

1. The church of the last days is characterized as apostate = turned away from the truth

2. However, biblically, the church is the pillar and support of the truth

#4769 στῦλος *stylos*

= a pillar, a column

= a support

➤ the church holds up the truth in such a way that all may see it

#1477 ἐδραῖωμα *hedraiōma*

= a buttress, the support of a building

➤ the church supports the truth against all those who would seek to destroy it

3. The TRUTH → the "mystery of godliness"

#3466 μυστήριον *musterion*

= a mystery, a hidden thing, a secret

= the content of that which has not been known before but which has been revealed to an in-group or restricted constituency

#2150 εὐσέβεια *eusebeia*

= reverence, respect, piety towards God

= the devout practice and appropriate beliefs concerning God

= the behaviour of a religion

4. Without question or doubt, we all agree this is the great mystery (secret) of our godly behaviour:

a) Jesus Christ was revealed in the flesh; God was made visible in a physical body

#5319 φανερώω *phanerōō*

= to make manifest or visible

- to see Christ was to see the Father

(John 1:1, 14, 18; John 12:45, 14:9)

➤ the church is the body in which Jesus is made visible on the earth today

➤ when the church is healthy and conducts itself in a godly way it reveals, makes visible the character and the ways of the invisible God

(1 Timothy 3:15; John 17:23)

b) Jesus Christ was vindicated by the Spirit

#1344 δικαιώω *dikaioō*

= to show, exhibit one to be righteous

- by miracles and wonders the Holy Spirit vindicated the ministry of Jesus

- by the resurrection He affirmed with power that Jesus was the Son of God

➤ through the church the Holy Spirit convicts the world that Jesus is the righteous One

(Mt 12:28; Rom 1:4; John 16:7-11)

c) Jesus Christ was seen by angels

- the angels have been intrigued to understand the salvation of sinners

(1 Pet 1:10-12; Isa 6:1-4; Jn 12:41; Phi 2:5-8; Heb 2:9)

➤ through the church God is making His manifold wisdom known to the angels, teaching them His ways

(Eph 3:8-10; 1 Cor 4:9)

d) Jesus Christ was proclaimed among the nations (Gentiles)

- in ages past there was always an aspect of mystery to salvation

→ that Gentiles would also be saved

➤ the church is one new man, Jew and Gentile in one body

(Ro 16:25-26; Gal 3:8; Eph 3:3-8; Eph 2:14-16)

e) Jesus Christ was believed on in the world

- Jesus' commission to the disciples was to go into the world with the gospel

➤ the church is the witness of godliness before the whole world

(Jn 17:21; 1 Cor 14:24-25)

f) Jesus Christ was taken up in glory

- after His resurrection Jesus ascended into the glory of heaven

➤ the church continues the work, witness and ministry until the Rapture

(Lk 24:50-53; 1 Thess 4:13-18)