

# A Mystery Hymn for Christmas

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** 1 Timothy 3:16  
**Preached on:** Sunday, December 21, 2014

I would invite you to take your Bibles and turn to 1 Timothy 3. We will be looking at verse 16. I wish to draw your attention to this passage of Scripture, one that is seldom considered at this time of year but it is one that not only speaks of the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ but it also provides perhaps the most comprehensive summary of the Gospel in all of Scripture. It is a passage that you would all do well to put to memory. This is condensed and highly concentrated truth, very short and concise sentences that are filled with profound and powerful statements. I might add, that because of the literary construction, it is thought to be a hymn that was sung by our ancient brethren, thus the title of my discourse to you this morning "A Mystery Hymn for Christmas."

Follow along as I read the text. 1 Timothy 3:16.

16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

Six stanzas that delineate the essentials of the Christian faith. Six lines that contain the essence of the entire New Testament. Here we have six verses that literally pulsate the intense emotion regarding the great mystery of godliness. Why men and women who wholeheartedly embrace these truths fear and worship and praise the Lord our God. And yet, these were also six verses that Satan seeks to distort and to deny and certainly six lines the world system that Satan operates desperately wants to silence.

Let me give you the context of this amazing passage of Scripture. Paul has just instructed Timothy regarding the qualifications of elders and deacons. He says in verse 14 that he writes "so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth." Then in verse 15, he states the twofold priority of the church, first we are to be the household of God, the church of the living God, therefore we need to know how we ought to conduct ourselves in this household; how we need to act accordingly and appropriately in this spiritual family, realizing that God is our Father, that our brothers and sisters in Christ are part of this family. He wants us to understand that the church is the possession, it is the dwelling place of the living God which he has established to display the embodiment of his truth through the revelation of Jesus Christ and therefore the church is not a religious country club. This is not a place where we come together to be entertained. This is not a theater. This is not a political organization that comes along and tries to promote various forms of social and political agendas. It is not a social welfare agency designed to feed and clothe and educate the poor. And it is not a center for prosperity and success and

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physical healing. This is the household of God. This is the church of the living God. This is an assembly of people that God has called by his mercy to come together where he can come in the midst of us and dwell with honor and dignity. You might put it this way: this is to be a habitation that is very much like the Holy of Holies where the glory of his presence and the power of his holiness is never diminished by the character and the conduct of his children. This is where the majesty and the glory and the excellency of Christ is to be put on display. Also, this is the place where the word and the will of God must be proclaimed and protected. We are to be a spiritual house set on a hill so that people can behold the transforming power of the Gospel of God. This is a spiritual structure whose foundation is the inspired, inerrant, authoritative, all-sufficient word of the living God. So by implication, when we properly understand how we are to conduct ourselves in God's household, the church, and when we humbly dwell under the roof of such a holy edifice supported by the truth, this wisdom of God will influence us to be godly in our character and in our conduct. That's the context of all of this.

So this brings us to verse 16 and here the Holy Spirit summarizes the contents of the essentials of our faith. You might say this is the divine recipe for the materials and construction of these foundational pillars of the church. Here we have six small, yet balanced sentences, each carefully stated in the original language in poetic form and he does this in order for there to be no doubt as to what these essentials are and he also wants us to remember these things. Now, by way of introduction as we look at the way this is put together, we can see that this is probably the lyrics of an ancient hymn. Now, ancient Oriental poetry is very different than how we think of poetry with meter and rhyme. Instead, they focused on thought patterns of parallel comparisons and/or contrasts that would be used to emphasize essential truths of the subject matter at hand and that's what the Holy Spirit uses here through the inspired writer. Here for example, we see first of all, the uniformity of six verbs that the Spirit of God uses, all being a reference to our Lord and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Notice he says, "He who was revealed, vindicated, beheld, proclaimed, believed and taken up." Even in the original language, it has an obvious rhythm to it. It even has a bit of rhyme to it. But we can also look at this and see in this text three marvelous parallels of comparison and contrast. First, we see a parallel and a contrast between the Christ being manifested in the flesh in line 1 and vindicated by the spirit in line 2. Secondly, we see another parallel between the sight of the angels in line 3 and the hearing of the nations in line 4. Thirdly, we see where Christ in his humiliation is believed on in the world in line 5 and then he is glorified in his ascension back into glory in line 6, a comparison there between heaven and earth.

