

General Church Education



# The Coming of the New Church

Revelation 1:17-19; 12:4, 5, 10-12, 18, 19

*True Christian Religion* 779, 791

## Lesson 31

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 6: The Lord Is Our Prophet

For ages 11-12 years

## The Coming of the New Church

Revelation 1:17-19; 12:4, 5, 10-12, 18, 19; *True Christian Religion* 779, 791

### Teacher Background

After the Lord died many people expected that He would come again quite quickly. Yet the Lord would not come again in person or swiftly, but revealed Himself when people were prepared for a new revelation. Emanuel Swedenborg, an experienced scientist, was well prepared to receive the new revelation as the Writings for the New Church. As he neared the end of his task Swedenborg saw the twelve disciples being sent out into the spiritual world to spread the good news that the Lord had come again. This started the New Church.

John's visions in the Book of Revelation foretell the coming of the New Church. For example, the woman clothed with the sun symbolizes this church, and her child, its doctrine. The Lord gave another picture of the church and its teachings through the vision of the holy city New Jerusalem with its streets paved with gold.

### Focus Points

- The Lord made His Second Coming by revealing the truths for the New Church.
- Emanuel Swedenborg was prepared by the Lord to receive its doctrine.
- The new revelation gives us a new and clearer picture of the Lord.

### Readings from the Writings

“The Lord's second coming, is not in person, but in the Word, which is from Him and which He is.” *True Christian Religion* 776

“The whole of Revelation from beginning to end prophesies the Lord's second coming, His conquest of the hells, the creation of a new heaven of angels and then the establishment of a new church on earth. All these things were there foretold, but they have not been revealed before the present time.” *True Christian Religion* 116.4

This, the Lord's second coming, is taking place by means of a man, to whom He has shown Himself in person, and whom He has filled with His spirit, so that he may teach the doctrines of the new church which come from the Lord through the Word.... I bear true witness that the Lord has shown Himself in the presence of me, His servant, and sent me to perform this function. After this He opened the sight of my spirit, thus admitting me to the spiritual world, and allowing me to see the heavens and the hells, and also to talk with angels and spirits.... From the first day of my calling, I have not received any instruction concerning the doctrines of that church from any angel, but only from the Lord, while I was reading the Word. *True Christian Religion* 779.

## Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following activity choices:

### Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“The Lord's second coming, is not in person, but in the Word.” (*True Christian Religion* 776)

### Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

The Coming of the New Church Questions

Use a sentence or two to answer the questions.

Prophecies of the New Church

Draw a line from each prophecy to the picture illustrating it, then answer the questions.

### Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

The Child Protected in Heaven

Analyze a drawing by Robert G. Glenn and answer questions, such as “Why did the Lord protect the woman’s child?” Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-the-child-protected-in-heaven-revelation-12.pdf>

Holy City Diorama

Print a model on stiff paper. Then color, cut out and assemble the model to use as a diorama. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-holy-city-diorama-revelation-21.pdf>.

## The Coming of the New Church

**Revelation 1:17-19; 12:4, 5, 10-12 18, 19; *True Christian Religion* 779, 791**

### Introduction

Near the end of His life on earth, the Lord had told the disciples that He would come again. The disciples thought this meant that the Lord would come in person. In fact, the disciples and other people expected the Lord to come quickly. Instead, He made His second coming through a new revelation which opened the inner, spiritual meaning of the Old and New Testaments so that people could see the Lord's power and great glory. But this couldn't happen until people were ready to receive these ideas.

### Prophecies Prepare the Way

The Lord prepared the way for His second coming through the prophecies of His disciple John in the Book of Revelation. He opened John's spiritual eyes and told him:

“Write the things which you have seen ... and the things which will take place after this” (Revelation 1:17-19).

John saw many wonderful things in the spiritual world that are prophecies of the New Church. He wrote about them in the book of Revelation. We will look at two of them: the vision of the woman clothed with the sun and a vision of the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending from the Lord.

### The Woman Clothed with the Sun

One of the most dramatic visions was of a woman clothed with the sun with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was ready to give birth to a baby, but a fiery red dragon threatened the woman and her unborn child.



The Woman Clothed with the Sun

“The dragon stood ready before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. And she bore a male Child.... And her Child was caught up to God and to His throne” (Revelation 12:4, 5).

God protected the woman and her child. He lifted the child to safety and sent Michael and his angels to fight the dragon. The woman symbolizes the New Church. Her child stands for the teachings of this church. The dragon

stands for people who would reject these new teachings, just as some people did not accept the Lord when He came into the world.

### **The Holy City New Jerusalem**

In another vision, John saw a city of gold coming down from God out of heaven:

[An angel showed John] the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.... Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates.... And the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones (see Revelation 21:10-12, 18, 19).



This holy city pictures the beautiful teachings of the New Church. However, it would be hundreds of years before this prophecy could be fulfilled and the new revelation given because people needed to be prepared to receive it.

### **New Freedom and Interest in Learning**

The Lord gave the revelation for the New Church when people had greater religious freedom than ever before. By then, the printing press had been invented and the Bible was published in many languages. There was also greater freedom to publish books that presented new ideas. Many were learning all that they could to understand the world. One of these people was Emanuel Swedenborg.

