

November 6, 2011
The Bridge Bible Fellowship
Pastor Paul S. Brown
1 Timothy 3:14-16

“The Mission & Message of the Church”

Background: Acts 19-20

I. The MISSION of the Church – v. 15

“so that you will know how one ought” or “so that you will know how you ought”?

“IN the household of God”

“which is the church”

“of the living God”

“the pillar and support of the truth”

II. The MESSAGE of the Church – v. 16-17

“Common confession”

“great is the mystery of godliness”

Structure: Three stanzas with two lines each or two stanzas with three lines each.

A. He who was revealed in the flesh = _____ / _____

“He” (“God” in KJV - not supported by earliest MSS)

“revealed in the flesh”

1. To _____ the Father to us! Jn. 14:8-9; Heb. 1:1-3
2. To _____ sin! 1 Jn. 3:5
3. To _____ the works of the devil! Gen. 3:15; 1 Jn. 3:8
4. To _____ His chosen people! Heb. 2:14-18

B. Was vindicated in (or “by”) the Spirit = _____ / _____ / _____

C. Beheld by angels = _____

D. Proclaimed (“preached”) among the nations = _____ / _____

E. Believed on in the world = _____ / _____ / _____

F. Taken up in glory = _____

WARNING!!! Rev. 2:1-7

Discussion Questions

1. Read Acts 19-20. What was the spiritual climate in Ephesus before Paul arrived with the Gospel? How was the initial reception to the Gospel? How did some of the people in Ephesus react to the “implications” of the Gospel? Why did they react that way? What was their “bottom line?” Do you see any similarities in our day?
2. What difference does it make if the proper translation in v. 15 is “you” or “one”? Where does change need to begin in the church – with you or with others? See Mt. 7:1-5.
3. Why does Paul emphasize “living God” in v. 15? What would that have brought to their minds? What false (“dead”) gods were the people in Ephesus serving? What false (“dead”) gods are we tempted to serve?
4. What image would the phrase “pillar and support of the truth” bring to their minds? The visible one in Ephesus was a pillar and support of lies (about the goddess Artemis or Diana)...but it was absolutely beautiful and people were drawn to the lies. Does beauty & success always equal truth? What are some things in our culture that are beautiful and successful but not true? How much effort to people put into promoting these lies? How much effort should we put into promoting the truth?
5. What happened to the temple of Artemis of the Ephesians and its great pillars? Will this ever happen to the church of Jesus Christ? (See Mt. 16:16ff)
6. What is the church supposed to be all about? What is our mission? Is it about us or something greater?
7. What would come to the minds of people in Ephesus when Paul wrote, “Great is the mystery of godliness!” What is this mystery of godliness? Why is this a “mystery” (something spoken of earlier but now understood)? What are the common ways people believe they can attain to godliness?
8. Who is the mystery of godliness? Why does Paul use these six short phrases to describe Him? How does a short message that can be put to music help people in the learning process? Can you come up with a tune for these words?
9. What is the warning from Rev. 2:1-7 to the church at Ephesus and to us? How can this happen to a church that seems so doctrinally sound and so hard at work for the Lord? How is it that people move from a passionate relationship with Jesus to simply being religious? What clues do we learn from the geography at ancient Ephesus and its relationship to the port? What are the things that develop slowly over time that cause our hearts to slowly move away from Jesus?
10. What will you do starting this week to reignite the fire of love in your heart for the Lord? What specific changes will you make in your lifestyle to “repent” and return to your first love? With whom will you share this decision and become accountable?
11. You are a “pillar and support of the truth” and that truth is Jesus! How are you specifically lifting Him up in the eyes of the watching world? To whom will you proclaim Him this week...next week...next month...next year...until He returns?