

## B. The Promise

- i. Rev. 21:6-7
- ii. Rev. 22:17



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### LIVE THE STORY

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- What surprised you (if anything) most from this message regarding the text? Did anything encourage you? ... change your perspective?
- What do you think the size and description of the New Jerusalem (NJ) may have conveyed to the original hearers?
- What was *Jerusalem* in the Biblical story? How does that help us understand the New Jerusalem?
- What does it mean to say that the New Jerusalem's coming down out of heaven from God is not static but dynamic? Did you find the graphs helpful? Explain.
- How does the text prevent us from thinking of the New Jerusalem in geographical terms (as a place)? What is it?
- Does the glorious image of the bride, the church, surprise you? Explain.
- How does the NJ come dynamically now? What role does the church play in this dynamic? The Holy Spirit?

## The Revelation of Jesus Christ – 20: On Earth as It is in Heaven

Jerry Cisar — January 21, 2024

Text: Revelation 21, 22

### Introduction: The Surprising End

#### I. What is the New Jerusalem? (21:1-5, 9-27; 22:1-5)

##### A. The New Jerusalem vs. Babylon

- i. God's answer to Babylon
- ii. The capital of God's empire far surpasses in glory that of the earthly empire.

##### iii. A Bride vs. a Harlot

##### iv. The Lamb's reign vs. the Beast's reign

##### B. Context of chapters

- C. Before you get too stuck thinking the New Jerusalem is a place, we are informed that is the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

In a letter to her friend who was dissatisfied with the church, Flannery O'Connor wrote, "Christ was crucified on earth and the Church is crucified in time, *and* the Church is crucified by all of us, by her members most particularly because she is a Church of sinners. Christ never said the Church would be operated in a sinless or intelligent way."

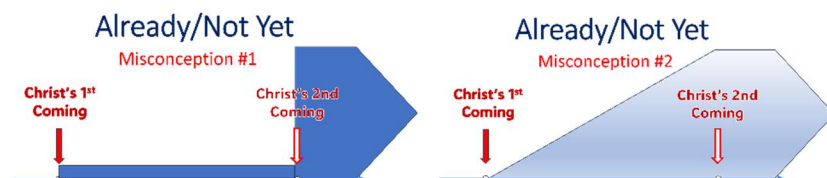
## II. When is the New Jerusalem? (21:2,4-8; 22:14-15)

### A. The Church? Really?

Flannery O'Connor: "All your dissatisfactions with the church seem to me to come from an incomplete understanding of sin.... What you seem to demand is that the church put the kingdom of heaven on earth right now and here—that the Holy Ghost be translated at once into all flesh."

#### i. When? Already/Not Yet

##### a) Some picture the state of the kingdom as *static*.



##### b) It is better understood as *dynamic*.



### B. "Coming down out of heaven from God" (5, 10). Present tense.

- i. We are to live our lives seeking, yearning for, crying out for, life **on earth as it is in heaven**.
- ii. Heb. 12:22-24
  - a) Leo Tolstoy and Theodore Dostoevsky.

*While Tolstoy savored the high call of the Gospel but didn't understand the nature of sin, Dostoevsky, understanding the nature of sin and embraced the full extent of grace. We need to learn both.*

- b) Jesus' teaching presents *absolute grace* and an *absolutely high calling to high ideals*.

## III. How Does the New Jerusalem Come?

### A. The New Jerusalem's coming is not static but dynamic.

Eugene Peterson: "While conflicts raged between good and evil, prayers went up from devout bands of first century Christians all over the Roman empire. Massive engines of persecution and scorn were ranged against them. They had neither weapons nor votes. They had little money and no prestige. Why didn't they have mental breakdowns? Why didn't they cut and run? They prayed.

"It was in order to hear those prayers that there was silence in heaven. He mixed the prayers of the Christians with incense...and combined them with fire... from the altar. Then he put it all in the censor and threw it over heaven's ramparts. The censor, plummeting through the air, landed on earth. On impact there were 'peals of thunder, voices, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake' (Rev. 8:5). The prayers which had ascended, unremarked by the journalists of the day, returned with immense force—in George's Herbert's phrase, as 'reversed thunder.' Prayer reenters history with incalculable effects. Our earth is shaken daily by it."

- i. The H.S.'s outpouring in answer to prayer is the means by which God is making everything new.
  - a) Acts 4:31
  - b) John 12:29
- ii. The rule of the King, the NJ coming down out of heaven is the answer to our prayer: "Your kingdom come."
- iii. God' gives the Spirit in answer to prayer and the Spirit recreates.