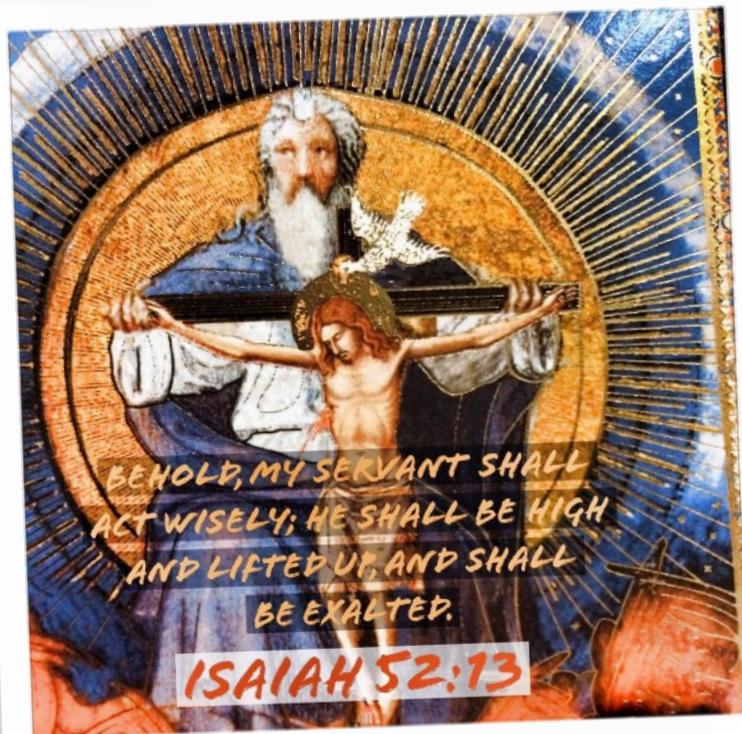


# THE MYSTERY OF MYSTERIES



What's Going on at the Lord's Table

## The Mystery of the Altar

What a wonder and mystery that God would become man! But that's what He did in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The all powerful God of the universe took on our flesh. He united Himself with Mankind! The Creator became a creature. *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"* (Romans 11:33-34)

This is a great mystery: that God would become one of His creatures. That He who is spirit would take on flesh; would live and breath; would be a helpless babe who suckled at His mother's breast; would live and die. God dead on a cross. For your sake! What an unfathomable mystery! Who can explain it? Who can accept it.

Yet in faith we not only accept it. We believe it! We rejoice in it. We confess Him who died for our sins and rose for our justification to be our saviour and our God.

And so we come to that "mystery of mysteries, the Mystery of the Altar. For here the fruits of Christ's cross, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us in bread and wine, body and blood. We eat into ourselves the very body and life-giving blood of God.



## The Mystery of What We Receive



In, with, and under the bread and wine which we receive is Christ's very body broken on the cross and His blood shed on the cross for your forgiveness. We do not know how this is so. But Jesus says, *"This IS my body... This IS my blood..."* (Matt. 26:26-28; Luke 22:19-20; Mark 14:22-24; 1 Cor. 11:23-25) And He who created all things by a word (Genesis 1) and

declares the guilty sinner innocent by His word (John 20:23) accomplishes a mystery: His own body and blood are present in bread and wine. For God is not a liar.

What He says happens.

## How Can These Things Be?

We don't know how this happens. It is a mystery. Some call it a "sacrament". And they are right, for sacrament means "mystery". We do not know how this happens, but Jesus says it does. And He who instituted this mystery gives it to us for our benefit. For our forgiveness. (Matt. 26:28)

## Mighty Mysteries

Doctors prescribe drugs for healing. Pastors hand out Christ's body and blood for eternal healing. For this blood is the blood of God and *"the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls"* (Lev. 17:11) In times past God forgave sins by the blood of a sacrificial lamb, pouring out that blood on His altar. But now in these last days He gives His own blood to you to drink and have life in His name!

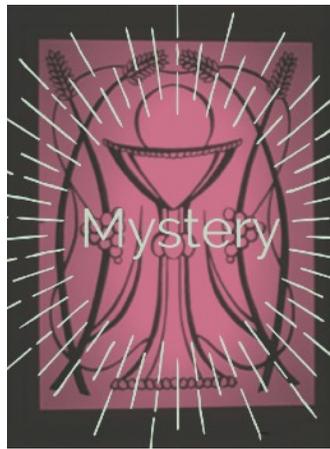
This is a mighty mystery. It is a power beyond imagining. Power tools are dangerous, which is why the believing Christian *fears*, loves, and trusts in God. For God is a consuming fire. (Heb. 12:28-29; Dt. 4:24)



