

Christ Our Priest: Looking at Holy Thursday Through Jewish Eyes

Was the Eucharist just a meal to remember Jesus by?
Is the Eucharist rooted in Jewish practices of Jesus' time?
What light do the Dead Sea Scrolls shed on the Eucharist?

Just a Way to Remember Jesus?

Joseph Bayly's modern parable:
"How Shall We Remember John?"

The whole point: the Lord's
Supper was just a family dinner to
remember Jesus.

Really? That's it?



Did the Essenes Have a “Eucharist”?

- “When they begin, and when they end, they praise God, as he that bestows their food upon them ...” (Josephus, *Jewish War* 2:131)
- “**I give thanks to You, O Lord, for You have redeemed my soul from the pit. From Sheol and Abaddon...**” (1QH_a 11:20)
- “**I give thanks to You, O Lord, for You have become a wall of strength for me ...**” (1QH_a 11:38)
- “**I give thanks to You, O Lord, for You have made my face to shine by Your covenant, and [...]**” (1QH_a 12:6)

Did the Essenes' Have a "Eucharist"?

- Their communal meal anticipated the meal with the Messiah in the final age.
- The priest officiated at the meal.
- The meal was bread and wine.
- One had to be a member of the community to take the meal.
- Sinning against the community meant loss of access to the meal.
- The meal began and ended with Thanksgiving Psalms, starting "I thank you O Lord!"

The Essenes at their Meal



Light from Qumran on the Eucharist?

- Luke 22:19: And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”
- He takes and gives thanks first...
- “In remembrance of me” is literally “as my memorial offering” --see the heading of Psalms 38, 70 (LXX 37, 69)



Light from Qumran on the Eucharist?

- Luke 22:19: *Do this in remembrance of me.*”
- Greek: *eis tên emên anamnêsin* =
- “as my memorial”
- Ps 38:1: *Psalmos tô David: eis anamnêsin peri sabbatou* =
“A Psalm of David for the memorial offering of the Sabbath”
- Ps 70:1 *tô David, eis anamnêsin* =
“Of David, for the memorial offering”



Light from Qumran on the Eucharist?

- Luke 22:19: Do this in remembrance of me. 20 And likewise the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is *the new covenant in my blood* (*hê kainê diathêkê en tô haimati mou*) which is poured out for you ...”
- Notice the *new covenant* is “the cup [consisting of] my blood...”
- #12. “of, consisting of; a marker of the substance of something”
—J Swanson, *DBLSD:G* (1997)



Light from Qumran on the Eucharist?

- **Matt. 26:28** “For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for Many for the forgiveness of sins....”
- “If the novice does proceed in joining the party of the Yahad, he must not touch the pure food of the Many before they have examined him as to his spiritual fitness and works, and not before a full year has passed...” CD 6:16-17
- “Many” is a typical way of referring to the community.



Light from Qumran on the Eucharist?

- Luke 22:24 “A dispute also arose among them, which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.”
- “Then the Messiah of Israel may enter, and the heads of the thousands of Israel are to sit before him *by rank*.... ... Afterward the Messiah of Israel shall reach for the bread. Finally, each member of the whole congregation ... *by rank*.” [Appendix to the Community Rule (1QSa) 2:14ff]
- It wasn't just that the disciples were vain ...

Light from Qumran on the Eucharist?

- Luke 22:28 “You are those who have continued with me in my trials; 29 and I covenant to you, as my Father covenanted to me, a kingdom, 30 that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Echoes here David the King—kingdom by covenant (2 Sam 7)
- Vice-royal status being given to the apostles
- This is seen in our bishops, shared with priests/deacons
- Note the covenant-meal connection



Summing Up: Qumran & the Eucharist

- Last Supper no mere “memorial meal” as non-Catholics sometimes think.
- Disciples would have understood the *priestly* and *messianic* significance of Jesus’ actions
- Disciples had concept of bread-and-wine meal with the Messiah in the end times
- Eucharist is *covenant* meal making us God’s family, and establishing us as God’s kingdom.
- Eucharist also goes *beyond* anything Essenes imagined

Differences Between “The Meal to Remember John” and the Last Supper

- John’s family wasn’t building on a long tradition of sacred meals in their culture—but Jesus was!
- John’s parents weren’t claiming to establish a “new covenant” between God and humanity through this meal—but Jesus did!
- None of the meal actions of John’s family were intended or understood to be priestly or liturgical—but Jesus’ were!

