

Revelation 21:1-6

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;
⁴ he 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.

John 13:31-35

³¹ When he had gone out,
Jesus said,

'Now the Son of Man
has been glorified,
and God
has been glorified
in him.

³² If God has been glorified in him,
God will also glorify him in himself
and will glorify him at once.

³³ Little children,
I am with you
only a little longer.

You will look for me;
and as I said to the Judeans
so now I say to you,
"Where I am going,
you cannot come."

³⁴ I give you a new commandment,
that you love one another.

Just as I have loved you,
you also should love one another.

³⁵ By this
everyone will know
that you are my disciples,
if you have love
for one another.'

Reading Revelation This Week

The lectionary leaps over most of the apocalypse,
To begin 3 Sundays of a beatific vision,
A new heaven and a new earth, a holy city

Is this the end of historical time, or beyond it
Fulfillment of the creation we know, or replacement
What creation waters or sea are 'no more'?

Into this new comes a holy city, New Jerusalem
Another discontinuity, gifted, not built-in continuity
A challenge to our progressive creed?

If the city is the bride – who is the husband?
If God dwells with humans, what changes?
What is gained or lost – how do we anticipate or prepare?

Shift back to your scene of the throne
Is this promise of novelty like our progress or growth?
How does this divine ecology change our environment?

One who gave a scroll with 7 seals to be opened,
Now invites a book to be written – by John, or by Lamb & all?
'It is done': the end of time/space, or beyond them?

The echoes of Alpha and Omega,
Water of life,
Suggest continuity... providential?

We get 2 more weeks of this vision, once begun
How do you approach and enter it
How is your world engaged or subsumed into it?

Reading the Gospel This Week

Judas has just left the room to betray Jesus
Next, Peter's denial will be predicted
In between, there's a lot of 'glorify' and 'love' talk

In the first 12 chapters, 'glory' is shown in 7 signs
Now, 'glory' is shown in the passion – harder, eh?
Show off the miraculous – but the tragic?

Use of Greek '*doxa*' for Hebrew '*kavod*' in Septuagint
That of God which humans can perceive
Think 'doxology', 'praise'

The 'love' this time is all '*agapē*'
'love one another' will be repeated in c.15
So: don't love the *Judaioi*? Or just not yet?

Social/cultural norms for who owes support to whom
Family, clan, ethnic group, are high stakes,
Absent our social welfare state

The early church community of John's gospel
Intends 'fictive kinship', not just emotional affection,
Mutual support in concrete terms, not legal duties

Sandwiched between Judas' betrayal, and Peter's denial,
Reflecting from 70 years later up in Syrian settings,
This is not romantic sentimentality, but setting norms

On this Sunday of Community of Faith meeting
What do we owe each other, as 'love one another'
What glorifies or reveals God in our signs or suffering?