## Who Are You, Mystery Man?

Who are pastors? Ministers of Christ. Stewards of the mysteries of God! (1 Cor. 4:1) Wielders of powerful tools. The ones to whom God has entrusted this mighty Mystery to distribute it to His people. Pastors

are undershepherds of the Good Shepherd. Those sent to feed us (John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 5:1-4) on the green pastures of His word of forgiveness, and place in our mouths His body and blood that we might taste and see that the Lord is good. (Ps. 34:8)



A steward is a manager. A good steward does not misuse what he manages. He is responsible for its use or abuse. A faithful and loving steward does not give out precious gifts to those whom they may harm. Just as doctors don't give helpful but dangerous narcotics to anyone who asks, but only to those under their care. So faithful pastors give this "medicine of eternal life" to those who are under their pastoral care.

### Who Are You to Judge Me?

No one can know or judge the heart of a man but God alone. But God opens our lips to praise His name. (Ps. 51:15) He grants faith which confesses His mighty works. He draws from your lips a confession of faith in front of others so that all might know your good works and praise God for them. (Matt. 10:31-33; 5:16) Your public profession of faith is most easily seen by your church attendance. Actions can speak louder than words. Communing at a church's altar confesses that you are at unity & agreement with them. If you are not, you break the unity of that altar. (1 Cor. 11:17-20) This means that you can't commune at churches with differing confessions without being a hypocrite, and without breaking the unity of those communing at that altar.

No one but God alone can judge what is in your heart. But your actions bear witness to the world—whether you mean them to or not. So, do you know what your church publicly teaches? Do you know what it says about this great Mystery? It is important! All important.

Pastors are loving shepherds. They do not wish to harm anyone. But this mighty Mystery delivers God who can consume you or bless you. (1 Cor. 11:27-30) In love we



(Ps. 133:1) But until that day we work for unity here at this table.

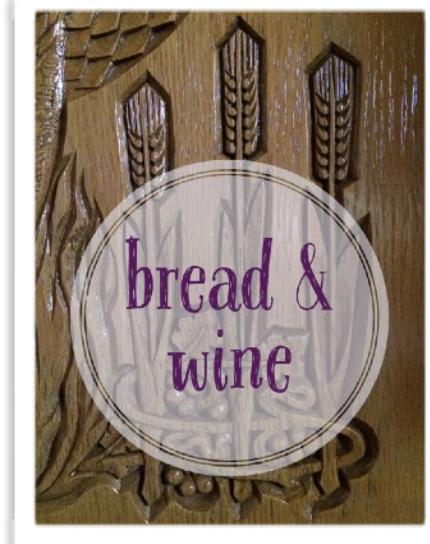
### Who Do You Say That I Am? What Do You Say That This Is?

Christ our Lord says this bread and this wine are (mysteriously) His body and blood for your forgiveness. His apostle says that this greatest of gifts can harm you if you don't know what you are receiving! (1 Cor. 11:27, 29) For those who do not recognize Christ's body and blood in His Supper do not receive His blessings, but His judgement. (1 Cor. 11:27-30) So what do you believe you are receiving? Whether or not you recognize the mystery of Christ's body and blood present in the bread and wine (1 Cor. 10:16) they are still there. But only by faith in Christ's word—which promises His presence—will you receive the benefits of His body and blood. (1 Cor. 11:29-31)

Moreover, when we commune, we are not merely communing with Jesus, but with all at the table. (1 Cor. 11:17-20) We want to come into union with them, through

wish to keep you from harm! We wish to magnify the blessings of Christ upon you.

By not giving you the body and blood of Christ, we are not saying that you are not a Christian. Rather we are protecting you from possible harm, and recognizing the sad reality that believers are not united on Christ's teaching. We desire to be! For how good and how pleasant is it when brothers dwell in unity.



Christ Jesus, just as through Him we are at union with the whole host of heaven. For in this mysterious supper Heaven comes to earth: angels, archangels, and the whole company of heaven are there, saints of all ages, at union with you. (Ps. 133:1) Are you at union with those around you? For if your public confession of faith differs from those around you, you break the fellowship of the table. (1 Cor. 11:17-20)



### Godly Fellowship with One Another Through Christ

**Jesus** For these reasons we ask, if you are visiting, to speak with our pastor before you come forward to receive our Lord's body and blood. If you are from another church that is in fellowship with this church let God's steward of His mysteries know that he is able to give Jesus' body and blood to you to your soul's benefit. If you are not in fellowship with this congregation, or are unsure, please discuss it with the pastor. If you desire to be instructed in order to partake in the fellowship of this altar please contact



our pastor. He will be happy to serve you this way.

God bless you this day.

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