We can also see three pairs of truth revealed to us in this text. We can see that the first and the last lines contrast Christ's descent to Earth in line 1 and his ascent back into heaven in line 6. Then the second and the fifth lines exalt the Holy Spirit's affirmation of Christ's deity. In line 2, we read how Christ was vindicated in the Spirit but we also see

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the Spirit's work of regeneration in line 5 where he is believed on in the world. Also, lines 3 and 4 underscore the universal proclamation of God's redemptive plan which is seen by angels in line 3 and that is proclaimed among the nations in line 4. Now folks, I would submit to you that none of this is by accident. All of this, once again, speaks to the inspiration of the word of God and it also tells us that we need to examine these things very carefully and closely and apply them to our lives.

So let's do that. First of all, let's look at the introduction to this great hymn. In verse 16, "And by common confession, great is the mystery of godliness." Now, this parallels the phrase Paul used in verse 9 regarding the mystery of the faith. This is a reference to the mystery of our salvation that is purchased by the godly one, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the merits of his life and sacrificial death, provides the only way, the only means by which we can become godly. Paul is saying also that this profound mystery is now explained by common confession. In other words, this is a unanimous belief among all who have placed their faith in Christ and those who deny or try to distort this, are simply not part of his body, the church. Now, it's important for us to understand what this word "mystery" means. Many times in our culture when we think of a mystery, we think of a whodunnit novel. That's not what it means, alright? Instead, the term refers to the revelation of something previously hidden and unknown. In other words, what we are about to study are things that were previously hidden and not fully known in the Old Testament but are now being clarified. The 17th century theologian, Matthew Henry, said this, "Christianity is a mystery, a mystery that could not have been found out by reason or the light of nature and which cannot be comprehended by reason because it is above reason though not contrary thereto. It is a mystery, not a philosophy or speculation but of godliness designed to promote godliness and herein it exceeds all the mysteries of the Gentiles. It is also a revealed mystery, not shut up and sealed and it does not cease to be a mystery because now in part revealed."

Indeed today, as we look at spiritual things, as we look into the word of God, Paul tells us that we see in a mirror dimly but then one day face-to-face. "Now we only know in part," he says, "but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known." Even with God's word completed and with the illuminating power of his Spirit, we are not capable of seeing all that God has and all that he is doing and all that he will do, but a day is coming when we will enter into his presence and at that moment, we will see him face-to-face. No longer will we only know in part but then we shall know fully just as we also have been fully known.

Also by way of introduction, it's important for you to know that there are seven mysteries mentioned in the New Testament, revealed truths that were previously unknown and hidden in the Old Testament and each truth clarifies God's plan of redemption that is introduced in the Old Testament. First we have the mystery of the kingdom of God in

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Mark 11. It's also called the mystery of the kingdom of heaven about which Jesus taught in his parables in Matthew 13. This is a reference to God's sphere of influence, his dominion over those who have placed their faith in Christ Jesus and this includes not only a spiritual kingdom where God rules in the hearts of those that he has saved but also a future physical, earthly kingdom that Christ will establish when he returns as King of kings and Lord of lords. We know as we look at Scripture, that during the current church age in which we live, the Son of man is sowing seed as his parables say. He is raising up a spiritual nucleus for the future earthly kingdom for which we are commanded to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And until then, God is permitting a parallel development of evil in this world that is ruled by Satan but eventually at his second coming to earth, God will reap a harvest. He will separate the good from the bad and so and at that time, he will permanently establish his millennial kingdom upon the earth which will be the consummating bridge between human history and the eternal state.

But secondly in Scripture in the New Testament, we find another mystery which refers to the mystery of the body of Christ where both Jews and Gentiles are united together. This is revealed to us in Ephesians 3, verses 3 and following. There we read about Gentiles being fellow heirs and fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ through the Gospel. This was something unheard of in the Old Testament even though there are passages that alluded to it.

