

# The Harvester



## Preparing Souls

## To Serve The Lord



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## The Undeniably Great God

By Brian R. Kenyon

In a culture where the God of the Bible is ridiculed and rejected, and one in which His teachings are blamed for “imperialism,” racism, and oppression of the “little people,” it is refreshing to be reminded of how great God truly is! Paul gave us one such reminder in his encouragement of a young preacher, when he wrote,

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (1 Tim. 3:16, KJV)

Whether or not these lines were part of a first century “Christian hymn,” God saw fit to breathe these words into His written word (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

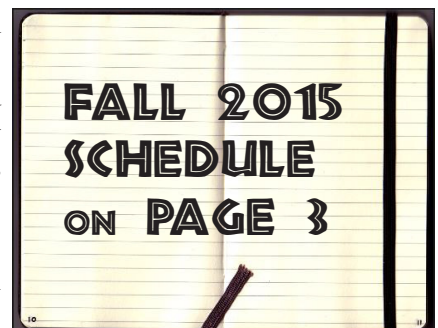
“Without controversy” is from a word (*homologoumenos*, ὁμολογουμένως) that has both a positive and negative aspect. Positively, it means “agreement by all” (thus, “confessedly,” or “most assuredly”); negatively, it means that which is beyond question or denial (thus, “undeniably”) (Knight 182). It can be, therefore, also translated, “by common confession (NAS), or “we confess” (ESV). This expression introduces something about which there is no question to the unbiased mind!

“Mystery of godliness” basically refers to the revealed religion of God. “Mystery” is something formerly unknown but now revealed (Eph. 3:3-5, 9). It is, for all practical purposes, synonymous with the Gospel. “Godliness [religion, RSV]” (from *eusebia*, εὐσέβεια) means godliness, godly life; religion; or as one source states, “the duty that man owes to God” (Bauer 412). “Godliness” is a key word in First Timothy (1 Tim. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7-8; 6:3, 5-6, 11). Here, “godliness” has the article (literally, “the godliness”), and thus indicates the system of godliness.

The expression is similar to “the mystery of the faith” (1 Tim. 3:9), with one notable exception: “the faith” regards the Gospel as “the object intended for trust,” whereas “the godliness” regards the Gospel as “the inwardness of all that forms real godliness, man’s blessed relation to God” (Lenski 608). This “godliness” results from inward cleansing and expresses itself in the proper conduct (cf. 1 Tim. 2:2b). It is made possible by a right relationship with God (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21). Paul gave six reasons why God is so undeniably great.

### “Manifest in the Flesh”

God’s being made known (“manifest”) in the flesh took place through His incarnation, which itself means “in flesh.” Jesus was “conceived . . . of the Holy Ghost” in the womb of Mary (Mt. 1:20). Scripture does not reveal exactly how this conception took place, but it was not, as some erroneously assume, through sexual contact. The Holy Spirit is a spirit being and, obviously, has no genitalia! The significance of the incarnation is brought out well in Matthew’s account of Jesus’ birth. The angel of the Lord announced to Joseph that Mary “shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Mt. 1:21). Then Matthew quoted Isaiah 7:14 to show the prophetic fulfillment of this event, noting, as Isaiah did, that “they shall call his name Emmanuel,



which being interpreted is, God with us” (Mt. 1:23). Thus, the true and living God, who has existed from eternity, came to this earth in human flesh to be “God with us” (Jn. 1:1-3, 14; Phil. 2:6-11). Peter said that Christ was “foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Pet. 1:20). God was “manifest in the flesh” to seek and save the lost!

## “Justified in the Spirit”

The word from which “justified [vindicated, ESV]” is translated (*dikaioo*, δικαιόω) means to put into a right relationship (with God); to acquit, declare and treat as righteous. Since Jesus had no sin (Jn. 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 1:19), the idea of vindication is more applicable. Despite the Jews’ charging Him of blasphemy (Jn. 5:18; 10:33; 19:7), Christ’s claims to be the Messiah were vindicated by His life, death, and resurrection (Rom. 1:4)! “Spirit” in “in the Spirit” can refer to Christ’s human spirit (disposition cf. “spirit,” ASV), in which case Christ was vindicated by “the demonstration of his own pure, spirit essence” (i.e., the “higher sphere of His divine life”) (Jackson 106). “Spirit” can also refer to the Holy Spirit, in which case Christ was vindicated through the agency of His deity. “Christ’s miracles, climaxing in his resurrection, were demonstrations of his deity, sure evidences that he was the sinless Son of God” (cf. Jn. 3:2) (Earle 370). Jesus was undeniably proven to be the Son of God!

## “Seen of Angels”

Angels fulfilled an important role in the life of Jesus as evidences by the following: (1) they praised God at His birth (Lk. 2:13-14); (2) they ministered to Him following

His temptation (Mt. 4:11); (3) they strengthened Him in Gethsemane (Lk. 22:43); (4) they gave hope in Him at the tomb (Jn. 20:12); and (5) they explained His ascension (Acts 1:10-11). However, “angels” in this context do not seem to refer to any of those occasions. The word translated “seen” (from *horao*, ὁράω) means to see, observe, notice; in the passive voice, appear. Since “all other NT occurrences” of this word “used with reference to Jesus refer to his resurrection appearances” (Lk. 24:31; Acts 13:31; 1 Cor. 15:5-8 cf. Acts 26:16) (Knight 185), it is likely that “seen of angels” here refers to spiritual beings beholding the Lord’s resurrection. Thus, “angels” may be the “principalities and powers” (cf. Col. 2:15; Eph. 6:12), in which case “the triumphant Christ showed himself to his spiritual enemies” (a possible meaning of 1 Pet. 3:18-20), or they may be good angels (cf. 1 Pet. 1:12), in which case “the host of heaven are eager to receive back the exalted Son of God” (Guthrie 101-102). Christ’s resurrection even resounded in the angelic world!