### **Emanuel Swedenborg**

The Lord called Emanuel Swedenborg to write the revelation that is the Lord's second coming. Swedenborg prayed to the Lord and read the Word from the time he was young. He had an excellent education in religion, science, Latin, and the other subjects that young scholars learned at the time. After finishing his studies at the University of Uppsala he continued his education by touring Europe. He sketched plans for fourteen inventions, including a flying machine, a submarine, canal locks, and a machine gun. Back home in Sweden, Emanuel Swedenborg helped improve the way valuable resources were mined, and he served in the government in the House of Nobles. He was interested in philosophy and thought deeply about religion. He was well-respected for all that he accomplished.

When Swedenborg was 56 years old, the Lord appeared to him and told him to think more about spiritual things. He began studying the Word with great care. He wrote: "Lord Jesus Christ, lead me to and on the way on which You will that I shall walk." This showed that he was ready to serve the Lord however he could.

## Lesson 31 • The Coming of the New Church

### The Lord Calls Swedenborg

In 1745 the Lord called Swedenborg to serve as revelator. He opened Swedenborg's spiritual eyes so that he could see into the spiritual world. He stated:

the Lord manifested Himself before me, His Servant, and sent me to perform this use. Afterward, He opened the eyes of my spirit and introduced me into the spiritual world and granted me to see the heavens and the hells, and to talk with angels and spirits (see *True Christian Religion* 779).

After this Swedenborg focused on writing the new revelation. The Lord told him what to write but he also explored the spiritual world. This helped him understand what the Lord was teaching him. He carefully recorded what he saw and heard.

Altogether, the Lord led Swedenborg to write and publish 18 theological works. These are the Writings for the New Church. They tell the deeper meaning of the Old and New Testaments and reveal the life after death and other important topics.

### The Beginning of the New Church

Swedenborg's final book, *True Christian Religion*, explains key teachings of the New Church. When Swedenborg finished writing it the Lord called together His twelve disciples.

“The next day He sent them all forth throughout the whole spiritual world to preach the Gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, and His kingdom shall be for ever and ever.... This took place on the nineteenth day of June, 1770.” (*True Christian Religion* 791)

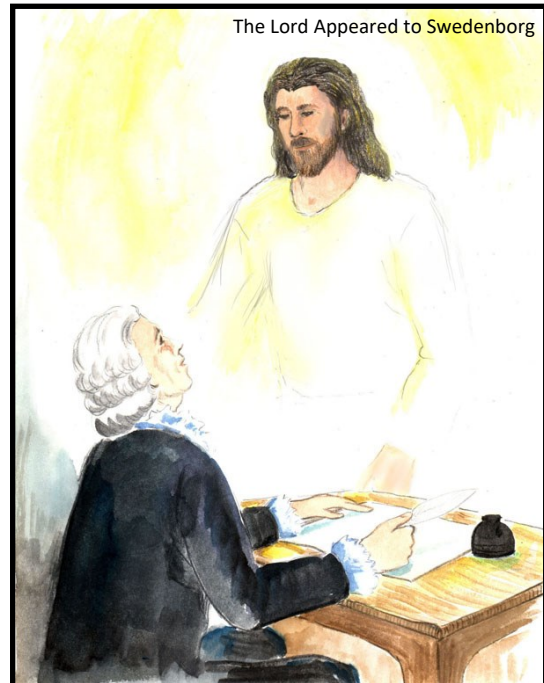
This is why we celebrate the Nineteenth of June. When Swedenborg published the book, the Lord commanded him sign it, “Emanuel Swedenborg, Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ” .

### The Second Coming of the Lord

People thought the Lord would make His second coming in person, however He came by means of a new revelation.

The Lord's second coming is taking place by means of a man, to whom He has shown Himself in person, and whom He has filled with His spirit, so that he may teach the doctrines of the New Church which come from the Lord by means of the Word (see *True Christian Religion* 779).

The teachings of the New Church are from the Lord alone. As we read the Word we can form a clearer idea of the Lord Jesus Christ. We won't see Him here on earth, but we can see and follow Him by receiving these truths into our lives.



## Activity Overview

### Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“The Word is from the Lord, about the Lord, and is the Lord.” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 200)

### Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Choose one or two.

The Coming of the New Church Questions

Use a sentence or two to answer the questions.

Prophecies of the New Church

Draw a line from each prophecy to the picture illustrating it, then answer the questions.



## **The Coming of the New Church Questions**

Revelation 12, 19, 21

Use a sentence or two to answer the questions.

1. Who saw and wrote about visions that were prophecies of the New Church?
2. What does the woman clothed with the sun symbolize?
3. What does the red dragon stand for?
4. What does the holy city New Jerusalem picture?
5. Which two developments in Europe helped prepare for the New Church?
6. Why was Emanuel Swedenborg well prepared to serve the Lord as a revelator for the New Church? In other words, why do you think the Lord called him instead of someone else?
7. What did the Lord command Swedenborg to write at the front of True Christian Religion?
8. Why do we celebrate the birthday of the New Church on June 19<sup>th</sup>?



## Prophecies of the New Church

Draw a line from each prophecy to the picture illustrating it, then answer the questions.

### Words of the Prophecy

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.... And she bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and to His throne (Revelation 12:1,5).

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon.... And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born (Revelation 12:3-4).

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True...and His name is called The Word of God (Revelation 19:11,13).

I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2).

### Pictorial Representation



### Questions

Which of these visions would be the most frightening to see? Which of these prophecies is your favorite? Why?