:12-14; 14:20; Rev. 21:2, 10-11.
 2. The high peak of the divine revelation—the “diamond” in the “box” of the Bible—is the revelation that in Christ God has become man in order that man might become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead—2 Sam. 7:12-14a; Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; Eph. 3:17a.
 3. God became man through incarnation, man becomes God through regeneration, sanctification, renewing, transformation, conformation, and glorification—John 3:5-6; 1:12-13; Rom. 6:19, 22; 12:2; 8:29-30.
 4. It is only by God’s becoming man to make man God that the Body of Christ can be produced and built up; this is the high peak of the divine revelation given to us by God—v. 3; 1:3-4; 8:14-16; 12:4-5.
- F. The standard of the Lord’s recovery depends upon the standard of the truth we put out; the truths will be the measure and the standard—John 18:37.

Message Three

How to Conduct Ourselves in the House of God— Exercising Ourselves unto Godliness

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:15a, 16a; 4:7b-8; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:7; 4:22; Titus 1:1

I. “I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God”— 1 Tim. 3:15a:

- A. What Paul ministered to Timothy was entirely concerning how to conduct himself in the church—1:3-5, 18-19.
- B. The way to conduct ourselves in the church is by becoming one who loves the Word of God—3:15a; cf. John 6:63, 68.
- C. Respecting the headship of Christ and bearing the truth are two governing principles that we must follow in order to know how to conduct ourselves in the church life—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15.
- D. In order to properly conduct ourselves in the house of God, the church, we need to take care of the healthy teaching—2 Tim. 4:3-4.
- E. We must live and act in our spirit so that in the church God can be manifested as the living God—John 4:23-24; 1 Cor. 6:17; 1 Tim. 3:15-16.

II. “Confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness”—v. 16a:

- A. The important word *godliness* is used nine times in 1 and 2 Timothy—1 Tim. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7-8; 6:3, 5-6, 11; 2 Tim. 3:5.
- B. Godliness is a mystery because it is real and living yet invisible—1 Tim. 3:16a; 6:11.
- C. The full knowledge of the truth is according to godliness—Titus 1:1.
- D. The truth, the reality, of God’s eternal economy is according to godliness, which is God manifested in man—v. 1; 1 Tim. 3:16a.
- E. Godliness is godlikeness, being like God, expressing God—Col. 1:15; 3:10.
- F. Godliness is not merely an outward matter; the word *manifested* in 1 Timothy 3:16 indicates that godliness is an inward life with an outward expression.
- G. As believers in Christ, we should pursue godliness; to pursue godliness is to live a daily life that manifests God—6:11.
- H. In order for God to be manifested in the flesh, godliness needs to be expressed in our whole living—1 John 3:2; 2:28.
- I. God’s economy is God coming into us, and godliness is God going out of us—1 Tim. 1:4; 3:16a:
 - 1. The Christian life is simply God coming in and God going out—John 4:14; 7:29.
 - 2. Because godliness is the expression of God, the Christian life should be a life that expresses God and bears God’s likeness in all things—Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 3. First Timothy 2:2 says that we need to lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness; even in small things, we need to lead a life in all godliness, everywhere and in everything.
 - 4. Our church life, our daily life, and our family life are simply God coming in and God going out all day—2 Cor. 13:14; 3:18.
- J. The church of the living God is the ultimate mystery of godliness because the proper church life is the corporate manifestation of God in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:15-16; Col. 1:15.

III. “Exercise yourself unto godliness”—1 Tim. 4:7b:

- A. The way to conduct ourselves in the church life is to exercise ourselves unto godliness—3:15a; 4:7b; 2:2.
- B. We all have to exercise our spirit because the mystery of God is with our spirit—Eph. 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; 2 Tim. 4:22.