## “Preached unto the Gentiles”

“Preached [proclaimed, ESV]” (from *kerusso*, κηρύσσω) is to publicly proclaim. It is the same word Paul used when he told Timothy to “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2 cf. 1 Pet. 3:19). “Gentiles [nations, ESV]” refer to the non-Jewish people, otherwise termed pagans, heathen, and/or unbelievers (2 Tim. 4:17). This shows the universality of Jesus (cf. Mt. 28:19-20 [cf. Mt. 15:24]; Mk. 16:15-16 cf. Col. 1:23). The Son of God was meant to be proclaimed to “all families of the earth” (Gen. 12:3)!

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## The Harvester

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## “Believed on in the World”

Biblically, “believed on” includes obedience. This is perhaps best illustrated by comparing John 3:16 with John 3:36, which states, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.” Note: “he that believeth not” (KJV) means “he that obeyeth not” (ASV). Jesus asked, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Lk. 6:46). The message of Jesus “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6). Paul wrote, “Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world” (Rom. 10:18). It was the “truth of the gospel” that went “in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit” (Col. 1:6), which led to the “hope of the gospel” that was “preached to every creature which is under heaven” (Col. 1:23)!

## “Received up into Glory”

“Received up [taken up, ESV]” is an explicit reference to Jesus’ ascension (Mk. 16:19; Acts 1:2, 22). “Glory” generally means brightness, or brilliance, but here refers to the revealed presence of God; heaven. This is the state Jesus shared with the Father before He became human. It was this glory for which the Savior prayed, “O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before

the world was” (Jn. 17:5). It is this state all the faithful will experience, as Paul declared, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:4)!

## Conclusion

Indeed, there is no rationally denying the greatness of the only true and living God! Do not allow the world’s view to diminish the truth. Far from oppressing humanity, the God who “was made flesh, and dwelt among us” seeks to exalt us through His life, death, resurrection, ascension, and teaching, which, when obeyed gives eternal life in His glory!

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**Fall 2015 Semester Begins Aug. 10**

Register on-line, by calling the office, or by selecting classes from this form and mailing it to the office with your name, address, and phone number!

# Great Opportunity to Study and Learn God’s Word

Day	Time	Lakeland Classes	Instructor	Credit
Monday	__8:30-12:00	Revelation (259)	Bauer	3
	__1:00-4:15	First and Second Corinthians (135)	Richardson	3
Tuesday	__8:30-12:00	Preacher and His Work (107)	Wheeler	3
	__1:00-4:15	Computers and Churches (287)	Wheeler	3
Wednesday	__8:30-12:00	Romans (261)	Kenyon	3
	__1:00-4:15	Christian Evidences (224)	D. Stearsman	3
Thursday	__8:30-12:00	Logic (270)	Kenyon	3
	__1:00-4:15	English I: Grammar (124)	Patterson	3
Friday	__8:30-12:00	Church History: General (241)	Franson	3
	__1:00-4:15	Pentateuch (164)	Elledge	3
<b>Extension Classes</b>				
Tuesday	__7:00-9:30	Revelation (259) (Livingston church of Christ, Livingston, TN)	J. Stearsman	2.5
Thursday	__6:00-8:30	Difficult Texts of the New Testament (274) (Orange Street church of Christ, Auburndale)	Bauer	2.5
	__7:00-9:30	Revelation (259) (Wesconnett church of Christ, Jacksonville)	Atnip	2.5

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**The Harvester**

**June 2015**

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# How Much Do You Tip the Waitress?



Many church members work as servers and/or hostesses in restaurants, whose paychecks heavily rely upon tips. In fact, one waitress recently said if people going out to eat cannot afford to leave a generous tip, they should just go to a fast-food restaurant. Of course, good service is the main factor that goes into whether or not the tip is good. Customers usually do not mind leaving a good tip when there is good service. That tip may just be five or ten dollars (depending on the size of the party and price of the food), and every little bit helps the server.

This article is not about restaurant economics, but an appeal for us to consider the value of giving even small quantities to support something that renders great service. The Florida School of Preaching operates on the free-will offerings of individual Christians and the support of local churches of Christ. The thought occurred to me that if people would simply match the amount of money they tip restaurant servers throughout the month, the school would have more financial strength to train preachers. Every month, the school runs a shortfall (though not as much as it formerly was), but, thankfully, the Lord continues to provide. We will have new students beginning in August who will need financial support. If you are not currently supporting the school or a student financially, please consider doing so. Every little bit helps! Here is a little challenge for us all: add up the money we tip servers at restaurants in a month's time and compare that to how much we support good works in addition to our first-day-of-the-week contribution. How does that compare? What does that reflect in our spiritual life? When it comes to eating in a restaurant, we recognize the value of good service. Can we also recognize the spiritual value of training preachers and seek to financially support that? If you have questions or would like other ways to support the school, please contact me. —*Brian Kenyon*