

The Last Supper and the Lost Tribes of Israel

The Problem of the Lost Tribes of Israel

1000-922 B.C.	Davidic Kingdom: all 12 Tribes under Kings David and Solomon
922 B.C.	Divided Kingdom: 10 Tribes of Northern Kingdom (Israel) split apart from 2 Tribes of Southern Kingdom (Judah)
ca. 750 B.C.	Prophets begin foretelling that God would allow Israel and Judah (all 12 Tribes) to be exiled and gathered again
722 B.C.	Assyrian Exile: 10 Tribes of Israel deported by Assyria, scattered among Gentiles
587 B.C.	Babylonian Exile: 2 Tribes of Judah taken away to Babylon
539 B.C.	Judeans Return from Babylon: King Cyrus of Persia allows the Jews to return home and rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple
ca. 30 A.D.	Time of Jesus: Jews have been in the land for many centuries, but 10 Tribes of Northern Kingdom (Israel) remain lost, scattered among the Gentiles

Josephus: Wherefore there are but *two tribes* in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while *the ten tribes are beyond Euphrates until now*, and are *an immense multitude*, and not to be estimated by numbers. (Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.133)

The Jewish Hope for the Ingathering of the Lost Tribes of Israel

Isaiah: *In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.* In that day the LORD will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant which is left of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. *He will raise an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel (=10 tribes) and gather the dispersed of Judah (=2 tribes) from the four corners of the earth.* (Isaiah 11:10-12)

Ezekiel: [God said to Ezekiel:] “Son of man, take a stick and write on it, ‘*For Judah, and the children of Israel associated with him*’ (=2 Tribes); then take another stick and write upon it, ‘*For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him*’ (=10 Tribes); and join them together into one stick... When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, then say to them... *Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all sides, and bring them to their own land; and I will make them one nation upon the land... and one king shall be king over them all; and they shall no longer be two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms... My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd.* (Ezekiel 37:15-24)

Rabbi Johanan said: *The ingathering of the Exiles is as important as the day when heaven and earth were created* (Babylonian Talmud, *Pesahim* 88a)

Jesus and the Ingathering of the Exiles

Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, *in the new world, when the Son of Man shall sit on his throne of glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” (Matthew 19:28)

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The Jewish Hope for the Messianic Banquet

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death for ever, and the LORD God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us." (Isaiah 25:6-9)

Jesus' Signs of the Messianic Banquet: the Two Feedings of the Multitudes

Now they had forgotten to bring bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And [Jesus] cautioned them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod." And they discussed it with one another, saying, 'We have no bread'." And being aware of it, Jesus said to them, " Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? *When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand people, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?*" They said to him, "Twelve." "*And the seven baskets for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?*" And they said to him, "Seven." And he said to them, "*Do you not yet understand?*" (Mark 8:14-22)

First Feeding of the Multitude

(Matt 14, Mark 6)

1. Five loaves, two fish
2. 5000 Fed
3. Jewish Territory/Baskets
(*kophinos*; Mark 6:42)
4. 12 Baskets left over

Second Feeding of the Multitude

(Matt 15, Mark)

1. Seven loaves, and a few fish
2. 4000 Fed
3. Gentile territory (Tyre and Sidon)/baskets
(*spurida*; Mark 8:8)
4. 7 Baskets left over (cf. Acts 13:19)

Jesus' Teaching about the Messianic Banquet

I tell you, *many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven*, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. (Matthew 8:11-12)

The Heavenly Banquet in Jewish Tradition

Another explanation of "He shall dwell *on high*." (Isa 33:16). It is written, "For the Lord your God brings you into a good land" (Deut 8:7)—to see *the table that is prepared in Paradise*, as it says, "I shall walk before the Lord in the lands of the living" (Ps 116:9). *He [God] as it were sits above the patriarchs, and the patriarchs and all the righteous sit in his midst*, as it says, "And they sit down at your feet" (Deut 33:3), *and He distributes portions to them*. Should you wonder at this, then recall how even in this world He placed Himself between the two cherubim for their sake... then how much more will this be so in Paradise? *He will bring them the fruit from the Garden of Eden and will feed them from the Tree of Life*. Who will be the first to say Grace? All will respectfully request God to order one to say Grace; He will bid Michael say it; and he will bid Gabriel, and Gabriel the patriarchs, and they will give the honour to David, saying, "It befits an earthly king to bless the Heavenly King." *They will hand over the cup to David, who will say, "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord."*... Hence "For the LORD your God brings you into a good land," and for this reason does it say, "He shall dwell *on high*." (*Exodus Rabbah* 25:8)

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The Last Supper, the Messianic Banquet, and the Ingathering of the Tribes

And when it was evening he came with *the Twelve*... And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is *poured out for many*. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." (Mark 14:17-25)

You are those who have continued with me in my trials; as my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I covenant for you *that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel* (Luke 22:28-30)

Jesus' "Hour": Drawing All Men to Himself

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Beth-saida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him. *Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? `Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name.*" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. *Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.*" He said this to show by what death he was to die... (John 12:20-36)

Pope Benedict XVI: The Eucharist and Eschatology

31. Reflecting on this mystery [of the Eucharist], we can say that Jesus' coming responded to an expectation present in the people of Israel, in the whole of humanity and ultimately in creation itself. By his self-gift, he objectively inaugurated the eschatological age. *Christ came to gather together the scattered People of God (cf. Jn 11:52) and clearly manifested his intention to gather together the community of the covenant, in order to bring to fulfillment the promises made by God to the fathers of old (cf. Jer 23:3; Lk 1:55, 70).* In the calling of the Twelve, which is to be understood in relation to the twelve tribes of Israel, and in the command he gave them at the Last Supper, before his redemptive passion, to celebrate his memorial, Jesus showed that he wished to transfer to the entire community which he had founded the task of being, within history, the sign and instrument of the eschatological gathering that had its origin in him. *Consequently, every eucharistic celebration sacramentally accomplishes the eschatological gathering of the People of God.* For us, the eucharistic banquet is a real foretaste of the final banquet foretold by the prophets (cf. *Is 25:6-9*) and described in the New Testament as "the marriage-feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7-9), to be celebrated in the joy of the communion of saints (100). (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacrament of Charity*, 30-31).