

# LAST SAYINGS



4

- Mt 27:46:
- Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani  
ElaHē, ElaHē, lemah shabachtani

# LAST SAYINGS

## ARAMAIC

- Curious about the correct pronunciation of Jesus' cry?
- First, Jesus was speaking Aramaic,
  - We know this because Ps 22:1 in Hebrew reads “eli 'eli lamah 'azavtani” where in Aramaic ‘azavtani is rendered ‘shabachtani.’ Notice the “sh” at the beginning. The Greek transliteration *does not have a “sh” sound* so a sigma, the “s” sound is used instead.
  - Likewise, “lama” the Greek transliteration, ignores the Aramaic ‘h’ sound at the end, *because no such sound exists in Greek*. We would pronounce it as “lamah” a guttural ending sound that also does not really exist in English.

# LAST SAYINGS

## ARAMAIC


- That brings us to the first **Aramaic** word, Jesus utters:
  - Now that we know He was speaking **Aramaic**, we might see the confusion of the crowd believing He might have been calling on Elijah - **Eliahu in Hebrew**. In **Aramaic Psalm 22** begins with **Elahi, Elahi, lamah shabachtani**.
  - Again the **Greek** transliteration, ignores the **Aramaic 'h'** sound at the end. Jesus would have said something like "Ela Hē."
  - In **English** "Ela Hē" — The first **E** pronounced as the **E** in **Method**. The **A** pronounced as we might pronounce the **U** as in the word **Up**, and then Hē as we would the pronoun **HE**, except the **E** sound is barely heard.

# LAST SAYINGS


## ARAMAIC

- Finally, another issue reconstructing Jesus' cry that would add to the **Elijah confusion** of the listeners.
  - In **Judea**, the Priests, Scribes and the other religious bystanders spoke **Hebrew**, as their primary language.
  - In **Galilee**, not only the people spoke **Aramaic**, but their dialect had a pronunciation that made **Galilean Aramaic** difficult to understand. (cf. Mat 26:73 *Peter's accent gives him away, Lk 22:59 Identified as a Galilean based on accent*).
    - So, as Jesus *might* have said it:

# LAST SAYINGS

- Read Mt 27: 45-49.\*
- When Our Lord spoke this fourth saying from the Cross, darkness covered the earth.
- It is a common remark that nature is indifferent to our griefs. A nation may be *dying of famine*, yet the sun shines and plays upon the stricken fields.
- Brother may rise up against brother in a war which turns *fields of grain into fields of blood*, yet a bird, safe from the fire and shell, chants its song.

# LAST SAYINGS

- Hearts  may be broken by the **loss of a friend**, yet a **rainbow leaps with joy** across the heavens, making a **terrible contrast** between its **smile** and the **agony** it shines upon.
- ◆ **But the sun refused to shine on the crucifixion!**
- The light that rules the day, *probably for the first and last time in history*, was snuffed out like a candle when, **according to every human calculation, it should have continued to shine.**











# LAST SAYINGS

- Lets reflect on John 2: 23-25
  - Jesus knew that they believed He was someone who could do miracles. He also knew their temporary excitement based on miracles and not His teachings would likely fade.
  - As **St John Chrysostom** suggests, “it is the duller sort who are attracted by miracles, the more rational are convinced by prophecy and doctrine.”
  - “The true disciples were brought to him as a result of His preaching, not His miracles.”

# LAST SAYINGS

- “My God, My God, Why hast Thou abandoned Me?”
- **At one level, taken literally** - it is a mysterious cry and a tremendous mystery of a **God "abandoned" by God.**
  - **The Son calls His Father, God.**  
What a contrast, when we reflect on the other prayer He taught: **"Our Father, Who art in Heaven!"**
- In some strange way, *one could ponder that His human nature seems separated from His Heavenly Father, and yet not separated, for *otherwise* how could He cry  
“My God, My God?”*

# LAST SAYINGS



Again, taking this idea literally - Just as the sun's light and heat can be withdrawn from us by the intervening clouds, though the sun remains in the sky ...

- ... so then some might think the darkness that came over the Earth was a kind of withdrawal of His Father's Face in that terrible moment when the Father could not look at the Son, as He bore the sins of the world hanging on the cross, though He did so, in perfect obedience to the Father's own plan.

# LAST SAYINGS

- \* There is a better way to interpret Jesus' cry ...
- Let's Read John 17:1-5\* and John 19: 23-24\* then Psalm 22\*  
- understanding the Psalm's 'main' message in light of Jesus' priestly prayer on His way to Gethsemane.
  - Did you see the victory?
  - Psalm 22 is the prayer of an innocent man, who though appears vanquished, ultimately is given victory over those who wish him harm. While others jeered, Jesus knew Ps 22:25 was being fulfilled in their hearing.

# LAST SAYINGS

- We noted that Mark and Matthew record that the crowd thought Jesus was calling Elijah from the cross,
  - We know He is actually quoting Psalm 22, but the crowd misunderstands.
  - Read Mt 27:46-49.\* (cf 2Mac 15:12-15).
- What might we conclude from the reaction of the bystanders, about Jewish beliefs - waiting to see if Elijah will come down and take Jesus off the cross?



