

General Church Education



Emanuel Swedenborg

Matthew 13:33; *Apocalypse Revealed* 176

Lesson 21

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 3: The Lord Is Our Lawgiver

For ages 8-9 years

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Matthew 13:33; *Apocalypse Revealed* 176

For Parents and Teachers

The Lord has used many means to teach people about the life that leads to heaven. He reveals Himself to us in the Word of the Old and New Testaments. He came again as the Spirit of Truth in the Heavenly Doctrine given through the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. In this lesson children learn a little about Swedenborg and how the Lord appeared to him and commissioned him to write the books that we know as the Writings for the New Church or the Heavenly Doctrine. Children of this age can now begin to understand that deeper knowledge is contained in the stories of the Word, although they are not ready to grasp the rational truths of doctrine and correspondences. Children are intrigued by learning that there are hidden “secrets” in the Word. Through this knowledge they can begin to understand how rich and full the Word is. This lesson is also an introduction to the next four lessons that teach about aspects of heaven.

Ideas for Children

- Heaven is more wonderful than we can imagine.
- The books of the Writings are part of the Word and are holy.
- The Lord taught deeper truths through the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

From the Writings

The Lord has revealed the spiritual meaning of the Word at this day. This doctrine is contained in part in *The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine*. And because this doctrine and no other agrees with the spiritual meaning of the Word, therefore that meaning has now for the first time been disclosed, along with a knowledge of correspondences. That meaning is also symbolized by the Lord’s appearing in the clouds of heaven with glory and power (Matthew 24:30). A cloud of heaven symbolizes the Word in its letter, the Word in its letter being relatively like a cloud in comparison to its spiritual meaning. Glory, on the other hand, symbolizes the Word in respect to its spiritual meaning, by which Divine truth is in light. And by power is meant its force. See *Arcana Coelestia* 8780

The Lord’s Word is an unfathomable mine of truths, the source of all the wisdom of the angels. The way the truths of faith reproduce can be compared with the way seeds in fields or gardens reproduce; these can be propagated to make hundreds of millions and for ever. The human mind resembles the soil in which spiritual and natural truths are planted like seeds, and they can multiply without limit. See *True Christian Religion* 350

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Words to Understand

parable—a natural story with a heavenly meaning

scientist—a person whose job is investigating the natural world

philosopher—a person who searches for wisdom and knowledge

inventor—a person who thinks up or discovers a new device or process

internal—having to do with the inner nature of a thing

doctrine—teachings

leaven—to make light or rise

pungent—having a sharp taste or smell

knead—to mix by folding over and pressing together with the hands

Emanuel Swedenborg

Emanuel Swedenborg lived in Sweden more than 300 years ago. He was a famous scientist and philosopher. Scientists study the world of nature to find out how it works. Philosophers study ideas and the way we think and know things. Swedenborg invented many machines and served his country as a member of the government. He was honored by the king and his country. We especially remember him for his service to the Lord. From the time he was a boy, Swedenborg loved to study the Word. The Lord appeared to him when he was fifty-six years old saying there was an even more important job for him to do. He willingly accepted the Lord's call even though he would have to give up things he enjoyed doing.



For the next twenty-seven years, the Lord opened Swedenborg's spiritual eyes so that he could see into the spiritual world, talk with angels and learn about heaven. As Swedenborg read the Word, the Lord showed the deeper meaning of the stories. The time had come for the Lord to reveal more about His kingdom to people. Swedenborg was commanded to write down everything in the Writings for the New Church.

The Old and New Testaments

The Lord protected and guided the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land of Canaan. He was always with them, even when they rebelled. He taught them the Ten Commandments, how to build the tabernacle and how to worship. This is recorded in the first part of the Word or the Old Testament. For a long time this was what the people needed.

Then there came a time when the Lord Himself had to come into the world to teach people in person. People had become selfish and had forgotten about the Lord. Knowledge of what was good and true was in danger of being lost, even to those who wanted to obey. So the Lord came to earth as Jesus and taught. He sent out His disciples to spread His Word to even more people and nations. The story of the life of Jesus is recorded in the second part of the Word or the New Testament.

The Second Coming

Many years later the Lord needed to come again. Although news of Jesus' life and teachings had spread all over the world, many began to doubt because of false teachings that also sprang up. It was time for people on earth to learn deeper truths and more about life in the spiritual world. So the Lord came a second time, not Himself but through the Writings which are the third part of the Word. In these books the Lord explains the secret meaning of the first two parts of His Word and teaches about the spiritual world.