Differences Between “The Meal to Remember John” and the Last Supper

- John’s family wasn’t culturally formed to expect to celebrate a meal like this with the Messiah in the end time—but the Apostles were!
- John’s parents didn’t claim to be fulfilling ancient prophecies by celebrating this meal—but Jesus did!





Through Jewish Eyes

Good Friday

Just the Death of a Teacher?

- Or is there actually *wedding imagery* during the most unjust execution in world history?
- And are there really signs of Christ's *priesthood* during his death?
- What is the connection of Jesus' crucifixion with the *Temple*?
- What makes Jesus' death a *liturgical sacrifice* rather than an execution?

Bridegroom Images Before the Cross

- The Wedding at Cana
- The Woman at the Well in John 4
- The Anointing with Pure Nard in John 12

Priesthood Images before the Cross

- “He Spoke of the Temple of His Body” John 2:21 –High Priest
- The Priestly Defense for Breaking the Sabbath— Matt 12:2-8
- The “High Priestly Prayer” of John 17

The Crown of Thorns

- “And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe”—John 19:2
- “Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day of the gladness of his heart.” (Song 3:11)



The Seamless Tunic

- John 19:23: "His tunic was without seem, woven from top to bottom."
- Josephus, *Antiquities* 3:159-161: "The high priest is indeed adorned with ... a vestment of a blue color. This also is a long robe, reaching to his feet ... Now this vesture *was not composed of two pieces, nor was it sewed together upon the shoulders and the sides, but it was one long vestment so woven as to have an aperture for the neck ...*"



The Untorn Tunic

- *But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." John 19:23-24*
- *"The priest who is chief among his brethren shall not tear his clothes" Lev 21:10*
- *"Then the high priest tore his robes, and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy." Matt. 26:65*



The Bridegroom's Thirst

- After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst." (John 19:28)
- There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (John 4:7)
- "Let the maiden to whom I shall say, 'Pray let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels — let her be the one'" (Gen 24:14)



The Soured Wine

- *"A bowl full of soured wine stood there; so they put a sponge full of the soured wine on hyssop and held it to his mouth." (John 19:29)*
- *"You have kept the good wine till now" (John 2:10)*
- *"Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." (Mk 14:25)*



The Consummation

- *"Jesus therefore, when he had taken the soured wine, said: "It is consummated!" And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost" (John 19:30 Douay Rheims)*
- *The Greek word, tetelestai, has the same range of meaning as Latin consummatum, including the reference to marriage.*
- *But also Passover:*
- *And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (Mk 14:26)*
- *"Abba, Father, remove this cup from me" (Mk 14:36)*



The River from the Side of Christ

- *John 19:34: "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water."*
- *St. Augustine: The consummation of marriage ...*



The River from the Side of Christ

- *John 19:34: "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water."*
- *Other Fathers: The Birth of the Bride from the Side of Christ the New Adam ...*



The River from the Side of Christ

- *John 19:34: "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water."*
- *The Flow of Bloody Water from the Temple During Passover ...*



The River from the Side of Christ

- *John 19:34: "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water."*
- *The Flow of Bloody Water from the Temple During Passover ...*
- *John 2:21 But he spoke of the temple of his body.*



The River from the Side of Christ

- *John 19:34: "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water."*
- *The River of Life that flowed from the Garden of Eden*
- *Rev. 22:1 Then he showed me the river of the water of life ...either side of the river, the tree of life*



The River from the Side of Christ

- *John 19:34: "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water."*
- *John 7:37 On the last day of the feast, Jesus proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me, and let him drink who believes in me. As the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive."*