# LAST SAYINGS



- John 19:28-29
- “I thirst.”



# LAST SAYINGS

- Let's Read John 19: 28-29.\*
  - “in order that Scripture might be fulfilled...”
  - Psalm 22: 16; Ps 19:5; and Ps 66:4 - all allude to a parched throat or a thirsty person, but these references are incidental to the context of Jesus asking for a cup of wine, immediately before He breaths His last.
- It is well understood that a condemned man was allowed a drink of wine mixed with myrrh - *to deaden pain*, and we know that Jesus knew this, because it had already been offered to Him! (See again Mk 15:23).

# LAST SAYINGS

- If you **Google** - “what did Jesus mean when He said: **I Thirst** - you will find varied answers, most of which ignore the context - “in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”
- The greater “**context**” for this **saying by Jesus** is found at **John 19:30\*** - the verse that *immediately* follows,
  - **Jesus is the Passover Lamb**, and **His passover** is about to be completed,
    - **The Passover** - is where we will find our answer.
- ◆ More on this as we now discuss His **sixth** saying.

# LAST SAYINGS



- John 19:30:
- **It is finished**

# LAST SAYINGS

- What is finished? What is the IT, that is finished?
  - It can't be simply a pronouncement that He is about to breathe His last,
    - A witness would not need that information since it could simply be observed **by a final breath** *coupled with a collapsed body*.
- We must focus on the fact that “**every statement**” from the cross had a **significant** meaning - given the **great exertion and great pain** that preceded **even the smallest utterance**.

# LAST SAYINGS

- There are appropriately many levels consistent with reasonable **exegesis**:
  - His mission is complete;
  - His work of Redemption has been accomplished;
  - He proved His love for us, dying for our salvation.
- All these are true and proper for consideration, for prayer and meditation and a necessary prompting for us to have grateful hearts.
  - but there is more ... The event occurs on the “*day the Passover Lambs*” are being sacrificed.

# LAST SAYINGS

- Romans 4:25 instructs us:  
“[Jesus] was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.”
- I Cor 15:55:  
“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”
- Our Justification and Redemption, is not effected and therefore NOT complete until the Resurrection of Our Lord, when death has lost its sting and we can become justified and come by the promise of eternal life.

# LAST SAYINGS

- The **IT** in “**it is finished,**” points directly and primarily to the **Passover of the Lord**.
- **As we have noted before,** Our Lord after drinking the Third of Four cups of the Passover, sang Psalms with His disciples and left the upper room, **leaving the Passover Liturgy incomplete - *in a sense suspended***.
- **We also recall that He prayed that the Last Cup could pass without having to drink of it, while at Gethsemane.**
- **The significance of drinking the Fourth Cup, is that after the cup of consummation is drunk, the Passover liturgy is done and the Lamb sacrifice is complete.**

# LAST SAYINGS

- The **IT** in “**it is finished,**” then is nothing more than the completion of the Passover Liturgy.
  - **The Passover Lamb is dead** at the completion of the Passover Liturgy, ... and appropriately, the Gospel of John records, that having uttered this phrase, Jesus will bow His head **and with a final utterance, hand over His spirit to His Father.**
- A great and exhaustive treatment of this topic is provided by **Dr. Brant Pitre**, and I have added a link to his website that captures this theology in a *video* presentation.  
(see next two slides)



# 4TH CUP VIDEO



- Dr Brant Pitre was born in Louisiana in 1975.
- He is a New Testament Scholar and a Distinguished Research Professor of Scripture at the Augustine Institute.
- He has also served as a Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Univ of Notre Dame, and the Notre Dame seminary.
- Dr Pitre has focused his studies on the Jewish roots of Christianity.

# 4TH CUP VIDEO



<https://catholicproductions.com/products/the-fourth-cup-and-the-new-passover>

# LAST SAYINGS

- Understanding that Jesus' sacrifice was a Passover liturgy, Lets briefly review the ritual as it was celebrated that year. Read Ex 12: 1-23.\*
- On the 10th day of Nissan, every family procured a lamb. What happened on the Monday the 10th day of Nissan during 33AD?
  - A lamb came riding on a donkey, the day before. Will the people select this Lamb of God later that day?
- The people missed Him, wishing instead a King. He cried over Jerusalem. The cleansing of the Temple, was a sign Christ's judgment on Jerusalem. see Lk 19:41-46.

# LAST SAYINGS

- The liturgy in Exodus 12 provides:
  - Slaughter the Lamb,
    - taking care that it was a male lamb with no blemishes and making sure that none of its bones are broken,
      - See John 19:33.\*
  - Sprinkle its blood with a hyssop branch.  
Ex 12:22 and John 19:29.\*
  - Eat the lamb - the communion of a family, for which the Lamb was sacrificed. **THOSE WHO ATE THE LAMB WOULD LIVE.** See John 6:52-58.\*

# LAST SAYINGS

- The liturgy in Exodus 12 continued,
  - None of the Lamb must be kept beyond the next morning, but if so be burned up with fire.  
**Ex 12:10** and for **Lev 7:15** after three days.



- The early Church took great care to keep the Unleavened Bread, once it became the Body of Christ, properly reserved for the sick,
- Drawing from **John 1:14\*** & “**Jewish tradition,**” a **tabernacle** was instituted, because the Bread was the **Word of God** and if disposed it would need to be done in a holy manner.