- C. Our Christian life is a life of godliness, which comes out of God's dispensing of Himself into us; this depends upon our spirit being fully exercised—2 Cor. 13:14; 2 Tim. 4:22; Philem. 25.
- D. We need to build up the habit of exercising our spirit—1 Tim. 4:7b; 1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 2:22:
1. A godly life issuing from God's dispensing depends upon the exercise of our spirit—1 Tim. 4:7b; John 4:23-24.
 2. If we do not exercise our spirit strongly to cooperate with the Lord, God cannot dispense Himself into us—2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:4, 9.
- E. The word *exercise* implies forcing—1 Tim. 4:7b:
1. To exercise is always a forced matter.
 2. Whenever we are in a hard situation, we have to force ourselves to exercise our spirit—cf. Rom. 8:28.
 3. If we Christians want to be strong and grow in the Lord, we must force ourselves to use our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22; Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10; Rom. 8:16.
- F. To exercise our spirit is to set our mind on the spirit—v. 6; Mal. 2:15-16:
1. When we set our mind on the spirit, we have the inner sense of life and peace, the sense of strength, satisfaction, rest, release, liveliness, watering, brightness, and comfort.
 2. When we set our mind on the flesh, we have the inner sense of death, the sense of weakness, emptiness, uneasiness, restlessness, depression, dryness, darkness, and pain.
 3. Our Christian life is not according to the standard of right and wrong but according to the spirit, and we know the spirit by the inner sense of life and peace—Rom. 8:6, 16; 9:1; 2 Cor. 13:14.
- G. To exercise our spirit is to discern our spirit from our soul—Heb. 4:12:
1. We should always be on the alert to discern and deny anything that is not of the spirit but of the soul, the self—Matt. 16:25; cf. Luke 9:25.
 2. All the time we need to keep our spirit separate from our soul—Heb. 4:12; 1 Thes. 5:23.
 3. The enemy's strategy is always to mix our spirit with our soul.
 4. Whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we do must be in the spirit; everything that God is to us is in our spirit—2 Tim. 4:22.
- H. In order to prove that the exercise unto godliness is the exercise of the spirit, we need to go to 2 Timothy, where Paul says that God has given us a spirit that is strong, loving, and sober; such a spirit is with a strong will, a loving emotion, and a sober mind—1:7:
1. The word *spirit* in 2 Timothy 1:7 denotes our human spirit, regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit—John 3:6; Rom. 8:16.
 2. To fan into flame the gift of God is related to our regenerated spirit—2 Tim. 1:6.
 3. *Of power* refers to our will, *of love* to our emotion, and *of sobermindedness* to our mind—v. 7.
- I. To exercise ourselves unto godliness is to exercise our spirit to live Christ in our daily life for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 4:7b; Eph. 2:20-22; 4:12, 16; 1 Cor. 14:4, 12.

Message Four

The Function of the Church as the House of the Living God, the Pillar and Base of the Truth, and the Corporate Manifestation of God in the Flesh

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16-17; 10:32; 11:16; Eph. 2:19, 21-22; John 1:1, 14; Col. 2:9; 1 Cor. 6:17; 7:25, 40

I. The church is the house of God—1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:16:

- A. The expression *the church of God* indicates that the church is possessed by God and that the church has the nature of God and is constituted with the element of God—Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13.
- B. The church is *of* God because it is produced of God as the source and has God as its nature and essence, which are divine, universal, and eternal—1 Cor. 3:16-17.
- C. The content of the church essentially is God Himself—10:32.

II. The church of God is the house of the living God—1 Tim. 3:15:

- A. The house of God is the household of God—Eph. 2:19:
 - 1. The dwelling place—the house—and the family—the household—are one entity—a group of called, regenerated ones indwelt by God Himself—1 Pet. 1:3; 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:16.
 - 2. Just as Christ is not separate from the members of His Body but dwells in them, the Father is not a separate member of His household but is in all the children—Rom. 8:16; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 3:16.
 - 3. The house of God is organic in the divine life, organic in the divine nature, and organic in the Triune God—Eph. 4:18; 2 Pet. 1:4; Matt. 28:19.
- B. In speaking of the church as the house of God, Paul refers to God as the living God—1 Tim. 3:15:
 - 1. The living God, who lives in the church, must be subjective to the church and not merely objective—1 Cor. 3:16.
 - 2. Because God is living, the church as the house of God is also living in Him, by Him, and with Him.
 - 3. A living God and a living church live, move, and work together.
- C. As the house of God, the church is the dwelling place of God—the place where God can have His rest and put His trust—Eph. 2:22.
- D. The church as the house of God—the Father's house—is the enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation as the issue of Christ's being glorified by the Father with the divine glory—John 12:23; 13:31-32; 14:20.

III. The Lord wants His church to know Him as the truth and to receive and enjoy Him as life—1 John 1:1-2, 5-6; John 11:25; 14:6; 18:37b:

- A. *Truth* means “reality,” denoting all the real things revealed in God's Word, which are mainly Christ as the embodiment of God and the church as the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 2:4; Col. 2:9, 19.

