

# CAPITAL CONNECTIONS

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## FEBRUARY 2018

*“Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: He was revealed in flesh, **vindicated in spirit**, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.” (1 Tim. 3:16 NRSV)*

Advent provides the entry point in the discussion of 1 Timothy 3:16. In the context of the Liturgy of the Church, the Doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ is fitted for the Christmas Season. *“He was revealed in flesh...”*

This month, I want to attend to the second of the six mysteries of godliness; Jesus Christ was *“vindicated in spirit.”* Each mystery raises its own set of questions. Here are a few questions generated by this one.

What is vindication? How was Jesus vindicated in spirit? Does this mystery apply to me? You may also have some questions to ask. I’d be happy to hear your questions about “the mystery of our religion.”

What is vindication?

Vindication is a legal term. It’s derived from Latin and used to give the sense of the original Greek word. It means to be justified, or declared blameless, cleared; defended and proven to be free from guilt.

As we understand Jesus Christ, believers don’t need to be convinced of this. We believe that he is our perfect, sinless Savior. He’s the Son of God. He’s the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

But Jesus’ accusers complained against him. Here are a couple instances.

“The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him.” (Luke 6:7 NASB)

“And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.”” (Luke 23:2 NASB)

“Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?” They answered, “He deserves death!”” (Matt. 26:65-66 NRSV)

How was Jesus vindicated in spirit?



He stood accused of civil and religious crimes. His accusers used both Roman Law and Mosaic Law as the basis for their complaints. They tried to “throw the book at him.” None of it would stick.

However, being accused is not what this second mystery addresses. It’s the fact that Jesus made no defense for himself.

His ministry was disruptive. Unrest followed him. He was undermining the authorities by “taking it to the streets.” It was a grassroots movement. The Lord Jesus Christ was a populist before it became popular. That’s why the authorities were alarmed. They sought any way possible to disrupt and undermine his efforts.

In response to their tactics, he was typically passive. He did not present a positive defense. Though he often dialogued with Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, eventually he cut off communication with them. Watching the gathering storm, he knew the end was coming. At the most important moment, he was silent.

“Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And Jesus said to him, “It is as you say.” And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He did not answer. Then Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?” And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so the governor was quite amazed.” (Matt. 26:11-14 NASB) This is the essence of Jesus’ vindication in spirit. Silently, he left his fate to God.



Does this mystery apply to me?

Vindication in spirit means I need not defend myself. When I’m mocked for living my faith, or for holding opinions that differ from cultural norms, or when I’m antagonized for decisions I’ve made because of my faith, silence is my best response.

My silence allows the Lord to speak for me. And he will. It’s one great work of the Spirit of God. That’s what is meant by the second half of the first mysterious couplet in 1 Timothy 3:16.

Jesus’ silence was his dependence upon God’s Spirit as his sole advocate. Silence can make a difference for each of us too. Try it the next time someone accuses, antagonizes or attacks you. Let me know what happens.

I look forward to digging deeper into “the mystery of godliness” during our Sunday Worship Services. Beginning February 11, and leading up to Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, we’ll pick up where we left off at Advent. I’m intrigued by the depth and substance that Paul has left us in this ancient artifact of the Christian faith, 1 Timothy 3:16.

Blessings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Pastor John



## Library Media News

Last month many of you read the list of new materials, and for those we need to thank the Kerseys, Kincaids, Meeks, Higdon and anonymous persons who have given them for you to be able to learn from, be inspired by, and to enjoy. A few more this month include:

DVD's 225 *The Gospels*, about the extraordinary life of Jesus of Nazareth, and F *Your Love Never Fails*, set in Texas about family and church relationships.

BOOKS: F Kingsbury *Love Story*, about the Baxter Family; F *Love Finds You in Poetry, Texas*; 231 Charles Stanley *How To Handle Adversity*—and look at it from God's perspective; 231.8 Lutzer, *An Act of God*—God's role in natural disasters; F Harris *Vendetta*, a mystery set in Tennessee, the author is a missionary serving in Mozambique; F Gunn *Sierra Jensen*, 3 books in 1, especially for teens.