The Perfumed Body

- *John 19:39: Nicodemus also, who had at first come to him by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight.*
- *Exod 30:22-33 "Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh ... and you shall anoint Aaron and his sons ..."*
- Compare Proverbs 7:17: *"I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon."*
- Compare Psalm 45:8 (the Royal Wedding Psalm): *"your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia."*



The Perfumed Body

- *John 19:39: Nicodemus also, who had at first come to him by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight.*
- *Compare Songs 4:13-14: "Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, nard and saffron, ... myrrh and aloes, with all chief spices..."*



Wrapped in the Priestly Linen

- *They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews (John 19:40)*
- *“He shall put on the holy linen coat, and shall have the linen breeches on his body, be girded with the linen girdle, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments.” Lev 16:4*



Laid in a Virginal Tomb

- John 19:41-42: *Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.*
- Lev 21:13-14 "He shall take a wife in her virginity ... a virgin of his own people."
- Song 4:12 "A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a garden locked, a fountain sealed."



The High Priest giving his
body for his bride ...



A digital illustration of Jesus Christ standing in the entrance of an open tomb. He is wearing a long, flowing white robe and has a beard and long hair. His arms are outstretched, and he is looking towards the viewer. The tomb is a simple stone structure with a large, smooth, grey stone rolled away from the entrance. The background shows a landscape at dawn or dusk, with a crescent moon in the dark blue sky and a bright horizon over a valley. In the distance, three crosses are visible on a hill. The overall scene is peaceful and symbolic of new life.

EASTER SUNDAY

Through Jewish Eyes

▶ **Song 3:1** Upon my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer. **2** “I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves.” I sought him, but found him not. **3** The watchmen found me, as they went about in the city. “Have you seen him whom my soul loves?” **4** Scarcely had I passed them, when I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother’s house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

AN ANCIENT LOVE POEM

- ▶ 1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.
- ▶ *Upon my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves (Song 3:1)*



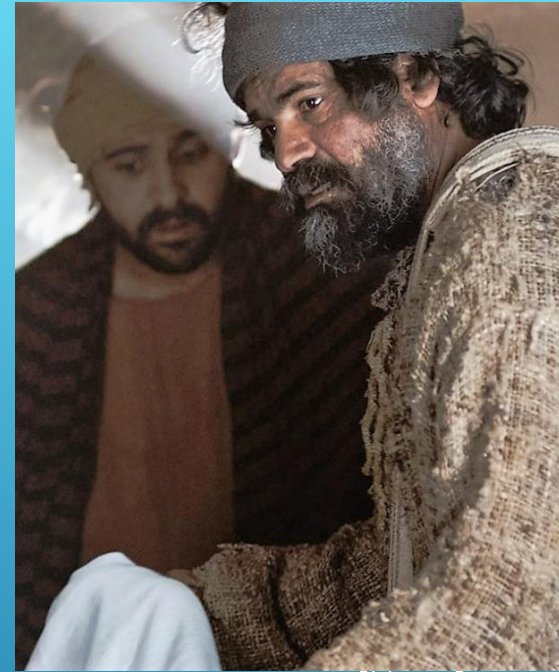
SHE GOES OUT WHILE IT IS NIGHT

▶ **2** So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” **3** Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. **4** They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; **5** and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.