Then thirdly, there is the mystery of the intimate and permanent union between Christ and his church that is reflected in the sacred bond of matrimony. We see this in Ephesians 5. This is also called the mystery of the Gospel in Ephesians 6:19 and the mystery of Christ dwelling within believers. Christ in you, the hope of glory, as Paul tells us in Colossians 1:26-27.

Then fourthly, there is the mystery of the partial hardening of Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and so all Israel will be saved, Romans 11:25-26. Although Israel is currently experiencing the judgment for rejecting her Messiah, he is not finished with her as a nation. God has kept a remnant of believing Jews and this remnant is evidence of what will happen to the nation as a whole eventually. The current partial and temporary judicial hardening of Israel will give way to a national restoration, a national salvation, when Christ returns to establish his kingdom and rule the nations. At that time, Israel will exist as a nation, it will offer leadership and service to the rest of the nations of the world under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then number 5, there is the mystery of lawlessness that we read about in 2 Thessalonians 2:7. Because of Satan, the spirit of lawlessness is currently operating in the world today but dear friends, what we see today will pale in comparison to what will happen during

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the pre-kingdom judgments during the time of the tribulation. Today we see an escalating hatred of Christ and his people and one day we are going to see an unprecedented explosion of opposition toward the one true God and all who belong to him through faith in his beloved Son. We're going to see a time when one man, the Antichrist, will become the embodiment of lawlessness just before the Lord returns and certainly we see the world being prepared for this day. So this mystery has not yet fully been revealed.

Then number 6, the Apostle Paul tells us about the mystery of the rapture of the church in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. I believe as we look at Scripture that this will happen before the tribulation will occur because the nature and the purpose of the tribulation, Daniel's 70th week, centers on Israel, not the church. It centers on bringing Israel to a place of repentance and belief, a time also of judgment upon the unbelieving world and therefore the church is excluded from being a part of all of this. Moreover, the church is promised deliverance from this time of wrath in 1 Thessalonians 1 and Revelation 3. I might add as a footnote, the term "rapture" is not found in the Greek New Testament. It is the Latin translation of a Greek word "harpazo" which means "caught up." We find this in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. It means "to be caught up or to be snatched away or taken away." We see evidences of this mentioned, for example, in John 14:1 and following where Jesus talks about going away and preparing a place for us and he will come again and he is going to receive us unto himself that where he is, there we may be also. Then of course, this is explained in great detail in 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4.

Then finally, number 7, we come to the mystery of godliness here in our text before us in 1 Timothy 3:16. Godliness not only refers to the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to every believer at the moment of salvation so that he can produce within us righteousness, but it can also be understood as a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, the embodiment of perfect God-likeness. You know, as we look at God, if you can imagine that time before you came to Christ and you knew anything about his word, as you look at God or you look think about God, you can't see it's all a mystery. All we can see is invisible attributes in creation and only a fool would deny that. And we also know according to Scripture and even personal experience, that we know he exists because of conscience. So because of creation and conscience, we know he's there but it's still a mystery and it wasn't until he came along in his word in special revelation and gave us the truth of who he is and how to be reconciled to him that we could understand more of really who he is and what we need to do in light of that. To be sure, all of Scripture therefore is inspired. It is breathed out by God for that purpose and to that end, the entire biblical record contains divine wisdom, mysteries once hidden, truths that we could have never conceived.

For that reason, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 2:6, "Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God

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predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, 'Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.' For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God." Therefore the Spirit of God has revealed these great truths to us to unlock the mysteries of who God is.

You know, every time I stand before you to exposit a text of Scripture, I find myself in awe of the fact that the great treasure of truth that unlocks these mysteries has been entrusted to us, the church, the household of God, the pillar and support of the truth and what a weighty responsibility we all have whether you're a pastor or a teacher in any way, regardless of how you do it, what a responsibility we have to rightly divide the word of truth and to remember that we are called to be faithful, not popular, and you'll never be able to do both so you'll have to choose which one you will be. 1 Corinthians 4, beginning in verse 1, Paul says, "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy." One be found faithful. Here the term "mystery" is used in its broadest sense to refer to the divine truths of the New Testament entrusted to God-ordained messengers. And now we have full disclosure of these once hidden truths because the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and he has given us his word.