# LAST SAYINGS



**synagogue**



**Catholic church**

# LAST SAYINGS



The *Ner Tamid* also represents the light that burned continuously in the western section of the ancient Temple of Jerusalem.

- **Ner Tamid, Hebrew:** “eternal light” is the red lamp that burns perpetually in Jewish synagogues near the ark of the Law (Aron Ha-Kodesh).
- It reminds the congregation of the holiness of the Torah scrolls that are stored within the ark, and calls to mind God’s abiding presence among the Jewish people.
  - Encyclopedia Britannica.

# LAST SAYINGS

- now, the final utterance ...





# LAST SAYINGS




- Luke 23:46:
- “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”

# LAST SAYINGS

- At this, the climax of his life on earth, *when He is apparently left totally on his own*, Christ makes an act of supreme confidence, throws Himself into his Father's arms, and freely gives up His life.
- He was not forced to die nor did he die against His will. It was the peculiar privilege of Christ the Lord to have died when He Himself decreed to die, and to have died not so much by *external violence* as by *internal assent*.
- Not only His **death**, but *also* its **time and place**, were ordained by Him.

# LAST SAYINGS

- With those words, Jesus affirms that He remains in control to His last breath.
  - “No one takes [my life] away from me, but I lay it down by myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” John 10:18.
  - Yet, it also a perfect prayer, from the depths of His Heart, of complete surrender to the Father, and of total abandonment and unwavering trust.
  - No anger, no self-pity and no regret. Peace .

# LAST SAYINGS



- St John Chrysostom informs us: “Now this voice teaches us, that the souls of the saints are not henceforth shut up in Sheol as before, but are with God, Christ being made the beginning of this change.”

# LAST SAYINGS

**Into Your Hand I  
Commit My Spirit**

Psalm 31

- And even now, with a final breath, Jesus quotes Scripture, showing us that it is not only He who can trust the Father, but that we too at that moment of our final breath - can equally trust in God,
- **Lets read Psalm 31: 1-9\***  
*reflecting as it applies to us.*

# LAST SAYINGS

- Christ has hereby left us an example, having *fitted* the words of David [Psalm 31] to the purpose of the dying and sanctified them for our use.
- In death our great care should be about our souls, and we cannot more effectually provide for their welfare than by committing them now into the hands of God, as a Father, to be sanctified and governed by his Spirit and grace, and at death committing them into his hands to be made perfect in holiness and happiness,
  - Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible (1662-1714).

# MY PRAYER

- My prayer for when my day comes is that:
  - I will **demonstrate** that *while I might wish to continue living and have the cup of death pass from me without drinking from it,*
  - that like Christ **I will be able to make an act of the will and submit to a willingness to die,** in that in so doing - I **affirm my belief in another life after this, and confess desire for it, by also saying:**  
**Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.**



# BURIAL OF JESUS





# BURIAL OF JESUS

## The Pietà of Michelangelo

Often called the **Deposition from the Cross** or the **Lamentation** - the portrayal of Mary holding the crucified Son - has captured the church imagination since the 9th Century in Byzantine art.



# BURIAL OF JESUS

- The **pietà**, “*pity*” is both a **portrayal of the lifeless Jesus**, **and** a **flashback** to a time when a **frail Jesus was cradled by His mother at His Nativity**.
- **Michelangelo** captures the duality by:
  - making **Mary much larger than her Son**, and,
  - by showing her **looking much younger** than the mother of a 33 year old.



completed in 1500 at  
the age of 23

# BURIAL OF JESUS

- Regarding the youth of the Virgin Mary, Michelangelo also revealed to his biographer Ascanio Condivi:
  - "Do you not know that chaste women stay fresh much more than those who are not chaste?
    - How much more in the case of the Virgin, who had never experienced the least lascivious desire that might change her body?"



# BURIAL OF JESUS

- This is the **only work** that the sculptor Michelangelo **ever signed**.
- It is rumored the signature followed Michelangelo overhearing a remark that the sculpture was the work of another sculptor **Cristoforo Solari**,
  - In response **Michelangelo carved his name on the sash running across Mary's chest.**



# BURIAL OF JESUS

- Returning to the pietà. We note four unique artistic representations:
- **Mary's youth** as we already noted. Earlier artists often painted the Blessed Mother as older, worn down by sorrow and age.
  - Some have suggested the face of Mary is the artist's recollection of the **face of his own deceased mother**, who he lost while young.