THE INTERLUDE: PETER AND JOHN AT THE TOMB



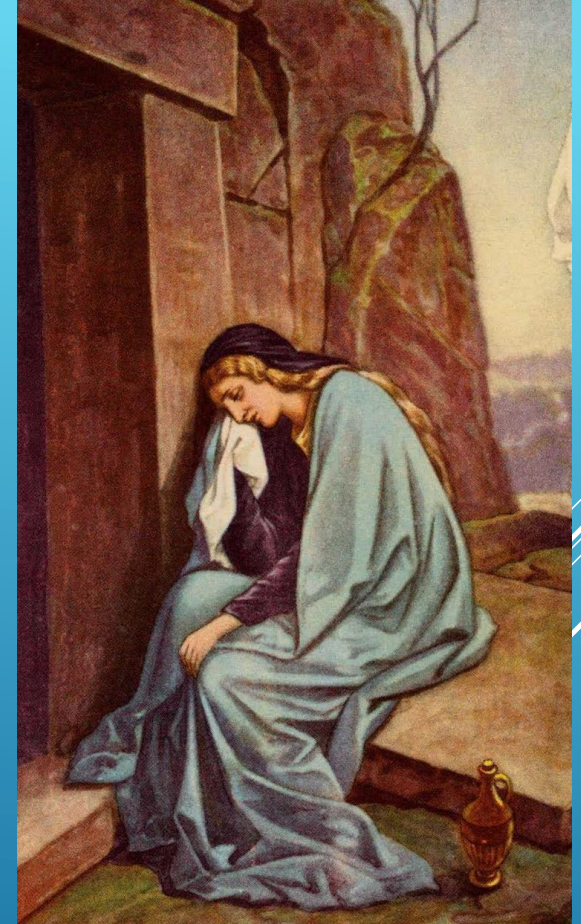
▶ **6** Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, **7** and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. **8** Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **9** for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. **10** Then the disciples went back to their homes.



THE INTERLUDE: PETER AND JOHN AT THE TOMB

- ▶ "But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb" (John 20:11)
- ▶ *I sought him, but found him not* (Song 3:2)

