It is written in John 12:1-2 that "Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him."

The death, burial and resurrection of Lazarus had taken place earlier in John 11. Following that miracle, John 11:45 says that "Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him." It was not Jesus Who resurrected but it was Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, who had been resurrected by Jesus' power. It is ironic that "many of the Jews...believed in Him" because of Lazarus' resurrection but when He Himself resurrected from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit, a truth to which the Apostles attested, it did not have the same effect upon the people even though it was His resurrection from the dead that declared that He was the Son of God. (Romans 1:4) Sadly, that remains to be the case not only with the Jews of that day but also with many Gentiles of this day.

We are reminded of the conversation between the "rich man" and "Abraham" in Luke 16. The "rich man" pled with "Abraham" concerning his "five brothers." He begged "Abraham" that he would send "Lazarus" - not the Lazarus of John 11 and 12 but the "Lazarus" of Luke 16 - to warn his "brothers" of the "place of torment" in which he found himself. "Abraham" said, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them... [And] If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."

Jesus left Bethany after resurrecting Lazarus because the chief priests, Pharisees, and the High Priest, Caiaphas, plotted "to put Him to death." (John 11:53) He went "to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples." "Then, six days before the Passover" - the last Passover that He would observe - Christ came again "to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead."

It is stated in John 12:2 that "they made Him a supper." It was not the Lord's Supper such as we observe each Lord's Day for He had not yet died and shed His blood, but still, it could be called the Lord's Supper for "they," no doubt Martha and Mary and perhaps even Lazarus himself, "made" it for Him.

We can presume that Mary and Martha also supped with Jesus but we know that Lazarus did for it is written, "...Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table"
with Him." A man who had died, been buried, and then resurrected by the power of Christ ate with Jesus at His supper table. It would be difficult for the spiritually-minded to miss the similarity between Lazarus at the supper table in Bethany and us at the supper table in the assembly of Christ's people, a supper not "made for Him but by Him.

We, like Lazarus, at one time were dead — spiritually "dead in trespasses and sin." (Ephesians 2:1) But, when we repented of our sins we became spiritually "dead to sin." Then, when we heard the gospel of Christ and believed in Him as the only begotten Son of God, again like Lazarus, we too were then buried — not in an earthly tomb but in a tomb of water. "...we were buried with Him through baptism into death," says Romans 6:4. Our old man died and was buried. But, like Lazarus, neither did we stay in our grave. We too resurrected. A new man resurrected not by our own power but by the power of Christ just as it was by the power of Christ that Lazarus was resurrected.

I don't know what Lazarus looked like when he resurrected after being buried for four days; but, I know how he smelled. He stunk. I can only surmise that he looked the same after his resurrection as he did before his resurrection. But in the case of our resurrection there has been a change. We are a "new creation" who walks "in newness of life." (Romans 6:4)

Each Lord's Day congregations of men and women who once were dead but now are alive sit "at the table with Him." By His grace we have been resurrected never to die again. We are alive because He is alive. Only dead people decline His invitation to be seated and to sup with Him each Lord's Day at His Table.

Following the supper in John 12:3 it is written that “Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.” If Mary's ointment "filled" her house "with fragrance," and if the prayers of the saints are like the aroma of a sweet-smelling incense to the Lord, I can't help but think that when the Lord’s people who were once dead but who have resurrected and are now alive, obediently meet around His Supper Table, that there is also a sweet-smelling spiritual scent that ascends from the bride of Christ to the majestic throne upon which her Lord and groom sits, reigns, and rules.

Prayer

Our Father in Heaven we want to honor and worship you in the way that has been prescribed and is acceptable to you. And so, we come to this sacred Table of our Lord as we have been taught by your Word to do, "in remembrance" of Him who by His power and through His blood resurrected us to a new life having cleansed us of our sins. Father, we confess to you now that we will always need your grace and forgiveness. As we eat this loaf and drink this cup we do remember Him and the price paid for our salvation. We pray that our obedience will be as sweet-smelling to you as was the anointing oil that Mary put on the feet of our Lord centuries ago. We ask in the name of Jesus Christ that you will accept our obedience and our worship. Amen.