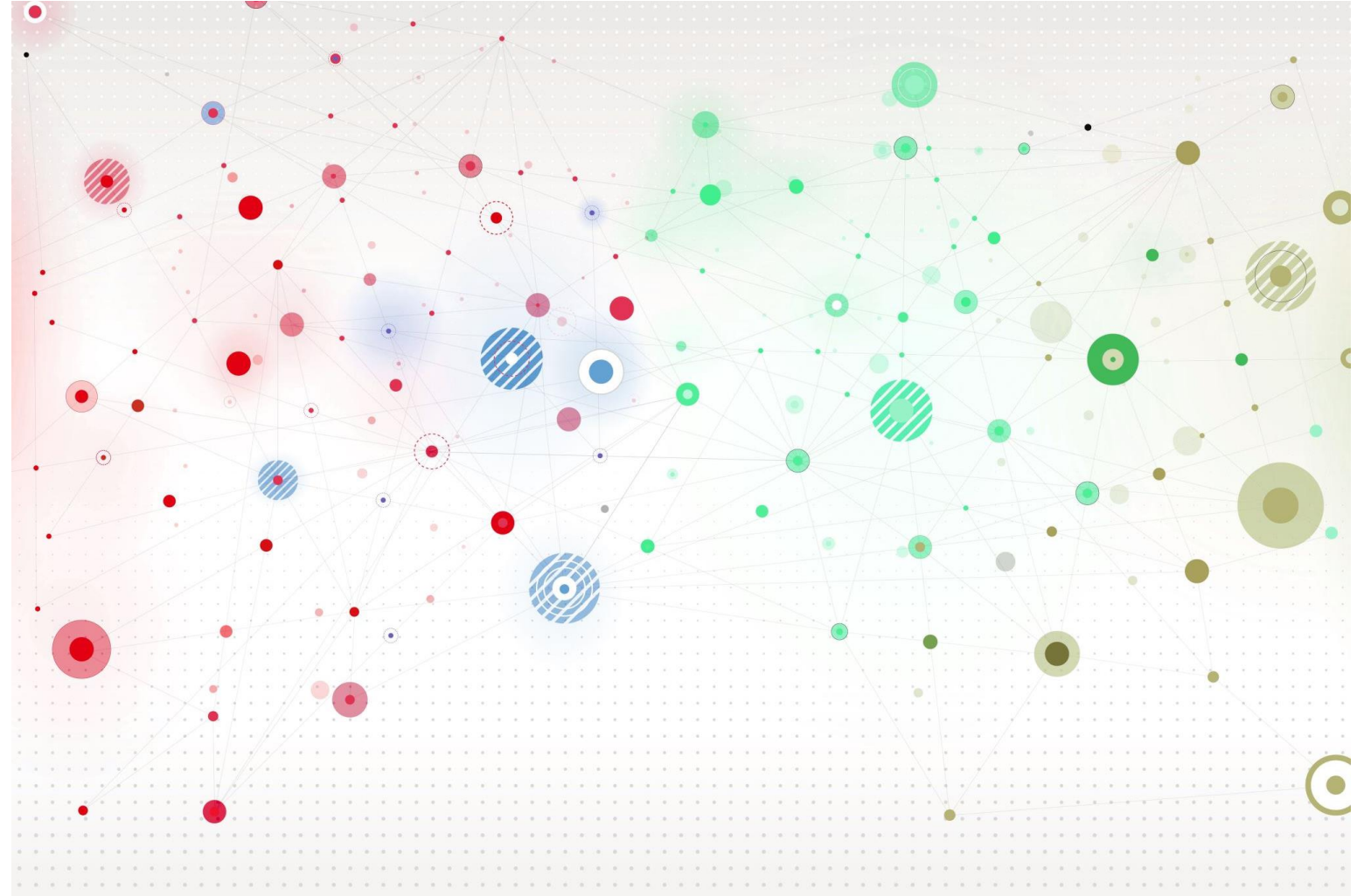

Seeing the Unknown Neighbor:

Receiving and Rejecting Jesus in the Fourth Gospel

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Seeing the Unknown Neighbor



The Gospel of John

The word “neighbor” never occurs in the Fourth Gospel.

one near-exception:

⁵ “So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, **near** [*plēsion*] the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.”

