

I'm Glad You Asked:
How Good Questions Turn Doubt to Faith

TRUTH in LOVE

Apologetics Conference



Doubting Thomas: Apologetics and Its Historical Use in the Church

Truth in Love Apologetics Conference
Smithville, 2024

What is Doubt?

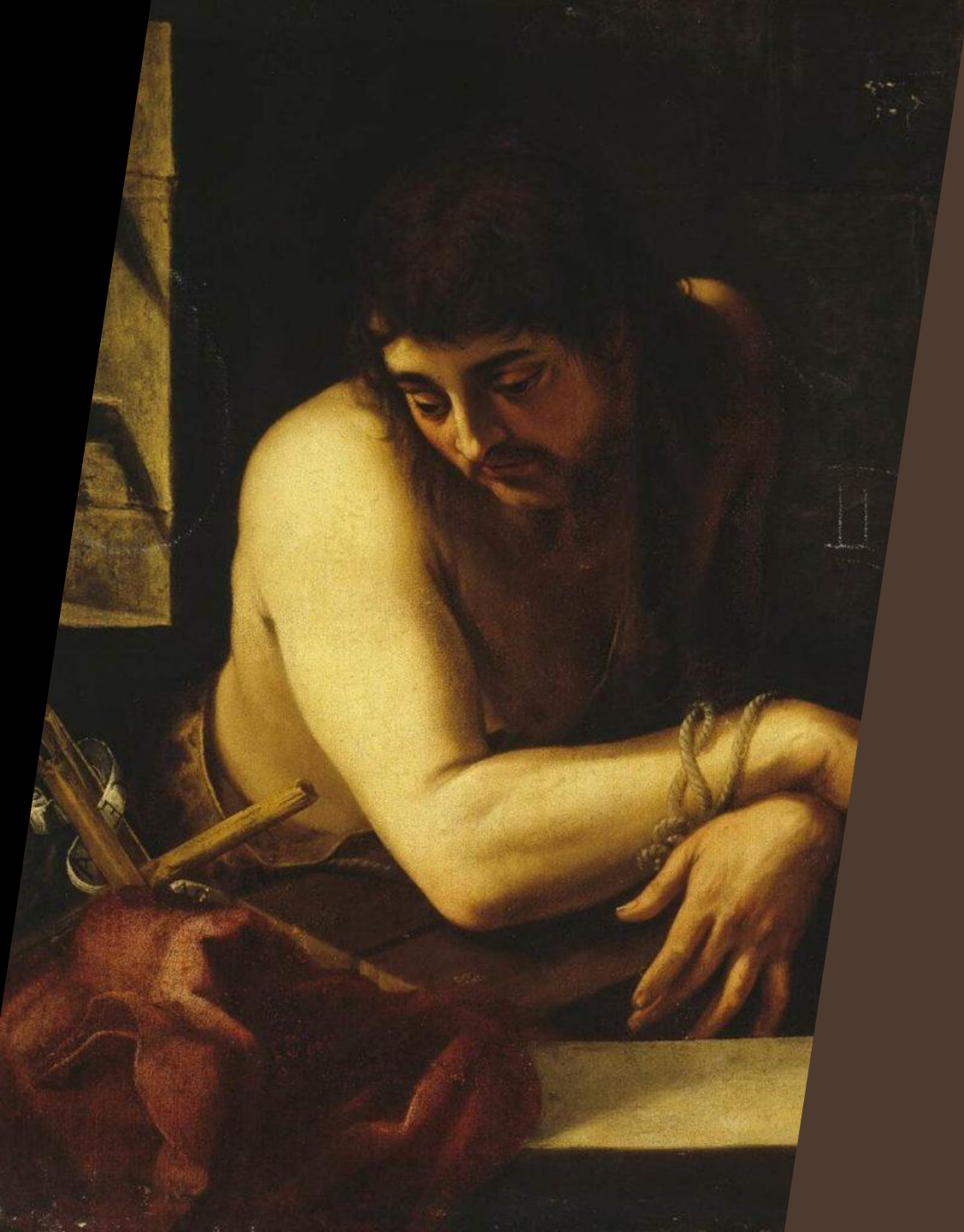
- ▶ Uncertainty about the truth of something.
- ▶ Often produced or accompanied by confusion.
- ▶ We do not mean to say that doubt is a good thing. We do not mean to celebrate doubt or desire doubt, any more than we celebrate or desire temptation.
- ▶ What we mean today, is that doubt seems to be a fact of many people's lives, and that it should be treated with pastoral care.