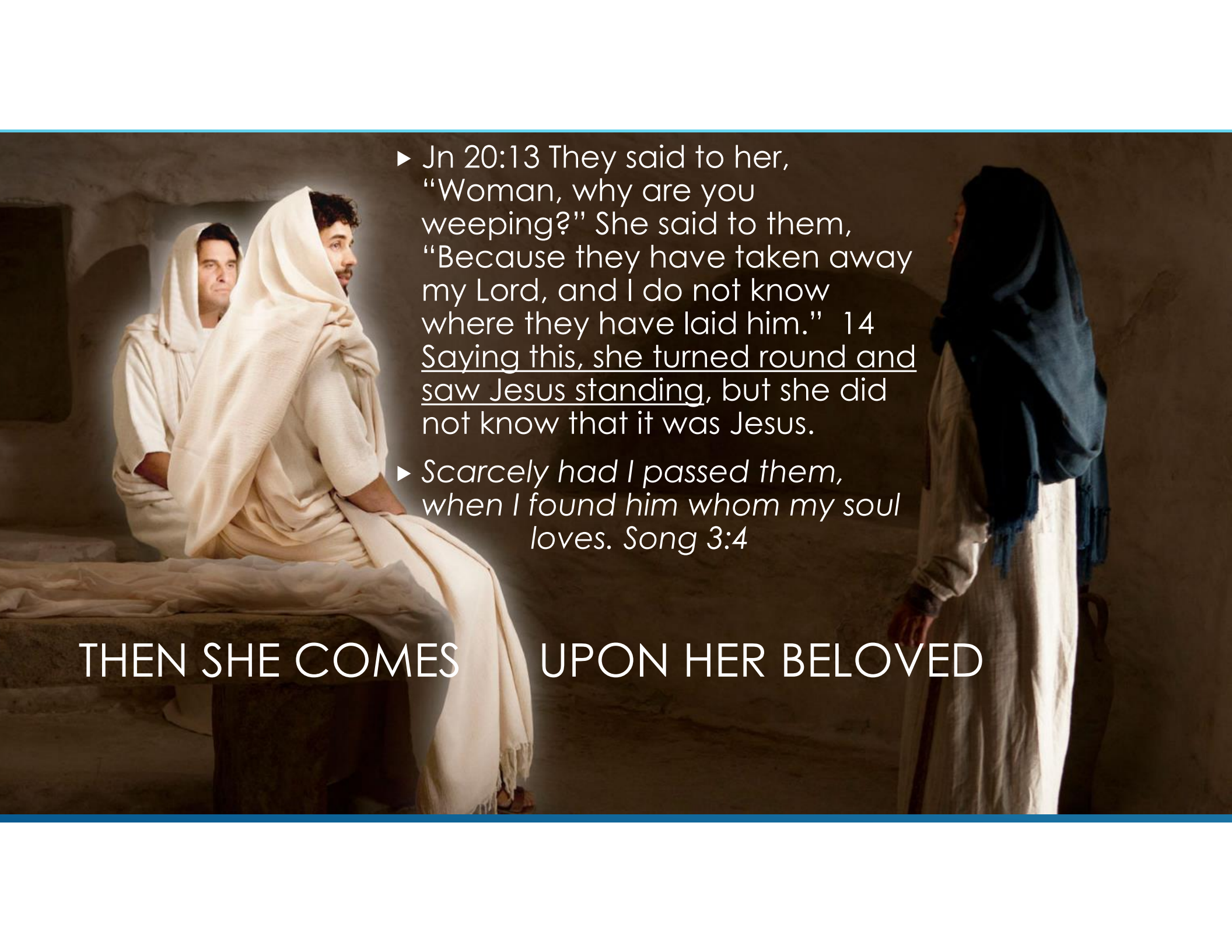
SHE CANNOT FIND HER BELOVED



- ▶ And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. Jn 20:12
- ▶ *The watchmen found me, as they went about in the city. “Have you seen him whom my soul loves?” (Song 3:3)*



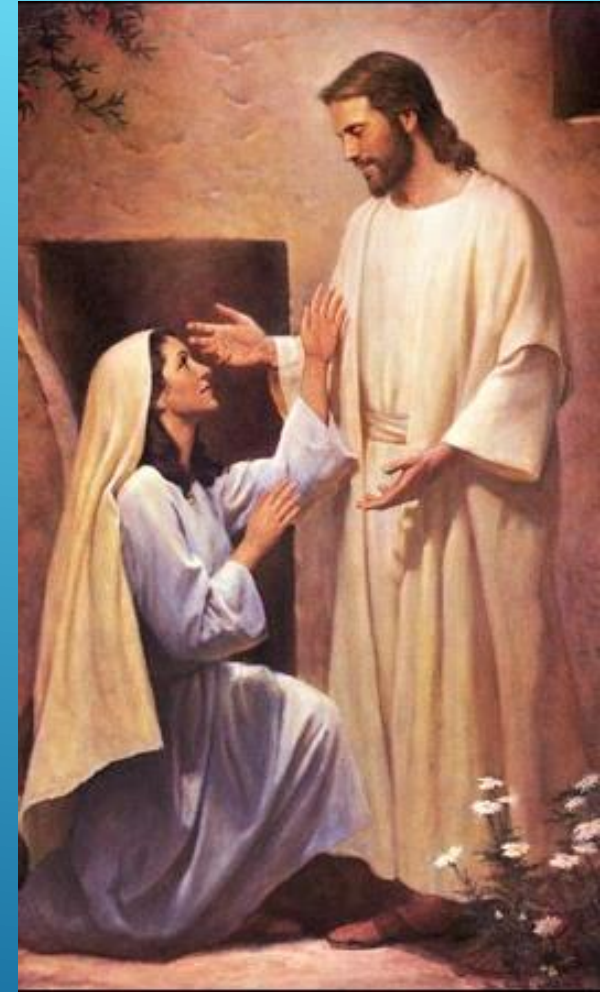
SHE ENCOUNTERS THE “WATCHERS”

- 
- ▶ Jn 20:13 They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” 14 Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.
 - ▶ *Scarcely had I passed them, when I found him whom my soul loves. Song 3:4*

THEN SHE COMES UPON HER BELOVED

- ▶ 20:15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” 16 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher)
- ▶ I found him whom my soul loves. (Song 3:4)

