

Nuptial Sacrifice of the High Priest

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I. Priestly Background of Jesus' Passion in John

a. John 2:20-21: *The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" 21 But he spoke of the temple of his body*

b. What is the background for a man whose _____ is a _____?

c. For the Jews, the entire C _____ was a Temple:

Is. 66:1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house which you would build for me?"

Psa. 78:69 He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded for ever.

d. Now look at how the H _____ P _____ was clothed:

Wisdom of Solomon 18:24: *For upon [the High Priest's] long robe the whole world was depicted, and the glories of the fathers were engraved on the four rows of stones, and your majesty on the diadem upon his head.*

Philo, *Life of Moses* 2:143: *Then [Moses] gave [the priests] their sacred vestments, giving to his brother [Aaron, the High Priest] the robe which reached down to his feet, and the mantle which covered his shoulders, as a sort of breast-plate, being an embroidered robe, adorned with all kinds of figures, and a representation of the universe.*

Philo, *Life of Moses* 2:135: *The High Priest "represents the world" and is a "microcosm" (brachys kosmos).*

Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 3:180: *for if anyone do but consider the fabric of the tabernacle, and take a view of the garments of the high priest, and of those vessels which we make use of in our sacred ministration, he will find ... they were every one made in way of imitation and representation of the universe.*

e. The description of Solomon the Royal Bridegroom in Song 5:9 *What is your beloved more than another beloved, O fairest among women? What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you thus adjure us? 10 My beloved is all radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand. 11 His head is the finest gold; his locks are wavy, black as a raven. 12 His eyes are like doves beside springs of water, bathed in milk, fitly set. 13 His cheeks are like beds of spices, yielding fragrance. His lips are lilies, distilling liquid myrrh. 14 His arms are rounded gold, set with jewels. His body is ivory work, encrusted with sapphires. 15 His legs are alabaster columns, set upon bases of gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars. 16 His speech is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*

Commentary: "The woman's description of her lover in Song of Songs 5:6-10 draws on terminology used to describe the temple – there's myrrh, sockets, inlays, cedars of Lebanon. More, the sequence of the description is not only head-to-foot, but also roughly follows the pattern of the temple. Head of gold, pure gold: Holy of Holies, especially the ark. Eyes like doves (keeping in mind the linkage of doves and flame from a previous post, and eyes with lamps): Lampstands. Cheeks with herbs and spices: Incense and incense altar. Lips like lilies: The lily shape of the capitals on the two pillars, and the lily design of sea and water basins. Legs like pillars of alabaster: The structural supports of the temple. Form like Lebanon, like cedars: Cedar wood interior of the temple. Mouth full of sweetness: This could be the opening of the temple, or possibly the altar, where Yahweh's bread is kept. Or, we may have moved out of the temple and back in: After we see the lilies in the courtyard, we move back to see the pillars and the cedar interior.

When the woman again mentions the mouth, we are back in the Holy of Holies, which 1 Kings calls the

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debir, a work linked to the Hebrew word for “word” (deber) and “speak” (dabar). In any case, the lover, like his bride, is described like a temple.”
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f. John 2:21 points to Jesus as the ultimate H_____ P_____!

II. The Culmination: Priestly Bridegroom at the Cross

a. C_____ (John 19:2)

“And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe”
“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)

b. John 19:23: “His tunic was without seem, woven from top to bottom.” So what?

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 ...*”

c. John 19:23-24: The Tunic not T_____.

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.

Lev 21:10: “*The priest who is chief among his brethren .. shall not ... tear his clothes ...*”

d. T_____ (John 19:28)

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), “I thirst.”

e. The presence of soured W_____ (John 19:29)

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.

f. “It is C_____” (John 19:30)

Jesus therefore, when he had taken the vinegar, said: “It is consummated.” And bowing his head, he gave up the ghost. (Douay-Rheims)

g. The Pierced Side of Christ, one of the densest images in Scripture:

John 19:34: “*But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.*”

The fathers recognized in the blood water both the imagery of birth and of marital consummation (so St. Augustine). It is also clearly Temple imagery, related to the Temple in Jerusalem at Passover, as well as the prophecies of the River of Life to flow from the eschatological Temple.

- h. John 19:39: The P_____ 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 Psalm 45:8 (the Royal Wedding Psalm): *"your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia."*

Compare Proverbs 7:17: *"I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon."*

Compare Songs 4:13-14: *"Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all chief spices..."*

- i. John 19:40: Wrapped in L_____;

John 19:40: *They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in **linen cloths** with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews*

Lev 16:4: *"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."*

- j. Laid in the V_____ T_____;

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."*

III. Again, What About the Disciples? Any Implications for Them?

- a. Look at John 20:22-23: *"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."*
- b. This is the A_____ that follows their W_____ back in John 13!
- c. Who could forgive sin in the Old Testament?

Look into it: only the _____!

Lev. 5:13 *Thus the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed in any one of these things, and he shall be **forgiven**.* Compare also Lev 4:20,26,31,35; 5:10,16,18; 6:6; 19:22.

Lev. 5:5 When a man is guilty in any of these, he shall **confess** the sin he has committed, 6 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.

IV. Conclusion: The Identity of the Priest Flows from a Sharing in the Cross of Christ

John 19:34 is an icon of the meaning of the priestly ministry:

“But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.”

From the body of the priest, conformed to Christ, flows life and joy for the people of God, the Bride of Christ!