

Revelation 21: 1-6 – May 9, 2010

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'

5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' ⁶Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.'

Discussion Questions

1. What are your thoughts about life beyond death?
 - a. What were you taught as a child/youth about "heaven?"
 - b. What beliefs did you acquire/settle on in your adult life?
 - c. What do you think now?
2. Do you believe that it's possible for people to have "revelations" from God?
 - a. If so, what form might they take?
3. What would you or might you share with others, perhaps new Christians, about life beyond death?

Acts 2: 1-21 – May 23 (Pentecost)

2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?' ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and

Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.’¹² All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’¹³ But others sneered and said, ‘They are filled with new wine.’

Peter Addresses the Crowd

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

¹⁵Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning.

¹⁶No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷‘In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

²⁰The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.

²¹Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the meaning and significance of Pentecost Sunday for you?
2. How do you believe the Holy Spirit comes to us today?
3. Have you ever had a powerful experience of the Spirit that you would like to share with the group?
4. How might one be more open to the Spirit in one’s own life?
 - a. How might the congregation be open to the Spirit in its own life?