SHE FINDS HER BELOVED

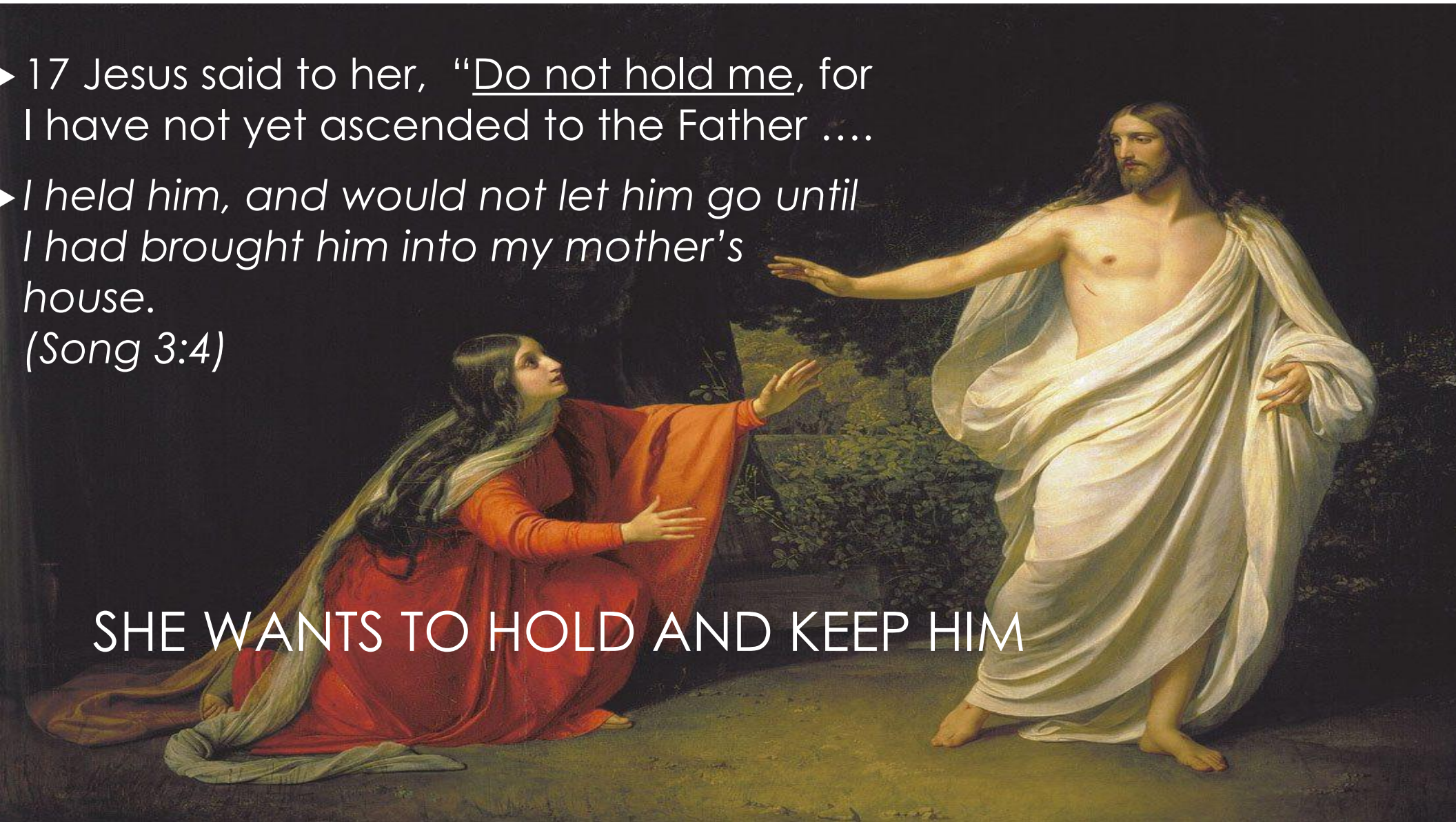


▶ 17 Jesus said to her, “Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father

