

General Church Education



# The Tree of Life

Revelation 22:1-2,14

## Lesson 35

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 3: The Lord Is Our Lawgiver

For ages 8-9 years

# The Tree of Life

## Revelation 22:1-2,14

### For Parents and Teachers

The Lord appeared to His beloved disciple John when he was old and living on the Isle of Patmos. The Romans banished John to Patmos to stop the spread of Christianity. The Lord opened John's spiritual eyes and gave him many wonderful visions. As commanded, he wrote them down and sent them to Christian churches in Asia Minor. The accounts of John's visions have become known as the book of Revelation or the Apocalypse.

The Church of the New Jerusalem, often called the New Church, is founded on the revelation of the internal sense of the Word which is the Second Coming of the Lord. The internal sense of the book of Revelation tells how the Lord will establish the New Church, the "crown" or high point of all churches. Revelation is similar in style to the Old Testament prophets, filled with strange and wonderful visions that can only be truly understood by means of correspondences, inner meanings revealed in the Heavenly Doctrine. This lesson focuses on the tree of life in the midst of the Holy City New Jerusalem. The city represents the eternal state of peace or heaven. It is the home of all who live according to the Lord's heavenly principles from love.

### Ideas for Children

- Revelation is full of prophetic visions foretelling the New Church in heaven and on earth.
- The visions tell about the spiritual world and how important the New Church is in the natural world.
- The New Church worships the Lord God Jesus Christ as revealed in the three parts of the Word.

### From the Writings

There is a church in heaven as well as on earth. The Word is also in heaven, and there are temples and ministers there. Angels were once people. Life in heaven is a continuation of life on earth. Angels grow in love and wisdom according to the depth of the affection of truth and good brought with them from the world. The church cannot exist in heaven unless it is joined with a church on earth because heaven and the church are one, like the internal and the external with us. Our internal cannot exist unless an external is joined with it, for an internal without an external is like a house without a foundation. So there must be a church in the world where the Word and the Lord are known. See *Apocalypse Revealed* 533

Revelation is written in a style that is similar to the prophetic books of the Old Testament. Every phrase has a spiritual meaning that cannot be seen in the literal sense. This is because the entire spiritual sense of the Word deals with the spiritual world, that is, the state of the church both in heaven and on earth. This is why the Word is spiritual and Divine. See *Last Judgment* 40

# The Tree of Life

## Revelation 22:1-2, 14

### Words to Understand

**proceed**—to go forward or onward

**yield**—to produce or give forth

### A Special Tree

Picture a tree in your mind. Think about the strong tree trunk pushing up from the ground. Think about the branches spreading high and wide. Picture the leaves and the flowers, and finally the beautiful fruit. Our story is about a wonderful tree, one that does not grow in this world. It bears twelve different kinds of fruit, a different one each month. Those who eat of this fruit become filled with happiness and wisdom from the Lord. This tree was seen in a vision given to John, one of the Lord's disciples.

### Revelation to John

When the disciple John was old and living the island of Patmos, the Lord opened his spiritual eyes and showed him many wonderful visions. John had been sent to this island by the Romans to try to keep him from spreading the news about the Lord's life on earth. One day the Lord appeared to John and told him to write the visions he saw in a book. This is what we know as the book of Revelation. It is found at the end of the New Testament. It is filled with prophecies about the New Church.

### Holy City New Jerusalem



Today we will read part of one of John's visions. It describes something inside the Holy City New Jerusalem. John saw this city coming down from God out of heaven, descending to earth. The Holy City was incredibly beautiful with golden streets, high crystal walls, foundations of precious stones and gates of pearl. There appeared a wonderful light coming from the city, having the glory of God. Perhaps you have seen pictures created from this description.

The Holy City New Jerusalem is a prophecy of the New Church that began in heaven and is now growing on the earth. The whole reason for this church is to help people make wise decisions in their lives so that they can be truly blessed by the Lord. The New Church, whose full name is the Church of the New Jerusalem, takes its name from the city in this vision. There is something very amazing that was inside this Holy City. **Read Revelation 22:1-2, 14.**

A pure river of water of life was coming from the throne of God. Did you notice where the tree of life was? It was in the middle of the street and on either side of the river.



At the beginning of creation the tree of life was in the center of the Garden of Eden. Now the same tree in the middle of the Holy City. It is at the beginning and end of the Scriptures because it stands for the heavenly idea that everything good comes from the Lord. It is important that we keep this heavenly idea in the center of our minds, just as this tree was in the center of the garden of Eden and the Holy City.

### **Everything Good Is from the Lord**

In the story of creation the Lord created everything and said that it was good. Yes, our lives, our bodies, our families, and all the trees, plants, animals—everything good comes from the Lord. There is something else good that also comes from the Lord: our good thoughts and good desires to be useful and helpful to others.

You might say that the tree of life is really the Lord. When the Lord was in the world He said a similar thing only then He called Himself a vine that had branches. He taught, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

### **Trees Describe People**

People are like trees. A fruitful tree pictures a good person who does useful things for others. A tree that does not bear fruit pictures a person who is not useful. Beautiful trees in the Word picture people who are loving and wise from the Lord. People who do not believe that all good comes from the Lord think good things are their own, and that they can do whatever they want with them. This

thinking leads to unhappiness. The Lord gives us freedom to choose which kind of tree to be.