Today's Main Point

- ▶ Each of our churches and families should be places that:
 - ▶ recognize the commonness of doubt,
 - ▶ welcome necessary questions,
 - ▶ and nurture hope that God knows the answers.

This Talk's Main Points

- ▶ Doubt occurs in the Bible, even among very godly men and women
- ▶ God wants us to ask questions and voice concerns
- ▶ God settles those questions in patience

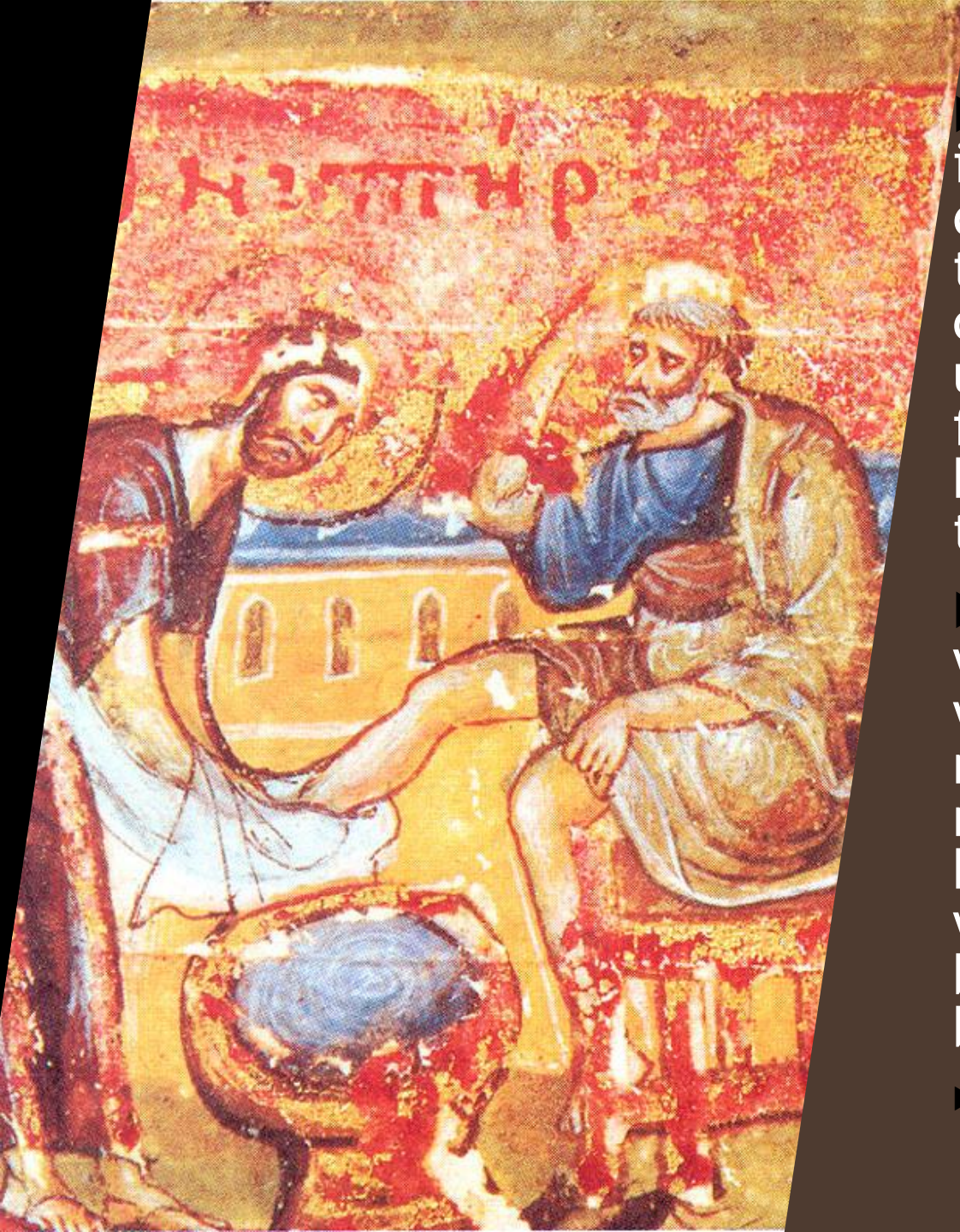


▶ Luk 7:20 Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

▶ Luk 7:22 Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.

▶ Luk 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. . . .

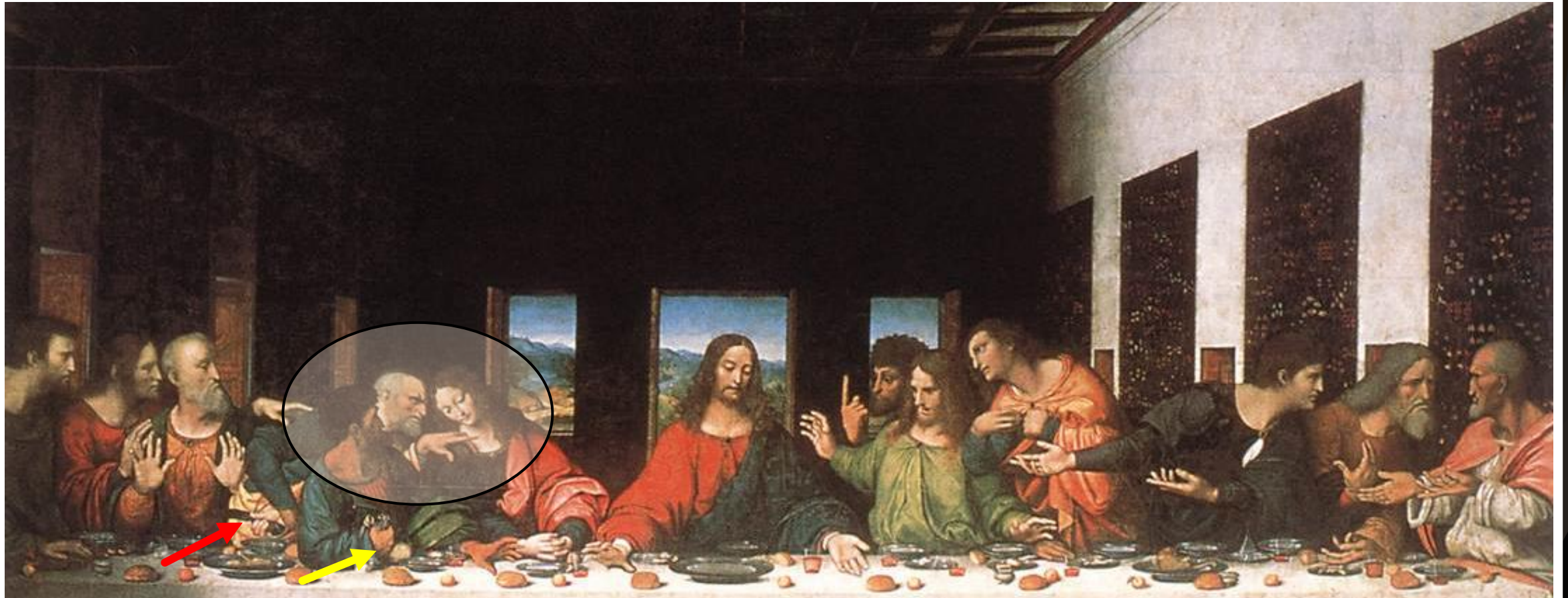
▶ Juan Fernandez de Navarrete, *St. John the Baptist in Prison* 1560s