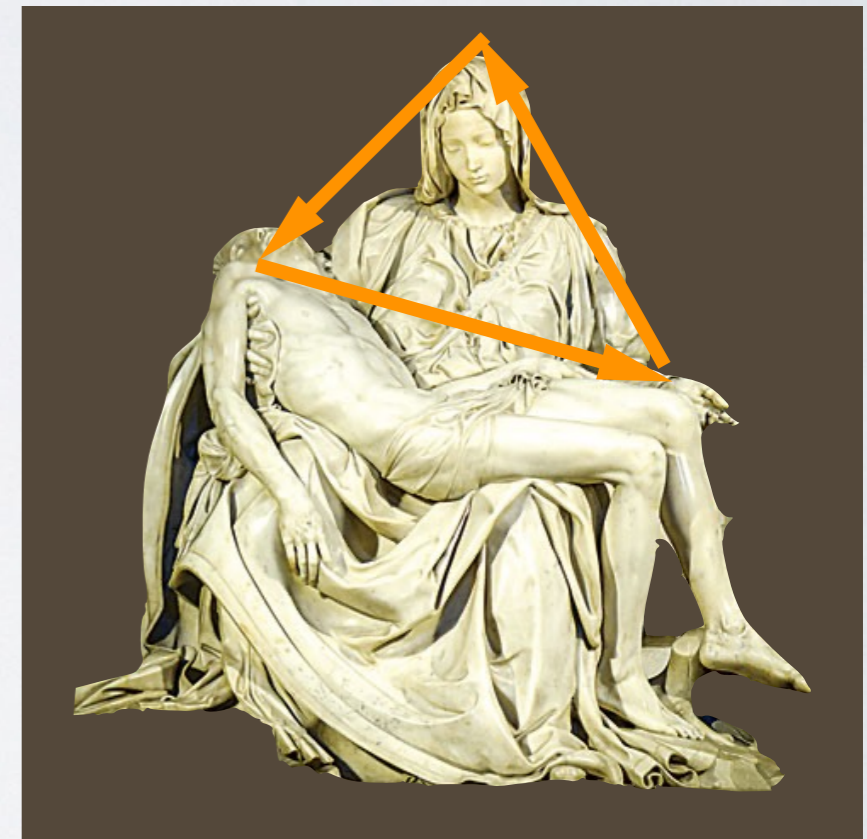
# BURIAL OF JESUS

- **Mary's is disproportionately larger.** If Mary, as portrayed by Michelangelo, were to stand up, **she would tower over Jesus.**
- This serves **two purposes:**
  - One is so **Mary can easily hold** the body of her adult son **without seeming crushed** under it.
  - Secondly, it **reminds us of the Nativity** as previously noted.



# BURIAL OF JESUS

- **Pyramid:** The statue is constructed so **Mary's head** is the **top** of a pyramid-shape or triangle.
- **Jesus' head** and **Mary's left hand** form the **two horizontal points** of the pyramid.
  - This **draws the eye** inward between these three points, with **Mary's left hand** almost beckoning us to her son.



# BURIAL OF JESUS

- **Use of cloth:** Mary's disproportionate size is masked by the carvings of cloth.
- Michelangelo was so skilled in this that the  **folds of the garments and cloth seem soft**, as if they could move in a breeze.
- **Mary's flesh never touches her son.**
  - ➡ The cloth always separates them. **Significance?**





# BURIAL OF JESUS

- There was probably nowhere at *Calvary for Mary to sit*, so as to receive and hold her Son after He was lowered from the cross.
- The image of Mary cradling the body of Jesus in her arms after He is taken down from the Cross,
- invites us to pause and meditate on this moment of pious *tenderness and grief*.



# BURIAL OF JESUS

- **John 19:38-42.\***
- Pontius Pilate.
- Joseph of Arimathea.
- Nicodemus.
- Herbs and Spices.
- The women.



# BURIAL OF JESUS

- **Pontius Pilate** - It remained the prerogative of the Roman Antonia garrison to determine when an executed criminal was dead. (cf. Jn 19:38).
  - *Not unlike modern Capital Punishment rules, the government agency executing a criminal, is tasked with completing the execution and declaring the time of death.*
- As such, here the removal and burial of the body before the Sabbath remained subject to Roman approval - and so Pontius Pilate himself approved.

# BURIAL OF JESUS

- **Joseph of Arimathea** - a '*secretive*' disciple of Jesus for "fear of the Jews."
  - Similar to the language that John uses to describe the Apostles - (See Jn 20:19\*).
- **Luke** informs us that **Joseph of Arimathea** was virtuous and righteous, a member of the Sanhedrin but that **Joseph did not consent** to the verdict against Jesus. He was from Arimathea, and he awaited the Kingdom of God. (Lk 23:50-51\*).

# BURIAL OF JESUS

- Mark tells us that **Joseph of Arimathea** was a distinguished member of the Sanhedrin. (Mk 15:43\*).
- He also tells us that the act of going to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body **was courageous**. (Ibid.).
- **Why, do you think?**
- Here we also learn that **Pilate was surprised Jesus was already dead**, and that Pilate confirmed the fact by querying the centurion. (cf. v.44-45).
  - **Might we assume the centurion to be St. Longinus?**