- B. The church is built with the divine life in Christ, a life that is indestructible, unconquerable, and able to withstand decline into death from any source—1 Tim. 1:16; 6:12, 19; 2 Tim. 1:1, 10; Titus 1:2; 3:7.
- C. Both the truth and the life are Christ Himself—John 14:6:
 - 1. Life is the inward and intrinsic element, and truth is the outward definition and explanation—1:4; 18:37b; 8:12, 32, 36; 17:17.
 - 2. The experience of the Lord as life is contained in the Lord as the truth; in order to experience the Lord as life, we must know the truth—14:6; 11:25; 8:32, 36.
- D. The content of the church should be the growth of Christ in us as truth and life—Col. 2:19; 3:4:
 - 1. Truth is the shining, the expression, of the divine light—John 8:12, 32, 36; 1 John 1:5-6.
 - 2. The standard of the truth should constantly be raised higher among all the churches in the Lord's recovery—1 Tim. 2:4; 3:15.

IV. The church is the supporting pillar and the holding base of the truth—1 Tim. 3:15:

- A. The truth is the Triune God, having Christ as the embodiment, center, and expression, to produce the church as the Body of Christ, the house of God, and the kingdom of God—Col. 2:9; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 1 Tim. 3:15; John 3:3, 5.
- B. The church bears Christ as the reality; the church testifies to the whole universe that Christ, and Christ alone, is the reality—John 1:14, 17; 14:6.
- C. As the pillar that bears the truth and the base that upholds the pillar, the church testifies the reality, the truth, of Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4.

V. God's manifestation was first in Christ as an individual expression in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 2:9; John 1:1, 14:

- A. The New Testament does not say that the Son of God was incarnated; it reveals that God was manifested in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:15-16:
 - 1. The entire God and not only God the Son was incarnated; hence, Christ in His incarnation was the entire God manifested in the flesh.
 - 2. Through incarnation the divine incorporation—God in His Divine Trinity coinhering mutually and working together as one—was brought into humanity; Christ is therefore the incorporation of the Triune God with the tripartite man—14:10-11.
- B. The Word, who is God, became flesh—1:1, 14:
 - 1. *Became flesh* (v. 14) means in the likeness, in the fashion, of man—Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:7-8.
 - 2. The Word is God's definition, explanation, and expression; hence, the Word who became flesh—God manifested in the flesh—is God's definition, explanation, and expression in the flesh—John 1:18.
- C. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily—Col. 2:9:
 - 1. *All the fullness of the Godhead* refers to the entire Godhead, to the complete God.
 - 2. Since the Godhead comprises the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the fullness of the Godhead must be the fullness of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

3. That all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily means that the Triune God is embodied in Him—John 14:10.

VI. First Timothy 3:15-16 indicates that not only Christ Himself as the Head is the manifestation of God in the flesh but also that the church as the Body of Christ and the house of God is the manifestation of God in the flesh—the mystery of godliness:

- A. *Godliness* in verse 16 refers not only to piety but also to the living of God in the church, that is, God as life lived out in the church to be expressed:
- B. Both Christ and the church are the mystery of godliness, expressing God in the flesh.
- C. God is manifested in the church—the house of God and the Body of Christ—as the enlarged corporate expression in the flesh—Eph. 2:19; 1:22-23:
 1. The manifestation of God in the flesh began with Christ when He was on earth—John 14:9.
 2. The manifestation of God in the flesh continues with the church, which is the increase, enlargement, and multiplication of the manifestation of God in the flesh—1 Tim. 3:15-16.
- D. This is God manifested in the flesh in a wider way according to the New Testament principle of incarnation—1 Cor. 7:40; Gal. 2:20:
 1. The principle of incarnation is that God enters into man and mingles Himself with man to make man one with Himself; thus, God is in man, and man is in God—John 15:4-5.
 2. The principle of incarnation means that divinity is brought into humanity and works with humanity—1 Cor. 6:17; 7:40; 1 Tim. 4:1.
 3. The New Testament principle of incarnation is that, in Christ and through Christ, the divine life and nature are mingled with the human life and nature so that we and God may have one life and one living—1 Cor. 6:17; Gal. 2:20.
 4. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 7 in the principle of incarnation:
 - a. The principle in verse 10 is the same as that in Galatians 2:20: the principle of incarnation—two persons living as one person.
 - b. In verses 25 and 40 of 1 Corinthians 7 we see the spirituality of a person who is so one with the Lord and permeated with Him that even his opinion expresses the Lord's mind.
- E. The great mystery of godliness is that God has become man so that man may become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead to produce a corporate God-man for the manifestation of God in the flesh—Rom. 8:3; 1:3-4; Eph. 4:24.

VII. Ultimately, God will be manifested in the New Jerusalem as the consummated corporate expression of the processed and consummated Triune God in the new heaven and new earth—Rev. 21:1-2, 10-11.