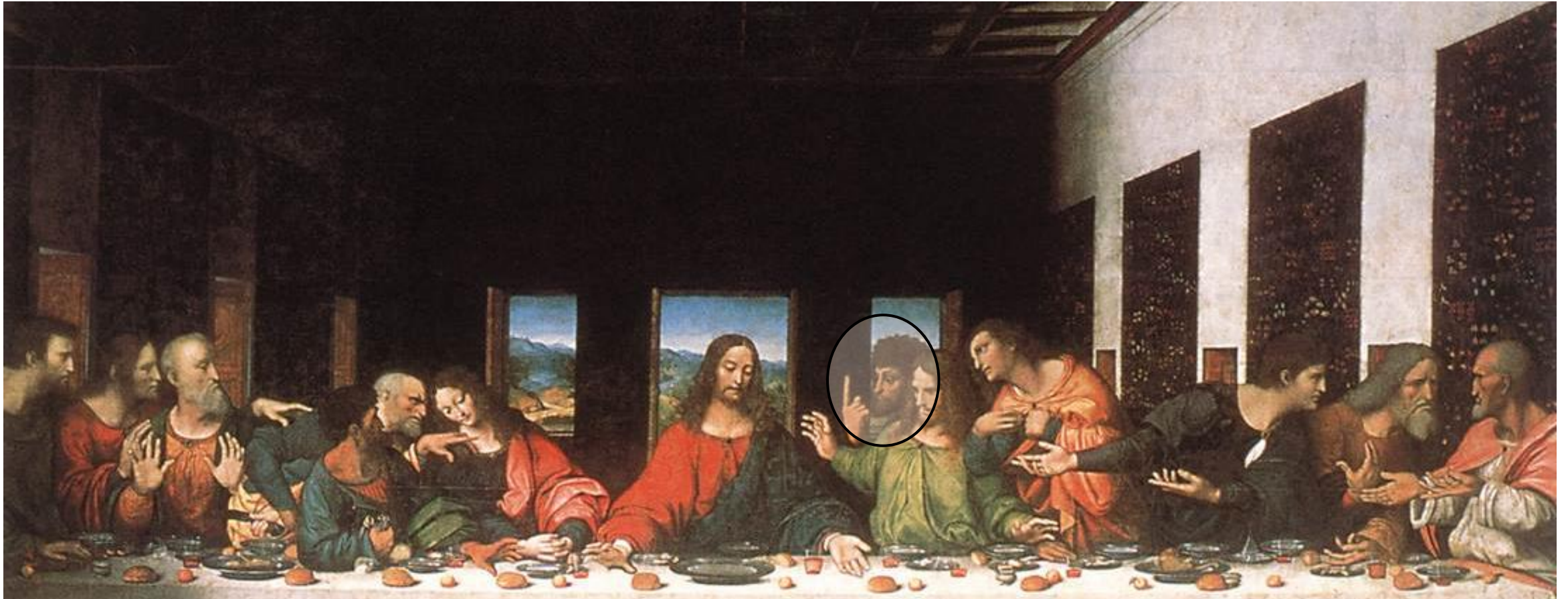
► Joh 13:5-10 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. (6) Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? (7) Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

► (8) Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. (9) Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. (10) Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