John 4:5

Johannine Prologue (John 1:1–18)

1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.”

John 1:1–4

Johannine Prologue (John 1:1–18)

⁵ “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ **The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.**”

John 1:5–9

Johannine Prologue (John 1:1–18)

Two Ideas in Tension:

- the light that comes into the world is preceded by a “witness” who testifies “so that all might believe”

“There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a **witness** to **testify** to the light, so that **all might believe through him.**” (1:6–7)

Johannine Prologue (John 1:1–18)

Two Ideas in Tension:

- the light that comes into the world is preceded by a “witness” who testifies “so that all might believe”
- despite the witness and his testimony, the world neither recognizes nor accepts the light

“He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet **the world did not know him**. He came to what was his own, and **his own people did not accept him.**” (1:10–11)

Johannine Prologue (John 1:1–18)

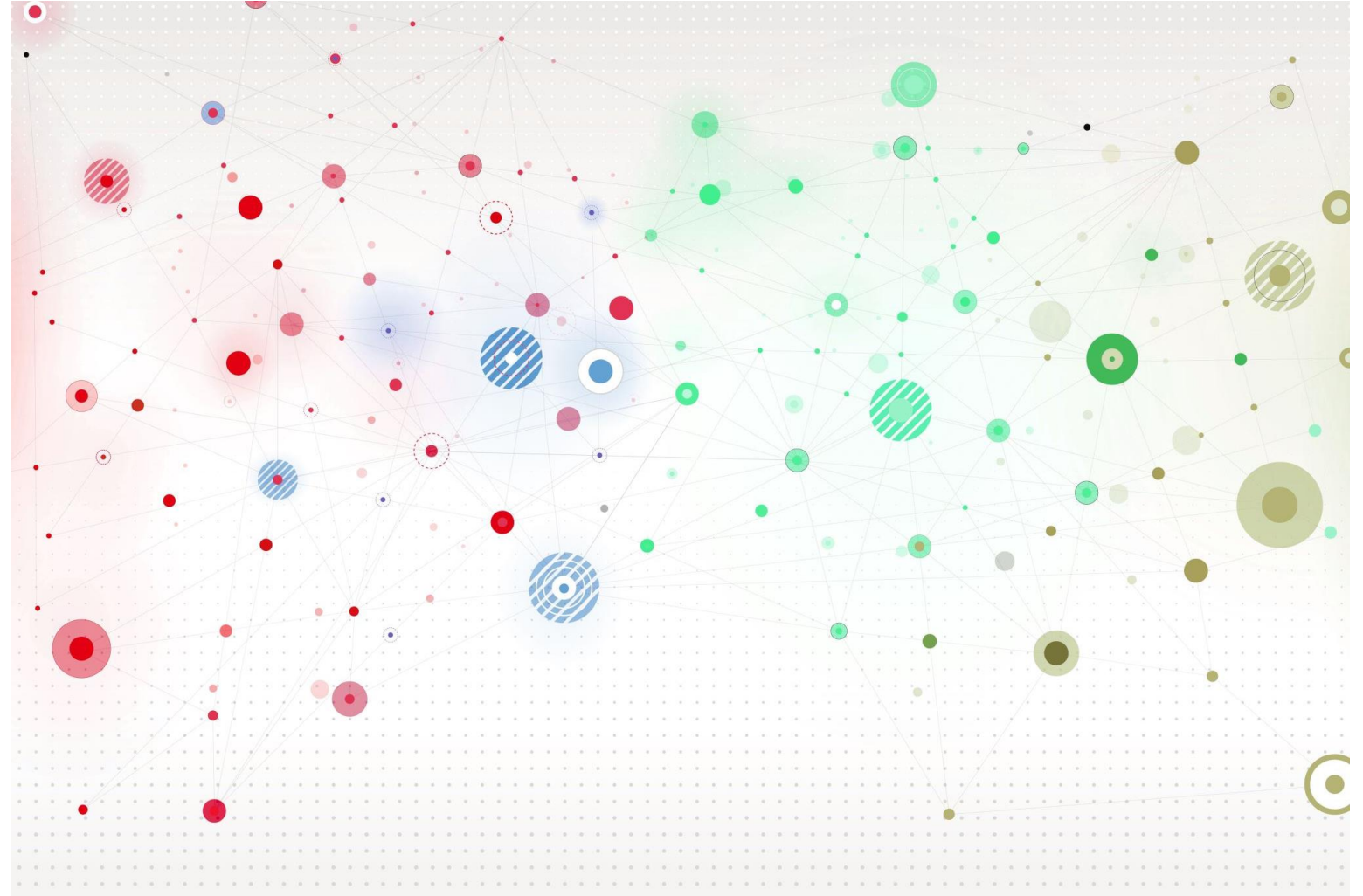
How does God act within this tension?