Now, let's look more closely at this common confession, in other words, this unanimous belief among those who have been saved and radically transformed by grace through faith in Christ. Notice the first mystery of godliness is founded upon this phrase "He who was revealed in the flesh." Now obviously, this is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ and I might add, the fact that he came is not so much a mystery, I mean, that's an indisputable truth that is the source of rejoicing for all the saints but think about this and here's the great mystery: the fact that the self-existent, pre-existent, uncreated Creator of the universe who is spirit indwells in unapproachable light, the fact that he took on human flesh, that's the inscrutable mystery, that's what was never fully disclosed in the Old Testament but is now something that we understand clearly. The reality of this, dear friends, was once pictured in Old Testament laws and types and symbols and rituals, sacrifices, prophecies and so forth but how else could we have possibly seen God who is spirit? Again, who dwells in unapproachable light as an eternal spirit, had he not taken on human flesh? With his inimitable grasp of language and divine truth, that 19th century English preacher, Charles Spurgeon, put it this way, "Not all the glory of the sky and of the sea nor the wonders of creation or Providence can set forth the deity as does the Son of Mary who from the manger went to the cross and from the cross to the tomb and from

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the tomb to his eternal throne. Behold ye now the Lamb of God for God is manifest in him." Then he closes with this statement, "People of God, look ye nowhere else for God." Isn't that great? Look ye nowhere else for God. If you want to see God, look at the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the foundation of our faith, dear friends. This is the wellspring of our salvation. This is what Christmas is all about. It's about the miracle of Christ's condescension. You see, a mere mortal conceived in sin could never possibly appease the wrath of a holy God so God had to furnish a sinless substitute to be the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sins. According to Hebrews 10 we read that in eternity past, the Father ordained to prepare a body for the Son, a body that would never be tainted with sin, would never have a sin nature and could therefore become that perfect sacrifice to satisfy the holy justice of God. This was the will of the Father and Jesus took that body upon himself. He came to do the Father's will, knowing perfectly well why he was taking upon himself according to Philippians 2:7 "the form of a bondservant and being made in the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, and even death on a cross." We see more of this in Hebrews 2:9 as we read of the one who has been, "made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." As you see, he did not come just to die. He came to die for us specifically.

Friends, I want you to think about this this morning during this Christmas season: the babe in the manger had to be conceived by the Spirit of God yet be born of a virgin in order for him to be both the Son of man and the Son of God. He had to be a son of a virgin according to the flesh yet Immanuel, God with us, according to the Spirit. Think of it this way: in creation, man was made in God's image; in the incarnation, God was made in man's image. Jesus had to take upon himself the nature of a man in order to be punished for our sin yet he also had to be God in order to endure the sufferings of the elect. Oh dear friends, ponder this great truth: he was revealed in the flesh. The work of redemption required a theanthropon, a God-man, one who would supernaturally fuse the human nature with the divine in order to form an indissoluble bond that we might be redeemed by his grace. He took our flesh that we might have his eternal spirit. He lay in a manger that we might live in glory. He came down to earth that we might ascend into heaven and have eternal life. And because he lived and died as a man, he can also identify with all that we struggle with. He can identify with our temptations, with our sorrows, with our pain, with our adversities. And as a result of this, the writer of Hebrews tells us that "we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but one who has been tempted in all things as we are yet without sin. Therefore," ah this is a wonderful therefore, "therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Dear friends, what

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comfort in knowing the one who was revealed in the flesh. This is the most foundational truth that explains the mystery of godliness because apart from this, apart from the Incarnation of Christ, godliness would be impossible to achieve and we would perish in our sins.