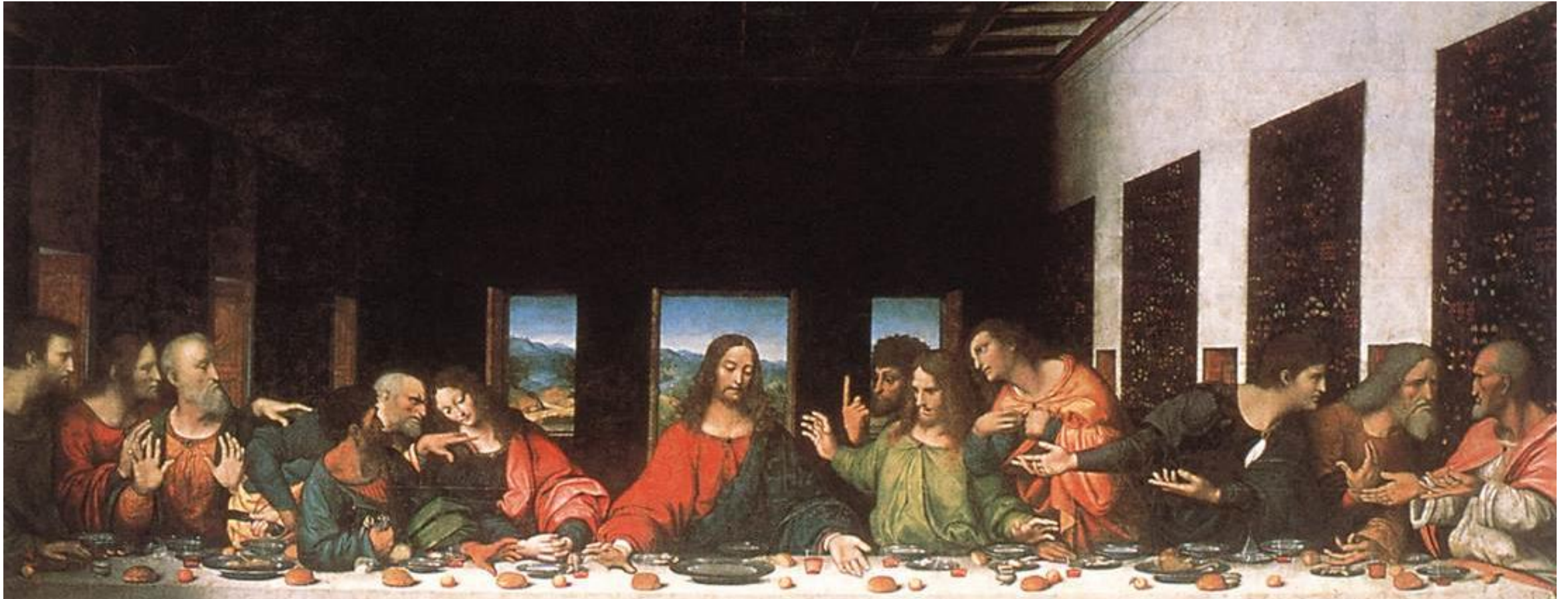
► Logos, Manuscript page from *The Four Gospels*, twelfth century.



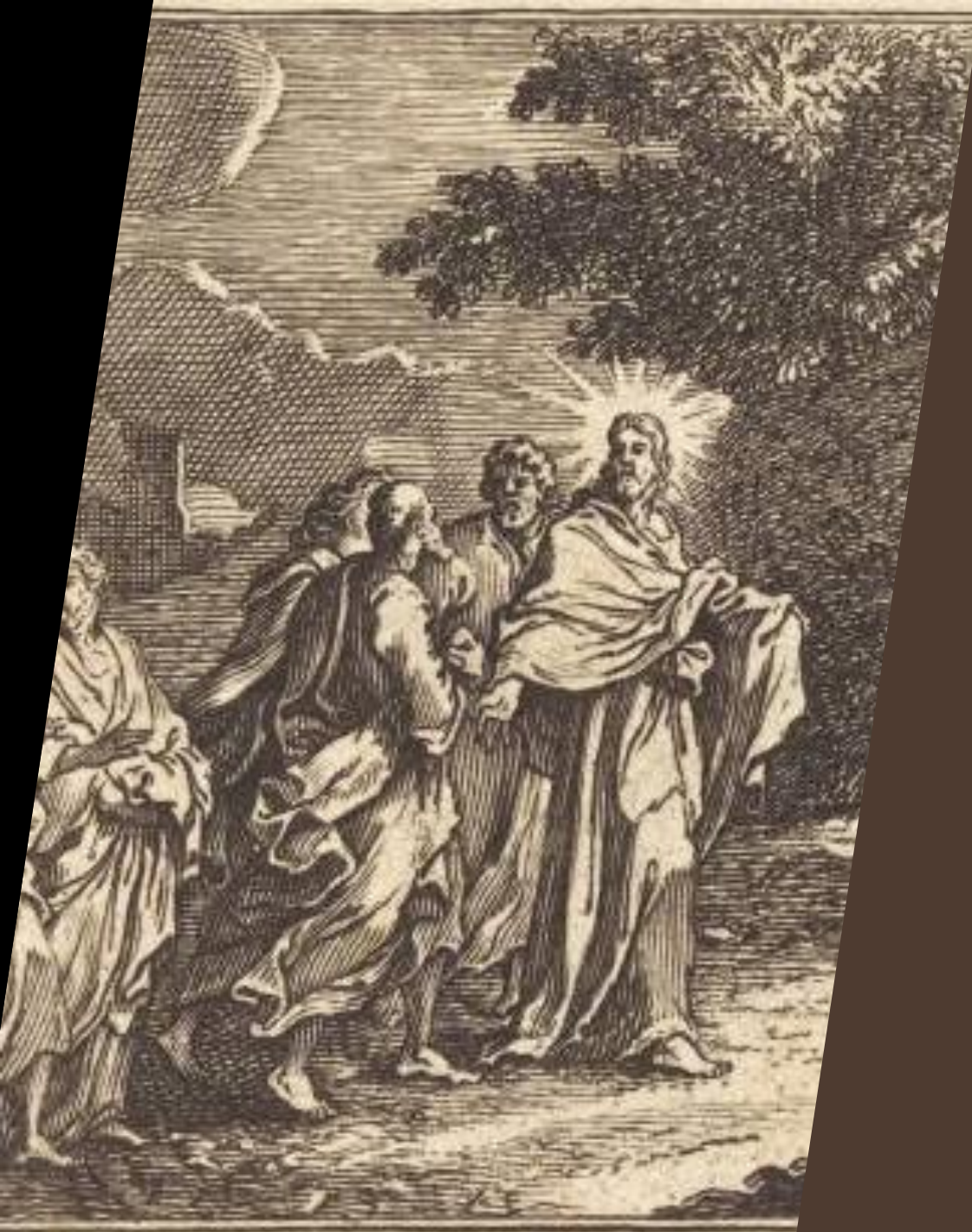
Joh 13:21-30 [Jesus, distressed] “said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. (22) Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting [perplexed?] of whom he spake. (23) Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. (24) Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. (25) He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? (26) Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. (27) And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. (28) Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. (29) For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. (30) He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.” And Jesus went back to teaching.