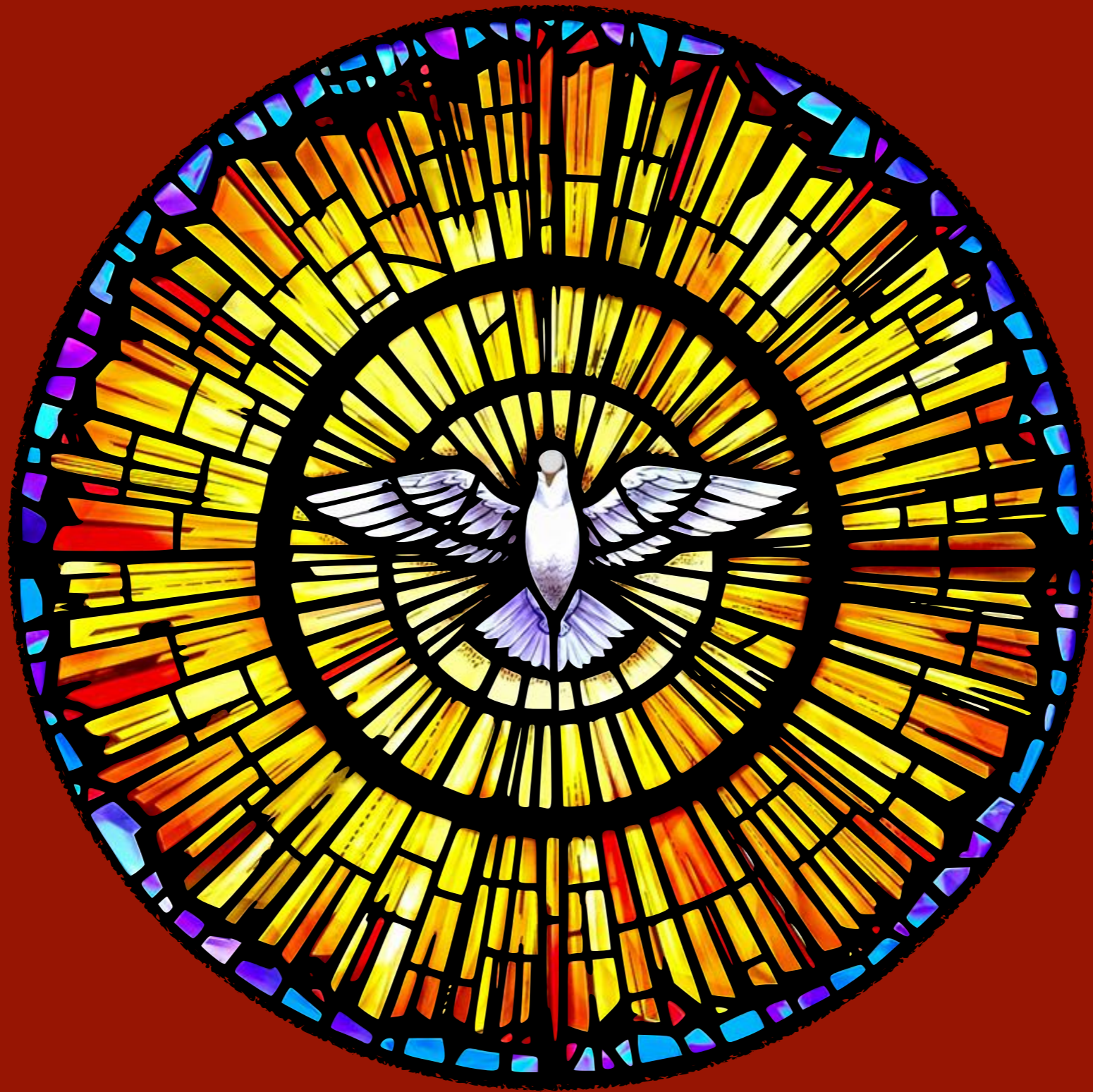
# BURIAL OF JESUS

- Matthew tells us that Joseph of Arimathea was rich.
  - He also tells us it was already evening, when Joseph laid Jesus in his own tomb, one he had hewn in the rock, after wrapping Jesus in a clean linen.
  - Finally, that it was Joseph of Arimathea that rolled the huge stone across the entrance of the tomb before departing. (cf. Mt 27:57-61\*).