¹⁴ “And the Word became flesh and **lived among us**, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth. . . . ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. **It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.**”

John 1:14, 17–18

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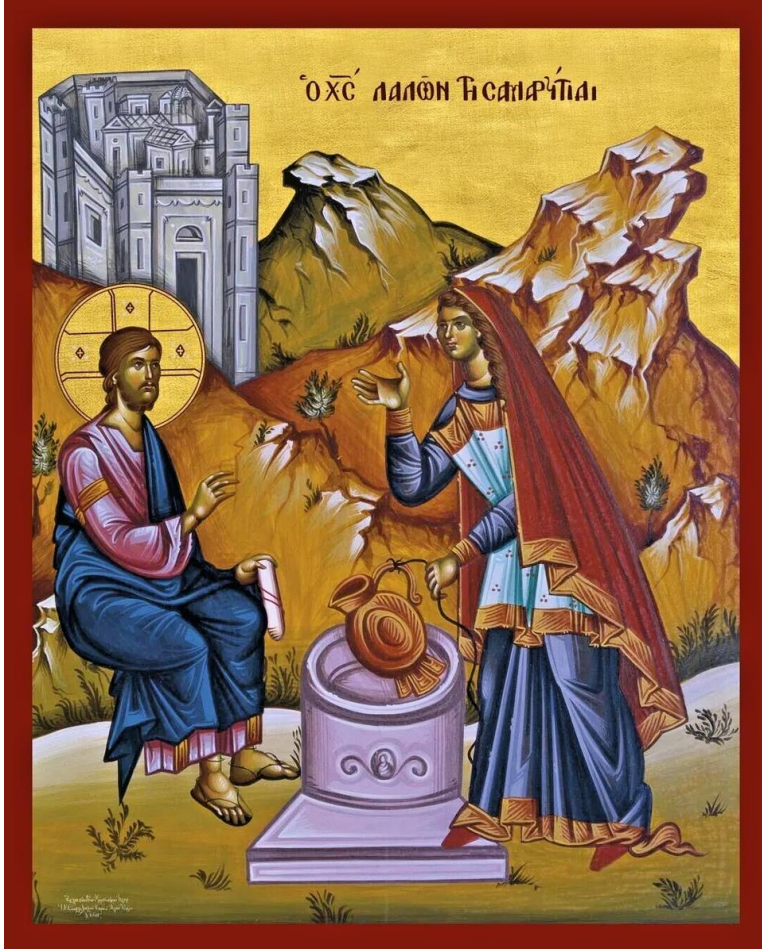


Wedding in Cana

2:1 “On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. . . . ⁹ the person in charge . . . did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), . . . Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.” (John 2:1–2, 9, 11)