▶ *I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house.*

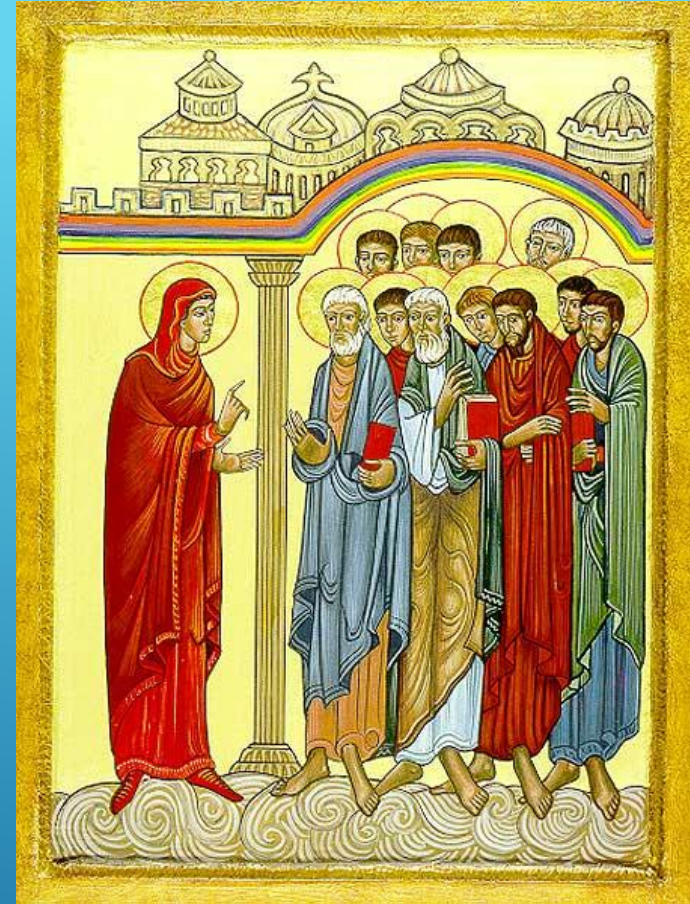
(Song 3:4)

SHE WANTS TO HOLD AND KEEP HIM



- ▶ In 20:17 “But go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” 18 Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

SHE BECOMES THE FIRST WITNESS



- ▶ John 20:19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”



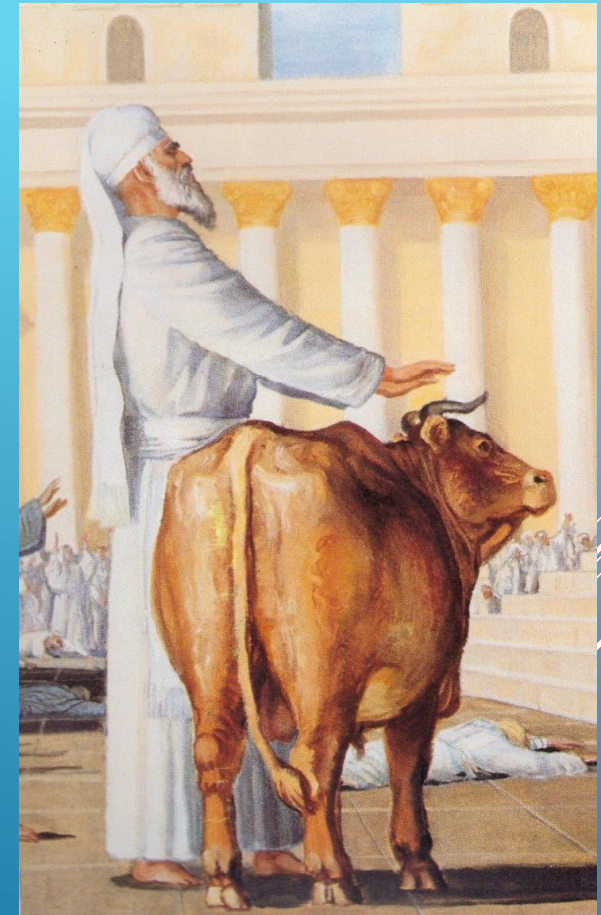
THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

- ▶ In 20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 *If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.*”