### Heavenly Life

The city of Jerusalem means “place of peace.” This golden city is where we will find the peace of heaven. All who become the Lord’s disciples and live by His teachings will find a home there. The Lord promises this happy and peaceful life to everyone and you can start choosing it now. One way to choose heaven is to practice thinking kind thoughts about others and acting thoughtfully to other people. When you find yourself thinking or doing something unkind you can stop and remember that the Lord will help you love your neighbor, if you ask Him.

It takes practice, but this knowledge can live in the center of your life, just as the tree of life was in the center of the Holy City. It gets easier and easier the more you practice. The Lord spoke to John earlier in Revelation saying, “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7).



### Healing Leaves

John also noticed leaves on the tree. The leaves were for healing. The Lord teaches that the leaves are like truths that heal unhappiness caused by anger, fear, and greed. Truths from the Word bring good thoughts to help us conquer spirits that bring evil and destructive ideas, so is important to read the Word daily. The more truths we have in our minds, the more we can be “healed” by the Lord’s power. His power helps us use the commandments to bring peace into our lives in this world and in the world to come. “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

## Discussion Ideas

- Discuss teachings that make the New Church *new*, such as the Lord is One in essence and person, life after death, eternal marriage, spiritual freedom, etc.
- The Lord teaches that “love has power through wisdom” (TCR 748:2). Discuss the value of becoming wise.

# Activity Overview | The Tree of Life

## Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Revelation 22:1, 2

## Songs

*Lord, for Countless Gifts We Thank Thee*

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-lord-for-countless-gifts-we-thank-thee/>

*New Hope of Every Nation*

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-new-hope-of-every-nation/>

*Peace Be to This Congregation*

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-peace-be-to-this-congregation/>

*The Lord God Jesus Christ Reigns!*

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-lord-god-jesus-christ-reigns/>

## Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Activity 1 | Holy City Diorama
- Activity 2 | Tree of Life Reading Chart
- Picture to Color—Tree of Life (Revelation 22)

## Additional Activity Ideas

- One of the reasons trees are like people is that a fruitful tree is like a useful person. In what other ways are trees like people?
- Visit a science museum. Look at precious stones, like those found in the holy city.
- Create a picture of a tree by making leaf rubbings.

## Activity 1 | Holy City Diorama

Create a diorama of the holy city, New Jerusalem.

### Materials Needed

crayons, water colors, or colored pencils (including gold); cotton balls; gold foil paper; sharp pointed scissors; glue, tape, or stapler

*Optional:* clear drinking glass or bowl to set the city on; green or blue fabric (or paper) to use as a backdrop; blue ribbon to create the river; pipe cleaners and tissue paper to create the tree

### Directions

1. Paint or color foundation and step at gate. Use the chart to show you which color to use for each gate. Outline the gate and the keystone in same color. Color the windows light blue and the turrets yellow or gold.

Tribe	Stone	Color
Gad	Jacinth	Violet
Simeon	Topaz	Golden yellow
Reuben	Sardius	Ruby red
Judah	Emerald	Bright green
Issachar	Amethyst	Deep purple
Zebulun	Beryl	Greenish yellow
Naphtali	Chrysophrasus	Blue-green
Asher	Chalcedony	Turquoise blue or light purple
Dan	Sapphire	Dark blue
Benjamin	Jasper	Gleaming white
Manasseh	Chrysolite	Yellow
Ephraim	Sardonyx	Red orange (or bands of red and white)

2. Look at the cutting directions on the project page.
3. Using sharp pointed scissors, cut the holy city sections apart in the center.
4. Cut around the bottoms of each section being careful not to cut off the clouds or the tabs at the sides.
5. Cut the bottoms and tops of the gates of the city, and slit the center of each gate so the gates can be folded back open. (“And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day....”)
6. Fold each section of the city in half on the dashed fold line.
7. Fold back the tabs. Glue, tape or staple the tabs together *inside* the holy city.
8. Fold the clouds outwards at the base of the city gates so the city stands securely.
9. Fluff out the cotton balls. Place or glue the cotton clouds underneath the cloud tabs.

10. *Optional:* set the holy city model on a square of gold paper. Place a green or blue

cloth or paper on a flat surface to serve as a backdrop. Place a clear glass or bowl upside down near the backdrop and put the city on top of it.

11. Color and cut out John. Create a stand for John by taping or stapling a thin strip of paper on the back at the base. Stand John below the holy city, as if he is watching it coming down from heaven.
12. Color and cut out the throne of God. Fold in half on the center line and place in the middle of the city.
13. *Optional:* Complete the city more fully by adding the river, and the tree of life. Place a blue ribbon under (coming from) the throne for the river. Make a tree out of pipe cleaners and tissue paper *or* stand a small branch in modeling clay, and attach green paper leaves and twelve fruits.





## Activity 2 | Tree of Life Reading Chart

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:14)

The Lord gave the Word so people can learn about Him and His commandments. When we obey the commandments, the Lord can give us the happiness of heavenly life. The first step is to read the Word to find out what the Lord wants for us.

### Directions

1. Cut out the reading chart on the next page and put it in a place that will help you to remember to read the Lord's Word.
2. Find a good time to read the Word each day, such as first thing in the morning, at a meal time, or at bed time.
3. Color one of the leaves of the tree with a marker or colored pencil each time you read from the Word.
4. When you have read the Word 90 times, all the leaves of the tree will be colored in.
5. Try setting a goals such as how soon you would like to complete the chart, how many verses you hope to read each time, or how often you want to read. See your progress as the chart is completed.