In January, *Tenacious* was listed by Jeremy and Jennifer Williams. It needs more than just a listing. This book is for ALL OF US—those interested in football, or how to lead a Christian life, for those caring for a handicapped child, or those facing a health crisis.

Jeremy Williams was the 2010 National High School Coach of the year who developed ALS after injuring a thumb at football practice (in this case). Perhaps you saw *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* that featured the Williams family.

Many of you remember our *Doug Wilbur* and the daily progression of his Lou Gehrig's (ALS) disease. You will be touched if you read this account; it will encourage you to be thankful to God for each day of health, and for

--Bonnie Brough and Kathy Kincaid



by Ellen Kersey

My dad was a good chess player. How do I know? The evening Earl was going to ask for my hand in marriage, he played chess with my dad, and Dad won!

**DAD** was a door-to-door salesman through my growing up years. Beginning with Fuller Brushes (when "The Fuller Brush Man," starring Red Skelton, came to our town, the theater manager let Dad put up a display in the lobby), he went on to sell Encyclopedia Britannica, Knapp and Mason Shoes, and Hertel Blue Ribbon Family Bibles. (Their claim to fame: they have the only cyclopedic index that lists everything, even "the prophecy of the automobile.")

It was while he was selling the Bibles, that he felt a "need" for our family to go to church. "I found a cute little white church," he told the family, "and we're going on Sunday." That "cute" church turned out to be a Southern Baptist church, where we all accepted Christ, and Dad became the treasurer and a deacon. We credit the Holy Spirit with moving in his life while he sold those Bibles door-to-door. (His claim to fame: He sold two Bibles to Dale Evans, Roy Rogers' wife.)

My dad was a fun man most of the time, but, when sales had gone poorly or people who had promised to “send a check” didn’t, he would become discouraged. He was so honest that he expected everyone else to be that, too, and he was disappointed every time someone broke a promise.

We were by no means wealthy: we kids never bought new school clothes; we got new shoes when the ones we had wore out. Dad bought a “new” car only when he could no longer fix the one he had. But we never went hungry, and we had many fun times.

Dad was a ham radio operator and found great joy in connecting with people all over the world, and he was good at Morse Code. His call letters, W6GIK, were on his license plate.



Dad sang in the car – a lot. Songs I remember are “Sweet Violets” (I’ll sing it for you if you don’t know it) and the song about the states: “Oh, what did Delaware, boys? Oh, what did Delaware? She wore a New Jersey, boys...”

And he made fun out of little things: 1) we played a game with dice in the car, where each roll of the die indicated a turn: left, right, straight ahead...; 2) We drove around, picking up soda bottles along the side of the road (long before canned soda and deposits). We made enough money to pay for gas for the trip.

Two summers in a row during my junior high years, we traveled. I remember fighting over who got to sit in the front between Mom and Dad, because that was better than being crowded in the back seat with a sibling and half that seat packed with supplies.

The first summer we drove up the California, Oregon, Washington coasts, staying along the side of the road. We had a cot for my mom and bedrolls (made of blankets) for all of us. Mom somehow cooked meals for us (I don’t remember how), and we loved seeing the beauty and green of Oregon and Washington.

The second summer we stayed in Flagstaff, Arizona, where we rented a cottage and stayed for several weeks, while Dad worked selling door-to-door. My sister, brother and I had a great time playing outside. It rained every afternoon, just enough to settle the dust, but that didn’t mean we went inside; we just jumped around in the rain. In Flagstaff, the highlight was getting to watch the Indian celebration and dancing on the main street with American Indians in full attire.

I remember these trips fondly, but, sadly, at the time I did not consider the hardship on my mom, who had to figure out how to make meals and care for us, and on Dad, who had to sell Bibles to keep us fed and housed.

Somewhere around 1949, my dad built us a house out of airplane crates. He paid my sister and me a penny for every 10 nails we picked up, as he tore the crates apart, but I don’t remember how much we earned. The house was a square: two bedrooms, a very small bathroom, living room and kitchen. I never thanked him for building a house for us, and I never asked him how he knew how to do that.

After Dad’s first heart attack, he had a new dedication to share the Bible and his Lord, and he was enthusiastic about that. His second heart attack ended his life, just six months before the local hospital began open heart surgeries.