# THE GOSPELS

A Scholarly Biblical Study





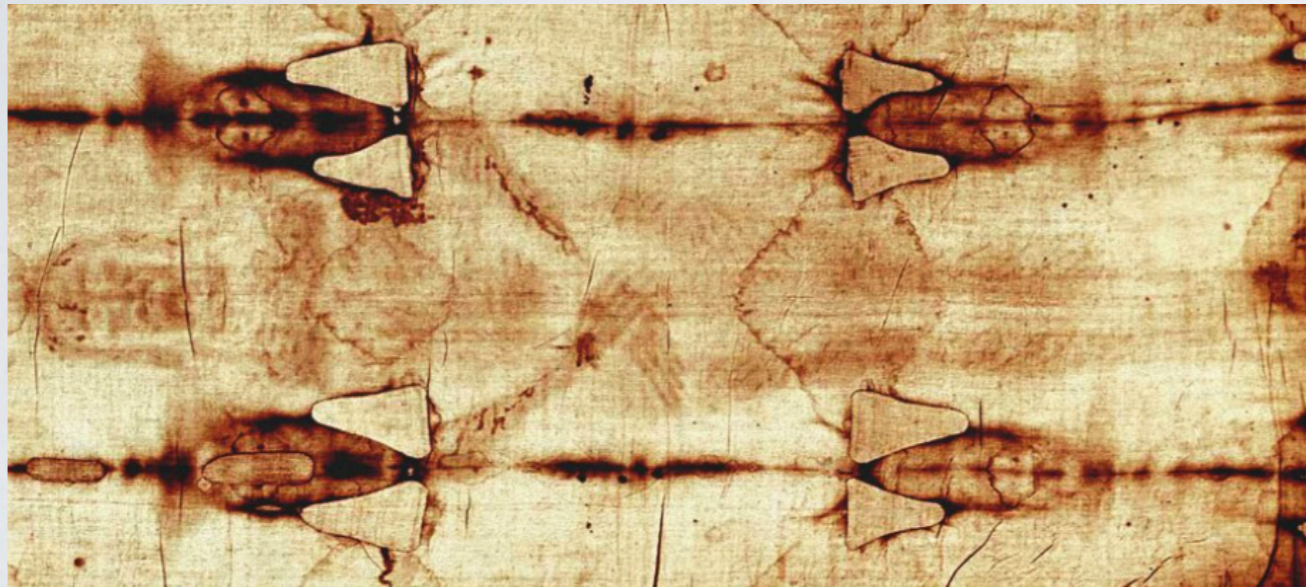


# BURIAL OF JESUS

- **Nicodemus**, who first met Jesus during His early ministry, was also involved in Jesus' burial preparation.
- The Gospel of John documents that **Nicodemus** brought a mixture of **myrrh** and **aloes** weighing about 100 pounds, that were used along with **spices** for the burial. (Jn 19: 39-40\*).

