

Series: The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Finding the Holy Spirit in Timothy

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Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.



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We have insight in 1 Timothy as to who Jesus is, the one mediator between God and men, that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all kinds of people, that Paul was appointed a herald and an apostle, a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles. The gospel is to form the message a pastor proclaims and is to be central to the life of the Christian church. Paul is writing to pastors, thus—the Pastoral Epistles.

Now moving on to 1 Timothy 3:16, **“He who was manifested in the flesh is said to be justified in the Spirit.”** Jesus proclaimed Himself the Son of God. He was put to death as a blasphemer when in fact He had no personal sin but rather stood in the place of those for whom He died as Surety of the New Covenant in His Blood. He is now raised up by His own divine nature and justified by the Holy Spirit when He rose. God accepted what Jesus accomplished on the Cross and by Jesus’ life, which life is seen as One Righteous Act in Romans 5. The proof of that acceptance is the resurrection. God raised Jesus from the dead. Here we learn that Jesus was justified in or by means of the Spirit. He was received up in glory.

In Second Timothy we see the expression, **“the Holy Spirit that dwells in us,”** as, for example, in 2 Timothy 1:9-14. Timothy was to guard his calling, the sure calling of salvation, committed to him, by depending on the Holy Spirit who preserves. Whenever this calling was threatened, he was to defend the effectual calling of his salvation.

First, let’s think more about 1 Timothy 3:16:

Great is the mystery of godliness, i.e., the “revealed secret” or “revealed truth” or “uncovered truth” of the faith, even Jesus Christ. Cf. Col 1:27; 2:2, 3 Paul quotes from an early Christian hymn and elaborates the Great Mystery in six phrases:

Who was manifested in the flesh, was vindicated in the spirit, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

Some see strict chronological progression, with each line receiving independent treatment. Others see two strophes of three lines each, or two strophes of two lines and a refrain. Others divide the quotation into three couplets, the majority view.

There are six dative nouns—flesh, spirit, angels, nations, world, and glory—which move from the earthly to the heavenly and then from the heavenly back to the earthly and then back from the earthly to the heavenly. We see an a/b, b/a, a/b pattern, so that the pattern seems more spatial than chronological, emphasizing the truth that both the earthly and the heavenly spheres find their center in Christ.

Was manifested in the flesh refers to the Incarnation and speaks of Christ's entire incarnate life as a revelation of the divine Son "in the sphere of human being." It also implies Christ's preexistence as the Son of God. Elsewhere the NT speaks of Jesus' incarnate life in terms of "manifestation," as in John 1:13, 14; Hebrews 9:26; 1 Peter 1:20; 1 John 1:2; 3:5, 8; John 1:14; Colossians 2:9.

Was vindicated in the spirit. The preceding line referred to Christ's human nature in its entirety, which would include his human spirit so it is considered unlikely that the reference of *pneuma* or spirit here is in view. The choice lies between understanding the referent to be the Holy Spirit or Christ's divine nature. Paul had instructed us in Romans 1:3, 4 that Christ was "powerfully marked out the Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness (his own holy divine spirit) by the resurrection from the dead." Jesus' resurrection here is clearly being represented as a vindicating event. So in the sphere of divine being, Jesus was vindicated. A paraphrase would be "was vindicated [as the Son of God by the resurrection] in the sphere of [his divine] spirit."

Was seen by angels. The phrase means something on the order of "appeared to angels." It refers both to Christ's triumph over the angelic forces of evil by his cross and to his exaltation over all the angelic powers at his ascension (Ephesians 1:21; Col 2:15; Phil. 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:4-14; 1 Peter 3:22; Rev. 5:8-14). It implies his superangelic dignity.

Was proclaimed among the nations reflects the church's conviction that Christ is properly the subject of worldwide proclamation and the church is in the process of proclaiming him as such.

Was believed on in the world reflects the church's confidence in the outcome of that proclamation—the nations of the world will become his disciples.

Was taken up in [not "into"] glory brings the hymn to a close with the imagery of Jesus' ascension to heaven in the glory attendant upon him on that occasion. We can cross reference to the glory cloud in Acts 1:9, 11; Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 14:62. Reymond, Robert L. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998.

So, this is a hymn form of a confession of faith. It is a common profession that extols Christ, the preexistent Son Incarnate, who was then vindicated as the divine Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, who, having ascended, is properly the acknowledged Lord among the angels and the proclaimed Lord in the world of men.

This Jesus is Messiah, Deity incarnate. He is Co-source with the Father of all spiritual blessings, whose Name is to be called upon in the church and at whose Name every knee is to bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. He is Lord over all, God blessed forever (Romans 9:5) and "our great God and Savior" (Titus 2:13).

In this verse we have in hymn form reflections of the primitive Christology of the early church that may antedate the letters of Paul in which they appear. In 1 Timothy 1:15 we have an early church confession in the form of a non-Pauline "faithful saying" which Paul endorsed by declaring it to be "worthy of acceptance." Jesus is the divine,

preexistent Son of God who through descent became flesh for people and for salvation and who through ascent assumed mediatorial Headship over the universe and the church. The primitive church looked to Jesus as their Lord and called upon His Name in their worship.

Craig, Mary J. *3:16: A Devotional Study of the Bible*. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Mary Craig Ministries, Inc. 2010

In 2 Timothy, Paul talks about stirring up the gift of God in Timothy by the laying on of Paul's hands. He writes about Christian warfare, of being a good example, of the last times, about living a godly life, and of being able to watch and endure. Paul would remind Timothy of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him and how all of this would help Timothy, by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, to guard and defend the sure calling of salvation.

2 Timothy 1:13, 14: *Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto you, keep by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us.*

2 Timothy 2:1-7 - ¹You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ²and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. ⁷Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. ESV The Greek word *anthropoi* can refer to both men and women, depending on the context.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

Just as God's "breath" (his word) created all the host of heaven Ps 33:6, just as his "breath" gave physical life to Adam and to all humanity (Gen 2:7; Job 33:4), just as his "breath" gave spiritual life to Israel, the "valley of dry bones" (Ezek. 37:1-14), so also his powerful, creative "breath" in its word form is living and active (Hebrews 4:12), imperishable and abiding (1 Peter 1:23), and through it God's Spirit imparts new life to the soul.

J. Hudson Taylor: "It is not by trying to be faithful, but in looking to the Faithful One, that we win the victory."

May we be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

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