Secondly, we read that Christ was vindicated in the Spirit. The term "vindicated" means "to justify or to declare righteous." This vindication is related to Christ's claim to be the Messiah of Israel, the Son of God. Now the term "Spirit" could be a reference to the Holy Spirit, it could be capitalized or it could refer to the righteous spirit or that spiritual nature of Jesus, both are correct. Think about it: to be sure, the spiritual nature of Christ vindicated him in that he was according to Hebrews 7:26, "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens." So we can see that he was declared righteous with respect to his spiritual nature, all of this, of course, validating his claim to be the Son of God and for this he was a sinless sacrifice on our behalf. 2 Corinthians 5:21 God, "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Because of his spiritual nature, he could speak and it was done. Miracle after miracle after miracle validated his claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God. But it's also correct to say that the Holy Spirit who raised him from the dead proved that he was the Son of God, proved his righteousness. Romans 1:4, we read that Jesus Christ, "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness." And even now, having ascended back into heaven and now seated at the right hand of the Father, we see the Spirit of God continuing to vindicate the Son by empowering his Gospel to go forth through the ministry of his body, the church, even through the giftedness of his people who are members of that body, who put the glory of God and the Gospel on display.

In light of all of this, notice the third stanza of the mystery of godliness, it says that he was beheld by angels. The term "beheld" means not only to see or to behold but also to be attendant to. Despite the magnificent glory of these angelic creatures, it would appear as we look at Scripture that they are unable to look upon the consuming glory of their Creator. For example, in Isaiah 6, we read about the seraphim who hover around the throne of God and yet they cover their face with 2 of their 6 wings. But think about this: when the Son of God took upon himself human flesh, perhaps this was the first time they could have a tiny glimpse of the glory of the God that they served and worshiped, the same glimpse that we have and their first glimpse is that of him being born of a virgin, wrapped in cloths, laid in a manger. What an inconceivable mystery this must have been to them as they looked upon that scene of divine humility. Then later, they would minister to Christ in the wilderness of temptation. They would behold his perfect life, his selfless love, his tears of compassion. They would look at his zeal for his Father's house. They would see his supernatural power over creation and all of his miracles. They would see his power over sin and Satan and even death. They would even tend to him in the garden

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of Gethsemane. Then they watched him as he hung upon the cross, I'm sure, in utter amazement. Then they would roll away the stone at his tomb, not to let Jesus out but to let us in. Then they would announce to the women, "He's not here. He has risen like he said."

You know, even the fallen angels beheld his glory and continued to behold his glory. In 1 Peter 3, we read that while Jesus' body was dead, his living and divine Spirit made a visit to those demons bound in a special prison that is known as the abyss where some demons are permanently bound because of some exceptional heinous act of wickedness. There we read how he announced his triumph over sin, Satan, death and hell itself. Can you even begin to imagine that scene? Paul tells us in Colossians 2:15 that because of the cross, "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in Him."

We also know that the holy angels were involved in Jesus' ascension back into heaven. So indeed, he was beheld by angels. Throughout the Lord's time on earth, they saw him, they attended to him, they met his needs as the Father willed and I marvel to think how that those angels even minister to us. I'm sure they're in this room. We cannot see them but they are here, even as the Lord our God is here. The angelic involvement throughout the life and ministry of Jesus gave further validation to the fact that he was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah.

Ah, but the mystery of godliness does not stop here. The one who was revealed in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit and beheld by angels is also proclaimed among the nations. Now folks, this is great news for me because I am a Gentile and most of you are Gentiles and I know that a lot that are listening to us are not. They are Jewish people that have come to faith in Yeshua as Messiah and we praise God for that but we must understand that though God came first to the Jew, he has also grafted the wild olive branch of the Gentiles into the root of covenant blessing that he gave originally to Abraham. Prior to the Gospel being extended to the Gentile nations, the Jews considered us to be the lowest of the low and certainly, we were and apart from Christ we are. They are too. We were those that could never experience God's mercy and grace and love and blessing but then Christ was preached among the Gentiles and myriads responded and repented in faith. Indeed, we have been commanded to go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, to be witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth. And to this day, dear friends, the message of the Gospel is being preached throughout the world. I find it fascinating that even this pulpit has documented listeners in over half of the 193 nations of the world. Many of them will be listening beginning this afternoon when it is posted on the Internet. What an amazing privilege to be a part of that.