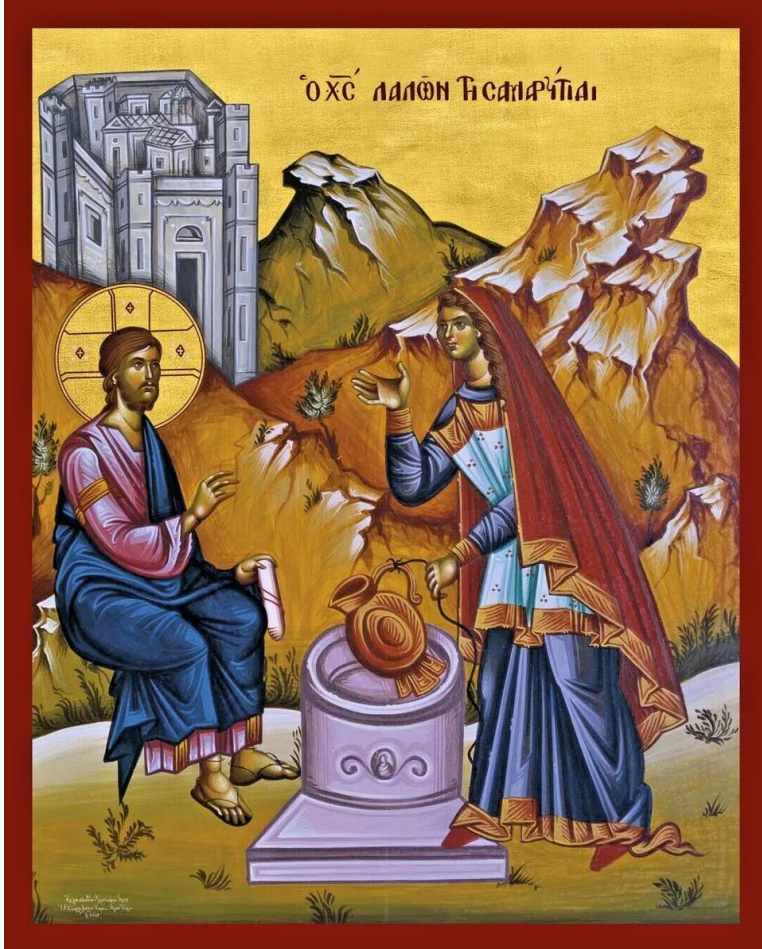
Samaritan Woman at the Well



⁷ “A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ . . . ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ . . . ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink,” you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’”

(John 4:7, 9, 10)

Samaritan Woman at the Well



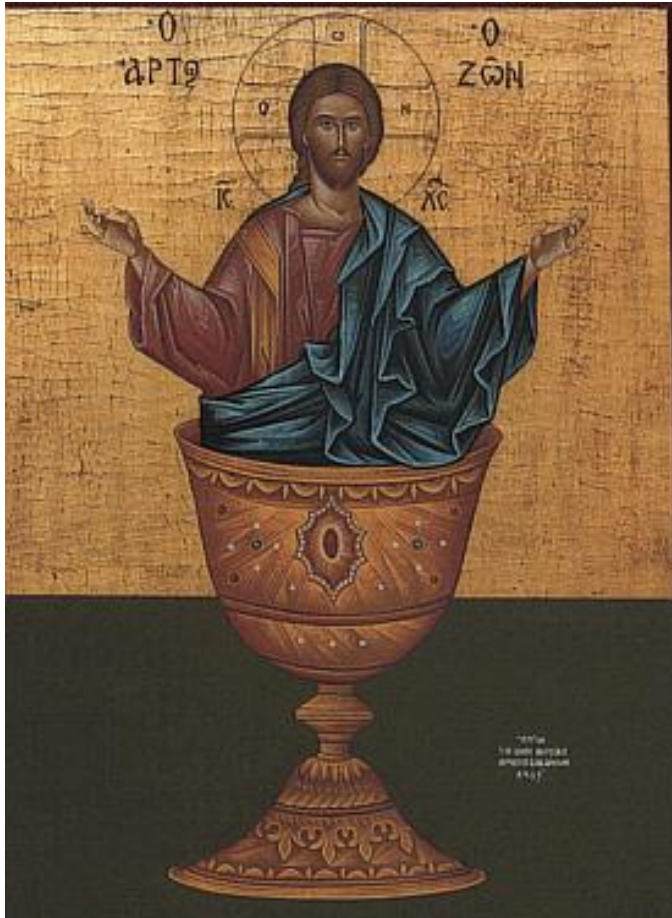
⁹ “The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’” (4:9)

¹⁹ “Sir, I see that you are a prophet.” (4:19)