Joh 14:1-6 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (4) And you know the way to where I am going.” (5) **Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”** (6) Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.



Joh 16:16-20 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. (17) Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? (18) They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. (19) Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? (20) Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

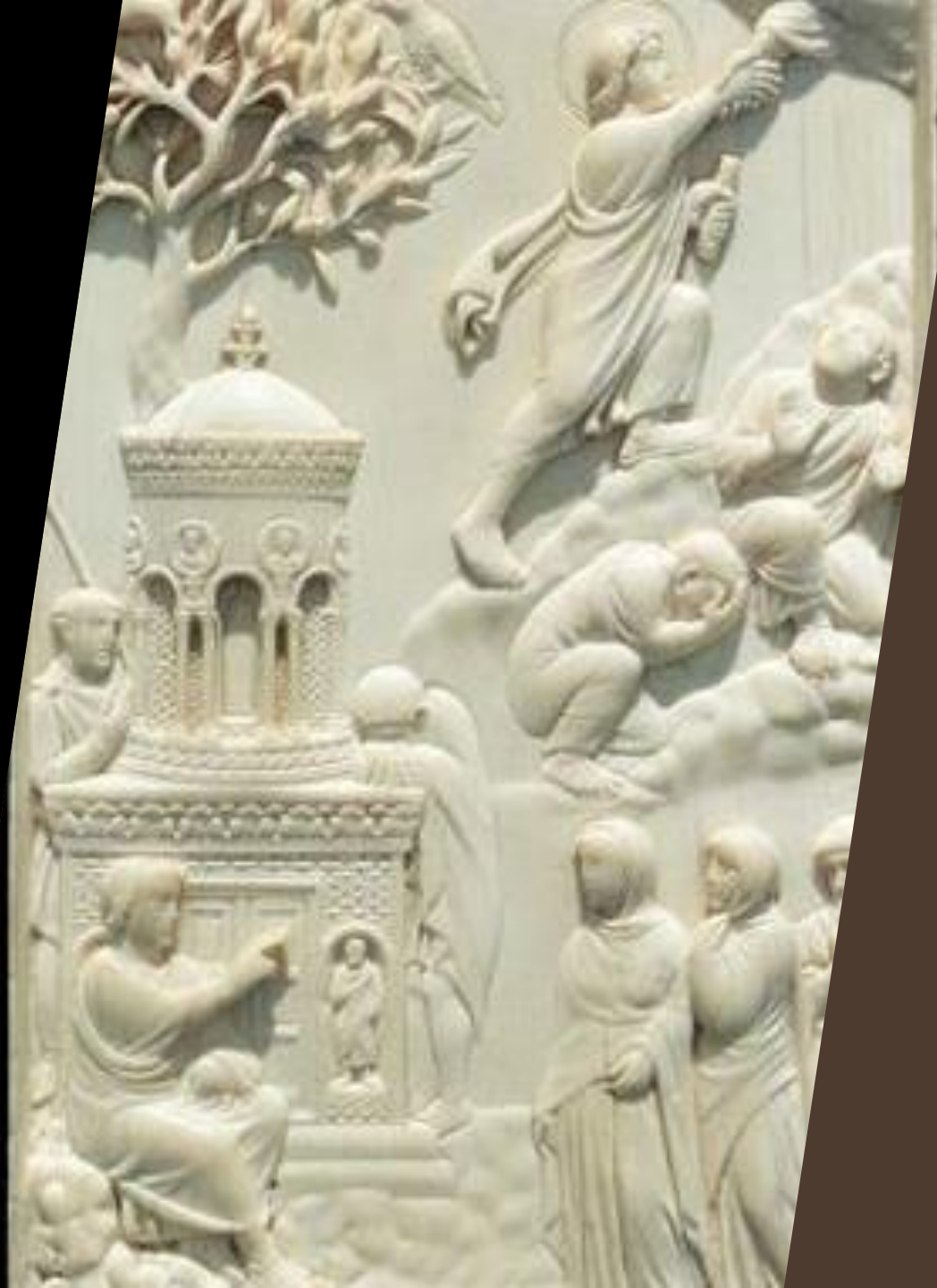


► Mar 14:26-30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (27) And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ (28) But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” (29) Peter said to him, “Even though they all fall away, I will not.” (30) And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”



The Three Marys at the Tomb by Mikolaj Haberschrack,
15th century, National Museum at Krakow

Luk 24:1-9 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. (2) And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. (3) And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. (4) And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: (5) And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? (6) He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, (7) Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. (8) And they remembered his words, (9) And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.



▶ Mat 28:16-17 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. (17) And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.



▶ Joh 20:24-29 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. (25) The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.



► Joh 20:24-29 (26) And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. (27) Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.



▶ Joh 20:24-
29 (28) And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. (29) Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Jesus the Apologist

When giving an answer to John the Baptist

When teaching his disciples in the Upper Room

When proving his resurrection to Thomas

Common Threads in the Bible

- ▶ Doubt occurs in the Bible, even among very godly men and women
- ▶ God wants us to ask questions and voice concerns
- ▶ God settles those questions in patience

Justin Martyr, 100s

- ▶ One of the great apologists of the early church.
- ▶ Defended Christianity against claims Christians were strange and irrational and bad citizens.



A statue of Thomas Aquinas, a medieval philosopher and theologian, standing on a stone pedestal. He is depicted in a dark robe with a white stole. The statue is set in a lush green park with trees and yellow flowers in the foreground.

Thomas Aquinas, 1200s

- ▶ One of the most brilliant and prolific authors of the middle ages.
- ▶ Argued five reasons to believe in God. This has returned to popularity in recent years.
- ▶ Note that his context was one of belief, not unbelief.
- ▶ Apologetics is for the believer, too.



Blaise Pascal, 1600s

- ▶ Pascal's wager: given the much higher risk of unbelief than belief, it is more rational to believe in God than not.
- ▶ Also argued that Christianity is good. Thankfully, it is also true.
- ▶ Last year's conference.

Today



This Talk's Main Points

- ▶ Doubt occurs in the Bible, even among very godly men and women
- ▶ God wants us to ask questions and voice concerns
- ▶ God settles those questions in patience