Heaven

The Writings tell us that heaven is a happy place that is more wonderful than we can imagine. There, the Lord provides all the things the angels need. And the angels are happy because they want to be there, they deeply desire to serve the Lord and their neighbors. Their greatest delight comes from being useful. The Lord teaches that we must freely choose to come into heaven. No one is forced. We choose the life of heaven by the things that delight us here in our natural life. Like the Israelites we also need to know the Ten Commandments so that we can choose good over evil. And in the stories of the New Testament we learn even more of the Lord's teachings. Let's look at one of the parables of Jesus and find out how the Writings explain more of the spiritual meaning hidden within the story. **Read Matthew 13:33.**

The Parable of the Leaven

The parable of the leaven seems hard to understand. But when we know the internal sense from the Writings we see what a powerful story it is! Leaven is a substance that makes something lighter or makes it rise. One example is yeast that is added to bread dough. Yeast starts to bubble and grow when warm water and sugar are added to it. Then, as flour is added and kneaded into dough, the yeast produces tiny bubbles that make the dough rise. Without leaven bread is flat, or unleavened. With leaven, bread is soft and fluffy.

This parable tells us that the goodness of heaven can spread into every part of our lives like leaven in a loaf of bread, until it is easier and easier to obey with joy and delight. We come to love the law of the Lord. Then, heaven grows and spreads within us and we find that the Lord can make us happy. This parable also tells us that people who have been “leavened” make up the Lord’s church on earth. Their hearts are lifted up and their spirits rise. Their presence in the world is like leaven in dough. The church changes the world by bringing it closer to heaven with the efforts of each person who trusts and follows the Lord.



The Gates of Heaven

Did you know that in the spiritual world there are actually doors and roads that lead to heaven? The Writings say,

“Behold, I have set before you an open door,” means that heaven is open to those who love the truths from the Lord. They go in and the Lord opens heaven to them. The Lord alone is the God of heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18). Those who do not come to Him, cannot see the way to heaven, nor can they find the door, and if they are permitted to approach it, it is shut, and if they knock it is not opened. In the spiritual world there are actually ways which lead to heaven, and there are gates. Those who are led to heaven by the Lord, take the ways which lead there and enter through the gates.” See *Apocalypse Revealed* 176



When the Lord was in the world He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6) Yes, the Lord alone is the God of heaven and earth. He alone leads us to heaven. Each time we learn something true and do it, we become more heavenly, like the yeast filling the whole loaf of bread. The only place to find this truth is in the Word. The Lord came again through the Writings so we could learn more about eternal life. And when we think of Swedenborg, we can be grateful that he was a wonderful servant of the Lord.

Discussion Ideas

- Can you name other people in the Word whose spiritual eyes were opened ?
- What dreams do you have for the future? How might you serve the Lord?

Activity Overview | Emanuel Swedenborg

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and go forward with courage; do not be afraid nor be dismayed, for the Lord God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

Songs

Wake, Awake!

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-wake-awake-for-night-is-flying/>

The Lord Bless You and Keep You

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-lord-bless-you-and-keep-you/>

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Activity 1 | Word scramble activity
- Activity 2 | Crossword puzzle
- Picture to color—Emanuel Swedenborg Writing down the Heavenly Doctrine)

Additional Activity Ideas

- Make a yeast bread.
- If you have books of the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, look at some of them and read the titles. The titles of many older books are written in original Latin, the language Mr. Swedenborg wrote in. His first theological work, *Arcana Coelestia*, means “Secrets of Heaven”. What other books do you see? How long might it take to write all of the books? To look for Mr. Swedenborg’s books online, go to www.newchristianbiblestudy.org.
- Emanuel Swedenborg gave up his job as a scientist because the Lord called him to do something important. Think of something you might like to do when you grow up. Now think of ways that job will serve the Lord and others.
- Try writing with a quill pen, like Mr. Swedenborg.

Activity 1 | Emanuel Swedenborg Word Scramble

The words in the box below have been scrambled and written on the numbered lines. Unscramble the words and write them out correctly.