²⁸ “Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,

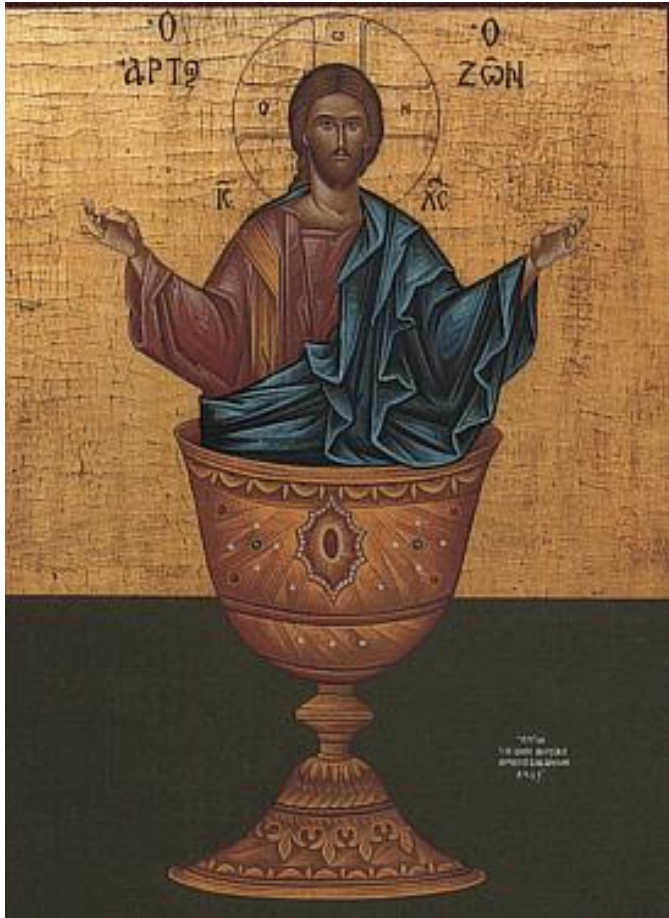
²⁹ ‘Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?’” (4:28–29)

Bread of Life



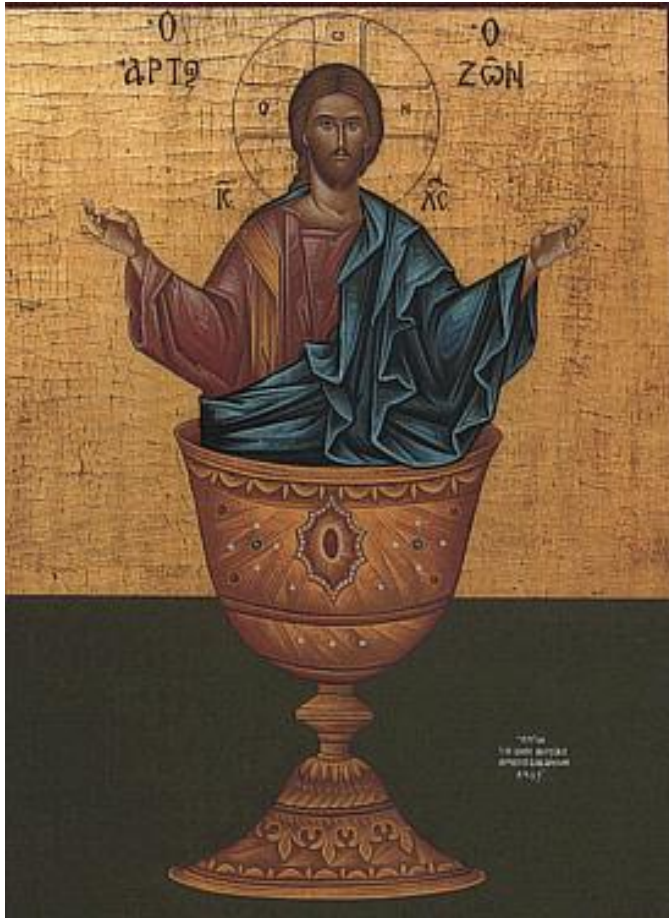
⁵ “When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?’
⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, ‘Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.’