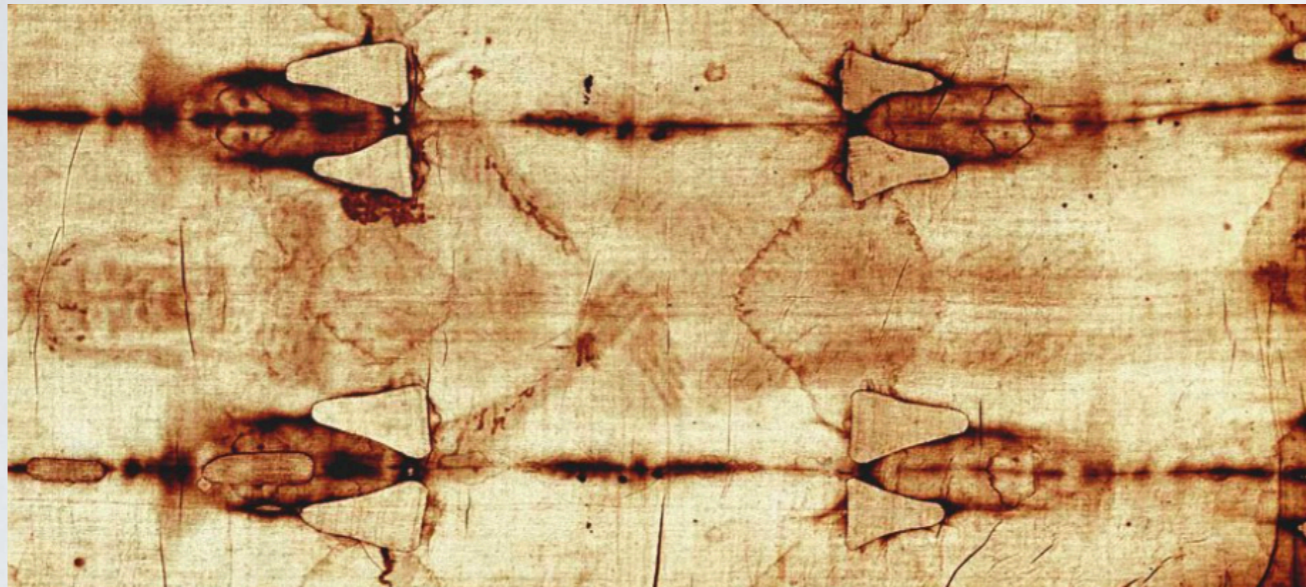


# BURIAL OF JESUS



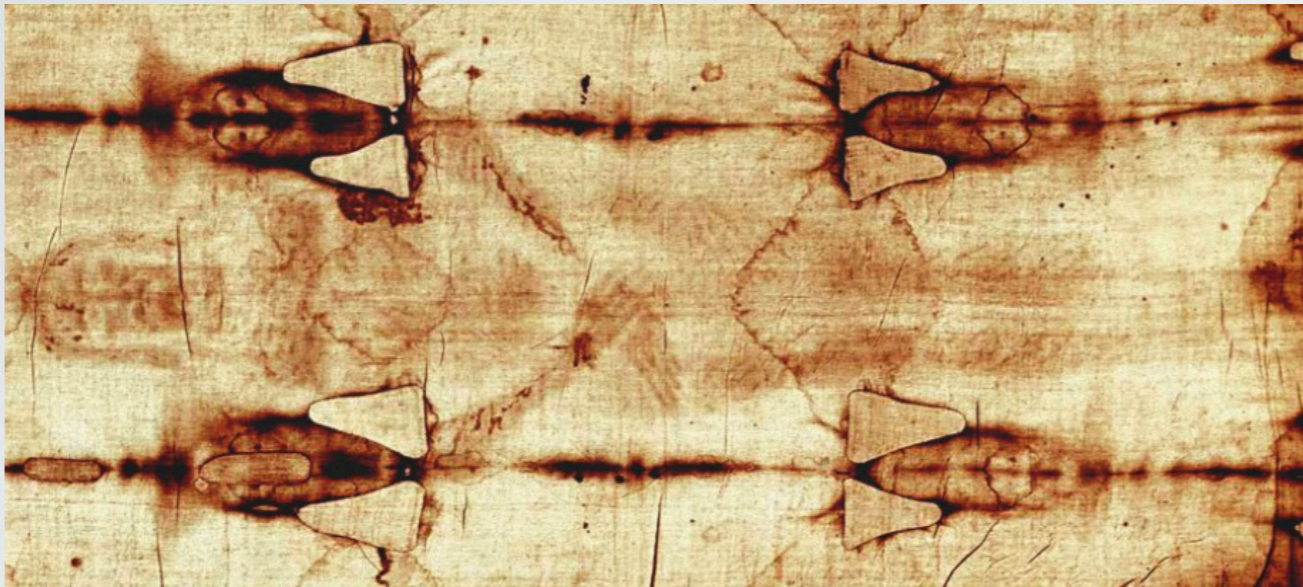
- On August 2, 1999, the **Science Daily** published the findings of **Jewish Botanist Avinoam Danin** of the **The Hebrew University of Jerusalem**.
- Danin, presented his research findings at the **XVI International Botanical Congress** attended by more than 4000 scientists from 100 countries.
- Danin's analysis confirms that **flowers** and **other plant materials** were placed on the **Shroud of Turin**, leaving **pollen grains** and **imprints of plants and flowers** on the linen cloth.

# BURIAL OF JESUS



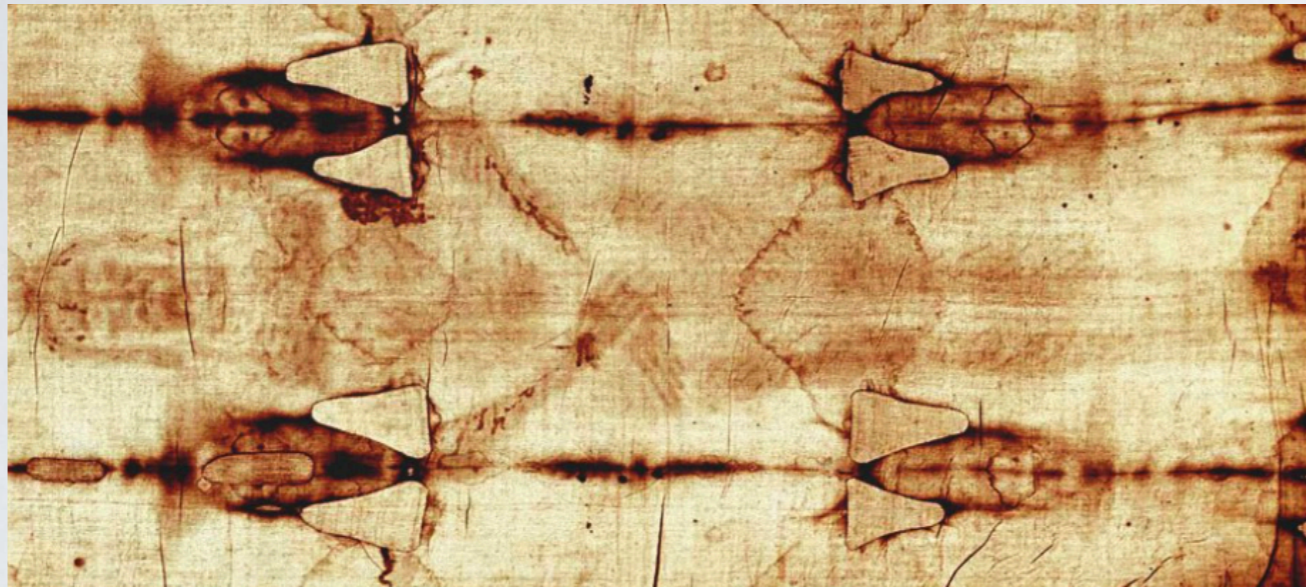
- In addition to the image of a crucified man, the cloth definitely contains faint images of plants.
- Analysis of the floral images by **Danin** and an **analysis** of the **pollen grains** by **Uri Baruch** identify a **combination of certain species that could be found only in the months of March and April in the region of Jerusalem during that time.**
- The analysis positively identifies a high density of pollen of the **thistle Gundelia tournefortii** which has bloomed exclusively in Israel between March and May for millennia.

# BURIAL OF JESUS



- Another plant seen in a clear image on the Shroud is of the **Zygophyllum dumosum** species.
- **Gundelia tournefortii** and **Zygophyllum dumosum** coexist in a limited area, according to **Danin**, a leading authority on plants of Israel. The area is bounded by lines linking **Jerusalem** and **Hebron** in **Israel** and **Madaba** in **Jordan**.
- The area is anchored toward the **Jerusalem-Hebron zone** with the addition of a third species, **Cistus creticus**.

# BURIAL OF JESUS



• **Cistus creticus**, was identified as being placed on the Shroud through an analysis of pollen and floral imaging.