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But notice the fifth stanza: it's not just proclaimed among the nations, it's believed on in the world. Now think about this: though the message of sin and the cross is utter folly to the natural man, it is foolishness to those apart from Christ, it has and it will continue to save millions. It saved me. It saved you. I hope you're all saved. If you're not, you need to do business with God today. But it's believed on in the world. Beloved, never underestimate the power of the Gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation and therefore we should never be ashamed of the Gospel. We should never soften it to make it more palatable. We should never compromise its truths to make it more popular. We should never tinker with the Gospel seed so that it will grow in any kind of soil because what will come up will be a tare, not the wheat. We just need to preacher it with all of its purity and power. Just unleash the truth and watch it turn murderers into preachers. Watch it turn fornicators and dope fiends and drunkards and thieves and even crooked politicians even into servants of Christ. You know, at the end of Christ's earthly ministry, there were only 120 believers who met in the Upper Room. Within a few weeks, thousands were added to their number. Within a few years, the Gospel had spread throughout all of the nations of the world. Oh, Christ has promised to build his church, right? Oh, the mystery of godliness and what a joy to know the truth of the Gospel, to be transformed by it and to witness its power to save those who believe from every nation and tribe and tongue and people.

Then in conclusion, the final stanza is not only another great mystery of godliness, dear friends, it is a preview of coming attractions if I can put it that way. This is a preview of what's going to happen with us. It says that he was taken up in glory. According to Scripture, Jesus perfectly obeyed the will of his Father and because his work on earth was finished, because he had made purification for sins, Hebrews 1:3 tells us that he ascended back into glory and there he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. In Acts 1, beginning in verse 9, there is a description of the scene. I wish I could have been there. Somehow we have to go there in our imaginations but we can do that as we look at the text. There we read, "And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them." There are the angels again. "They also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.'"

Oh dear child of God, ponder these great truths especially during the Christmas season. Memorize these stanzas. It's easy to memorize. Let them become a part of your spiritual repertoire but don't stop there, unleash it on your family and friends. Preach the wonderful news of the Gospel that they might understand, that they might experience the mystery of godliness. Might I add this as we draw our time together to a close: remember that Jesus came the first time in humility but he's coming again in glory. Remember that

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# A Mystery Hymn for Christmas

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** 1 Timothy 3:16

**Preached on:** Sunday, December 21, 2014

the first time he came he was a Lamb that opened not his mouth but the next time he comes, he will be the lion of the tribe of Judah and he tells us that from his mouth will come a sharp sword so that with it he may smite the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron and he will tread the wine press of the fierce wrath of God the Almighty. The first time he came, only a few knees bowed and only a few tongues confessed but when he comes again, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. When he came the first time, he was wrapped in cloths and he was laid in a manger but when he comes the second time, he will wear the robe of royalty. He tells us that on his robe and on his thigh he will have a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. Indeed, he will exchange his manger for a throne. The first time he came, he came in obscurity. He comes to a few shepherds on a Bethlehem hillside, then a few more begin to see him but when he returns again, he tells us that just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. Folks, no one will miss it the next time he comes. The first time he came to seek and to save the lost, the second time he comes he will come with those that he sought and that he saved and he will judge his enemies. The first time he came there was no room in the inn but the next time he comes the whole universe will not be able to contain his glory. He tells us that immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of the heavens will be shaken and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

Oh dear Christian, don't you long to see him face-to-face? I do. I long for that day when the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea and that day is coming and if you don't know Christ, today is the day that you need to do business with God as I said earlier. Acknowledge your sin. You know it's there. And cry out to the Lord Jesus Christ for his mercy and his grace. Believe on him and you will be saved and you will experience the reality of the great mystery of godliness.

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Let's pray together.

*Father, thank you for these eternal truths that give such expression to the doxologies of our heart. I pray that you will cause them to bear much fruit in our lives, not only for our good but more importantly, for your glory. Do a mighty work of grace upon those that do not know you as Savior. Give them no rest upon their pillow until they confess their sin and run to the cross in repentant faith. O Lord, how we long for our children and our grandchildren and our wives and husbands and grandparents, all of our family, all of our friends, how we long for them to be transformed by the Gospel. Lord, may this Christmas season be a time where we can truly be salt and light that many will come to faith in Christ, that this season will be the time when they experience the miracle of the new birth. I ask all of this in the precious name of the one who gave himself for us. Amen.*

We pray that you've been edified by this presentation. You've been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at [otcr.org](http://otcr.org).