Bread of Life



⁸ “One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him,
⁹ ‘There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?’”
(John 6:5–9)

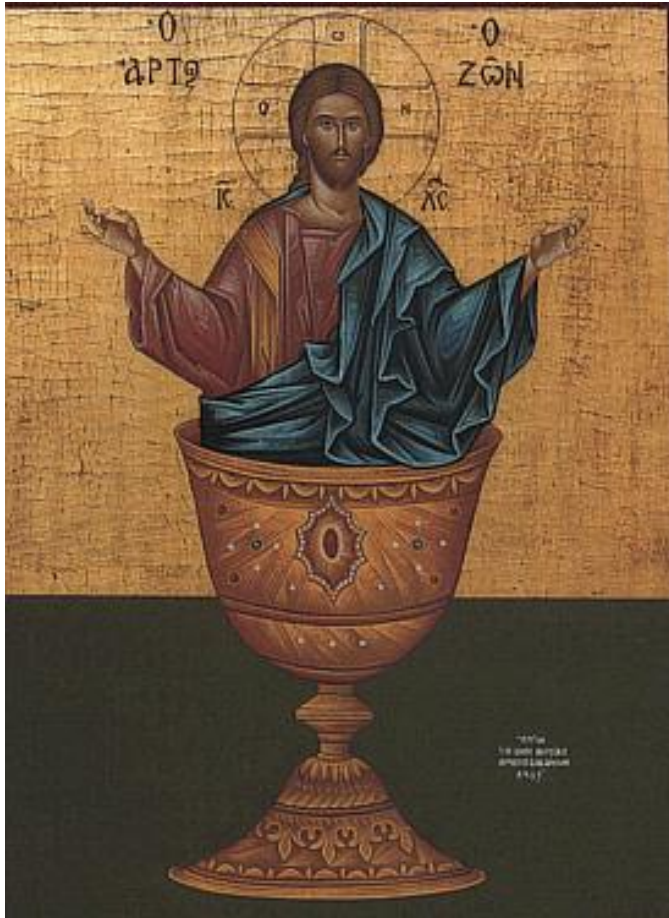
Bread of Life



¹⁴ “When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, ‘This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.’ ¹⁵ When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.”

(John 6:14–15)

Bread of Life



⁶⁶ “Many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus asked the twelve, ‘Do you also wish to go away?’ ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’”

(John 6:66–69)

The Footwashing

13:1 “Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”

(John 13:1)



The Footwashing

³ “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.”

(John 13:3–5)



The Footwashing

⁶ “He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, ‘Lord, are you going to wash my feet?’ ⁷ Jesus answered, ‘You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.’ ⁸ Peter said to him, ‘You will never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered, ‘Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.’ ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!’”

(John 13:6–9)



The Footwashing

² “The devil had already decided that Judas son of Simon Iscariot would betray Jesus. . . .

¹⁰ Jesus said to [Peter], ‘One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.’ ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, ‘Not all of you are clean.’”

(John 13:2, 10–11)



Recognizing Jesus



Seeing the Unknown Neighbor:

Receiving and Rejecting Jesus in the Fourth Gospel

- “I give you a new commandment, that **you love one another**. Just as I have loved you, **you also should love one another**. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, **if you have love for one another.**” (13:34–35)
- “**Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them**, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words, and the word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me.” (14:23–24)

Seeing the Unknown Neighbor:

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- “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; **abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.** I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**” (15:9–12)

Seeing the Unknown Neighbor:

Receiving and Rejecting Jesus in the Fourth Gospel

- We **encounter** the Creator God of Israel in the poor, the unknown, the dispossessed, the oppressed.
- We **imitate** the Creator God of Israel in loving one's enemies and persecutors.
- We **receive** Jesus by keeping his commandment to love one another.

Sunday, 3 May 2026

The Greatest Commandment: Loving and Inviting the Unknown in **the Synoptic Gospels**

Sunday, 10 May 2026

Seeing the Unknown Neighbor: Receiving and Rejecting Jesus in **the Fourth Gospel**

Sunday, 17 May 2026

Welcoming a Foreign Enemy: Surprising Hospitality in **the Acts of the Apostles**

Sunday, 24 May 2026

Sincere Hospitality: Dissent, Welcome, and Pursuit in **Paul's Letters**