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST



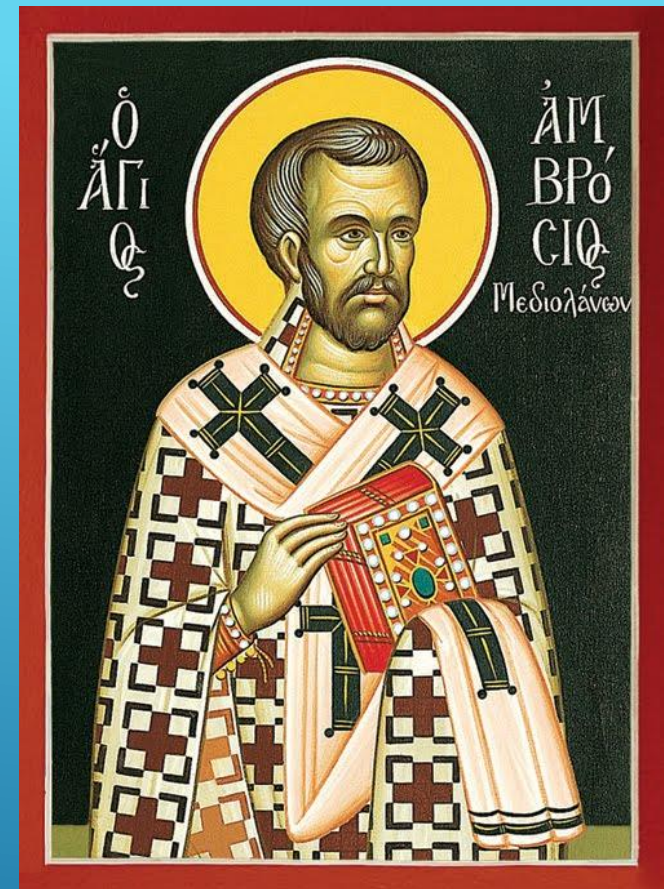
- ▶ When a man is guilty in any of these, he shall confess the sin he has committed, and he shall bring his guilt offering to the LORD for the sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin ... and he shall be forgiven (Leviticus 5:5-6, 10)



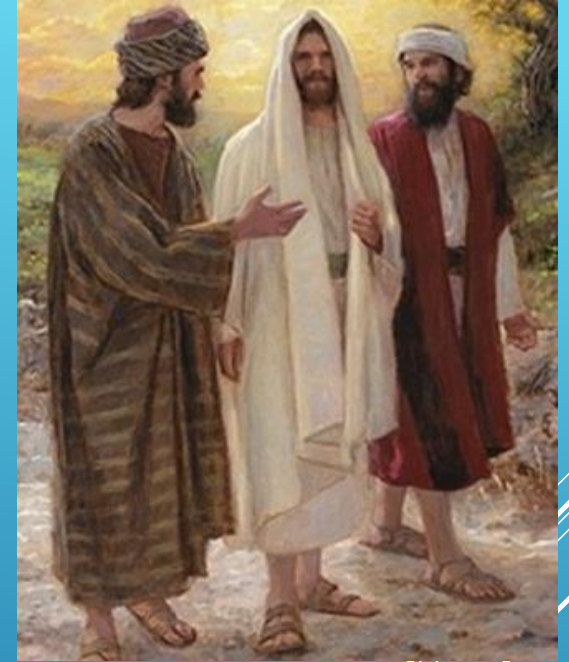
THE PRIESTLY DUTY OF FORGIVING SIN

▶ But what was impossible was made possible by God, who gave us so great a grace. It seemed likewise impossible for sins to be forgiven through penance; yet Christ granted even this to His Apostles, and by His Apostles it has been transmitted to the offices of priest.—St. Ambrose

THE PRIESTLY DUTY OF FORGIVING SIN



- ▶ **Luke 24:13** That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, **14** and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. **15** While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. **16** But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. **17** And he said to them, “What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?”



CHRIST THE PRIEST AND THE FIRST POST-EASTER EUCHARIST

- ▶ **Luke 24:28** So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, **29** but they constrained him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. **30** When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. **31** And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight.



CHRIST THE PRIEST AND THE FIRST POST-EASTER EUCHARIST

- ▶ Easter Sunday brings together the themes of nuptiality and priesthood from Good Friday
- ▶ Christ the spiritual bridegroom appears to Mary Magdalene
- ▶ Christ the Priest confers priesthood on the Apostles
- ▶ Jesus performs the *priestly act* of blessing the *messianic meal* in Luke 24

CHRIST BOTH BRIDEGROOM AND PRIEST