"This combination of flowers can be found in **only one region of the world**," **Danin** stated.

"The evidence clearly points to a floral grouping from the area surrounding Jerusalem."



# BURIAL OF JESUS



**Avinoam Danin**

Prof. Emeritus of Botany  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem



# BURIAL OF JESUS

The women at  
the cross



# BURIAL OF JESUS

- ➔ John 19:25,
  - Mary, the mother of Jesus,
  - ★ Mary's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas,
  - ◉ Mary Magdalene.
- ➔ Mark 15: 40,
  - ★ We learn the Wife of Clopas is the mother of James and Joses,
  - ❖ Salome.
- ➔ Matthew 27:56,
  - ❖ We learn Salome is the mother of the sons of Zebedee.





# BURIAL OF JESUS

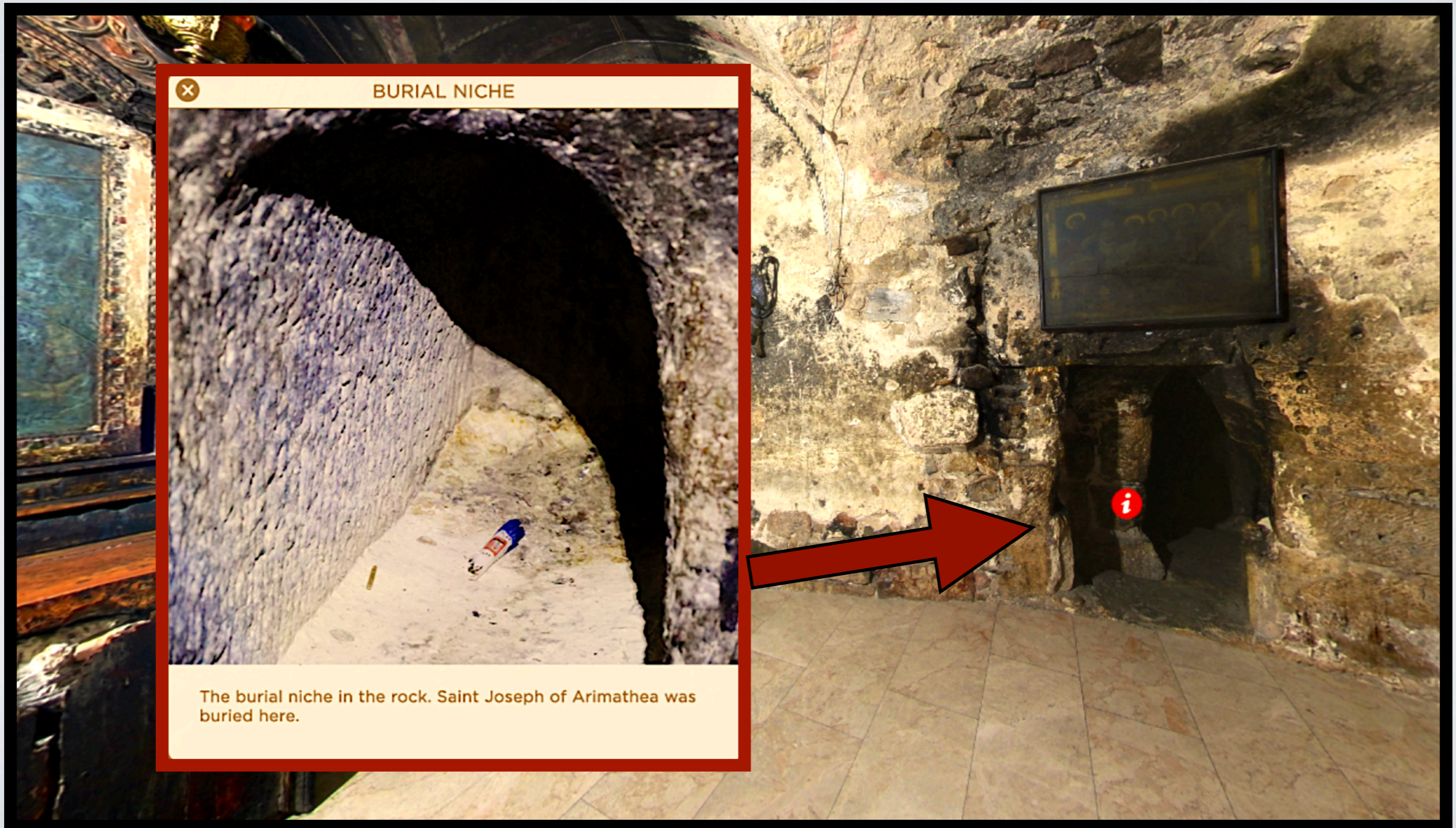
- **John** notes that **Nicodemus** returns at night with about 100 pounds of myrrh, aloes and spices.
- **Luke 23:55-56** records The women followed the body of Jesus and having noted how it was laid in the tomb they return with **Nicodemus** and prepare it for burial arranging the body per the Jewish custom.
- Then **Matthew** documents that **Joseph of Arimathea** rolled a huge stone across the entrance.



# TOMB OF JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA



# TOMB OF JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA



BURIAL NICHE



The burial niche in the rock. Saint Joseph of Arimathea was buried here.