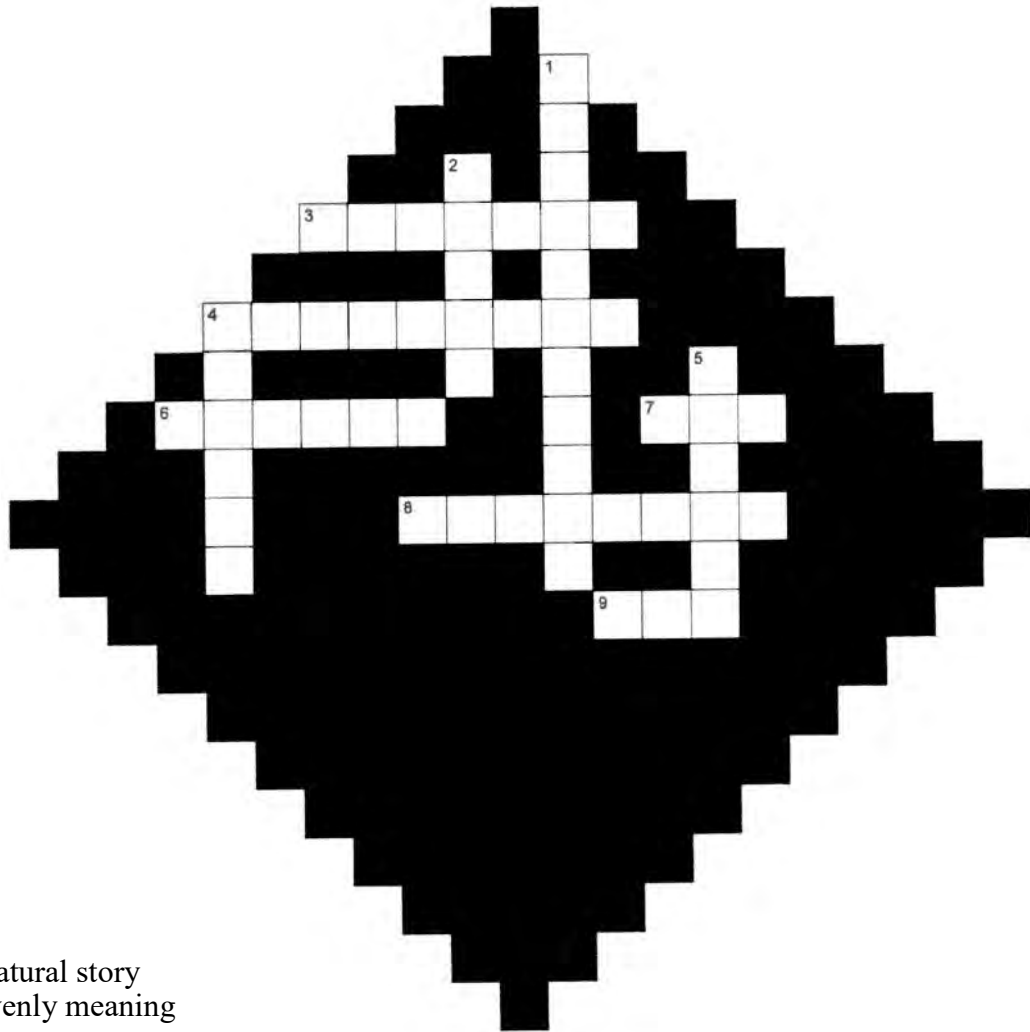
Emanuel	Swedenborg	leaven
doctrine	knead	Writings
kingdom	heaven	parable

1. pebraal _____
2. tiedcrno _____
3. daenk _____
4. leuname _____
5. eeavnh _____
6. rtnswiig _____
7. vnlac _____
8. mdnkigo _____
9. wergboensd _____

Activity 2 | Emanuel Swedenborg Crossword Puzzle

Word Bank

earth
inventor
leaven
New
Old
parable
philosopher
scientist
second
Sweden



Across

3. What is a natural story with a heavenly meaning called?
4. What is a person who investigates the natural world called?
6. What makes bread light and fluffy?
7. The second part of the Word is called the ___ Testament.
8. What is someone who thinks up or discovers a new device called?
9. The first part of the Word is called the ___ Testament.

Down

1. What is a person who searches for wisdom and knowledge called?
2. At His first coming the Lord was born on _____ as a baby.
4. In what country did Emanuel Swedenborg live?
5. The Lord came a _____ time through the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Activity 2 | Emanuel Swedenborg Crossword Puzzle Answers

