

The Resurrection Body of Christ the Lord

(Part 3)

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The greatest banquet in the history of the world will occur at the beginning of Christ's 1,000-year kingdom in the Holy Land. The menu was announced 2,700 years ago (cf. Isa. 25:6), and our Lord confirmed that the beverage would be the “fruit of the vine” (Matt. 26:29).

Not only the menu, but also the actual timing of the banquet seems to be indicated in relation to other prophetic events. Seventy-five days after the second coming of Christ to the earth, the final purging and cleansing of the earth will have been completed. It was in 536 B.C. that the pre-incarnate Christ told Daniel the prophet: “Blessed *is* he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days” (Dan. 12:12; cf. 10:1; 12:7).

The horrible abomination of desolation that the false prophet will supervise during the last three-and-a-half years (i.e., 1,260 days) of the great tribulation (Rev. 13:11-18) will be purged 30 days after the second coming (i.e., 1,290 days from the time the Temple will be desecrated; cf. Dan. 12:11). Similarly, godly king Hezekiah took 30 days to cleanse the Temple from the abominations of his father Ahaz (2 Chron. 30:2-4).

But even then, the great banquet will not be ready. During an additional 45 days (i.e., 1,335 days from the mid-point of the 70th week of Daniel), all remaining unbelievers will be removed from the earth. This will include Jews (cf. Isa. 4:3, 4; Ezek. 20:33-38; Mal. 3:1-6), Gentile leaders (cf. Matt. 25:31-46) and every remaining man and woman (cf. Matt. 24:40, 41).

Then, and then only, can our Lord's promise be fulfilled: “But he who endures to the end [i.e., of the 1,335 days] shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13). (Similarly, only those who endured

to the end of the flood were saved [Matt. 24:36-41; 2 Pet. 2:5]). For the Jews also, only at that point can it be said that “all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26). Daniel himself looks forward to that day, for our Lord concluded His marvelous revelation to him with these words: “But you, go *your way* till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days” (Dan. 12:13).

Who will be the blessed ones participating in that stupendous celebration? First, the glorified church will participate, having just descended with Christ from heaven (cf. Matt. 26:29; Luke 22:30; Rev. 19:14). Second, glorified Old Testament saints and tribulation martyrs will do likewise (cf. Dan. 12:1-3; Rev. 20:4-6). And finally, those few who survive the great tribulation, who will re-populate the world, will be there (cf. Zech. 14:1-5, Matt. 24:21, 22). Thus, untold millions of people will behold and clearly identify the One who died for them and rose again in a body that is perfect and permanent. “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). At last, as the prophet Joel predicted, Israel's God “will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten... You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied” (Joel 2:25, 26).

Sadly, many theologians throughout church history have rejected the idea of an inaugural banquet in the kingdom because it appears to them to be carnal and thus beneath their spiritual dignity. Largely because of this, the whole concept of a 1,000-year kingdom on the earth has been rejected. Thus, the great church father Augustine (354-430 A.D.) stated that the idea of a 1,000-year reign with Christ on the earth "would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath shall be spiritual... For I myself, too, once held this opinion. But, as they assert that those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal" (as quoted in Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel and the Church: The Origin and Effects of Replacement Theology* [Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2004], p. 161).

But our Lord's promises are not so easily evaporated. There are many of his people who still believe what He said. May we be counted among them!

At the dawn of the millennial kingdom on earth, our Lord Jesus Christ will reveal Himself in bodily form to all glorified and non-glorified believers. Just as He revealed Himself and His true identity to His astonished disciples for 40 days after His resurrection, often at mealtimes, so also will be His self-revelation at the inaugural kingdom banquet (cf. Acts 1:3).

At the second coming of Christ in glory, probably culminating at this banquet, the nation of Israel will experience a transforming confrontation with her Messiah God. The Apostle John says that at His coming “every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him” (Rev. 1:7).

Especially at the banquet, as He serves them, they will see His nailed-pierced hands, just like the Apostle Thomas did in the upper room. A week earlier, Thomas, who had not been in that room when Jesus appeared to the 10 apostles, emphatically declared: “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

The amazing thing is that God spared Thomas’ life after he verbalized such unbelief and rationalistic evidentialism. In infinite condescension, our Lord appeared to him in that same room eight days later and said: “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing” (John 20:27).

Now many Christians have assumed that the nation of Israel will not be converted until they see the Son of God at His coming. But that is highly improbable for at least two reasons.

First, seeing Christ, even in His glorified state, cannot save people. Saving faith “*comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). It must be remembered that Thomas was a genuine believer (cf. John 13:10, 11) before he saw his glorified Savior and cried out, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). Thomas was like those few “brethren” (1 Cor. 15:6), among the 500, who “doubted” even at the sight of the resurrected Christ (Matt. 28:17). And he was also like the two on the road to Emmaus who doubted that He would ever rise from the dead (Luke 24:21; cf. Mark 16:9-14). To them our Lord sadly admonished: “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” (Luke 24:25, 26).

Second, today, we cannot see the risen Savior. But by the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, we can trust in Him and be saved. “Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Pet. 1:8). Yes, “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:9, 10).

This will also be the case for the nation of Israel. Several years before they see their Messiah, they will put their faith in Him and be saved!

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