



Life Continues After Death

Lesson Overview

1. Watch Video

Watch *What the Afterlife Is Like* at bitly.com/AfterlifeLike (1min 43sec).

2. Discuss

What picture did this paint of the afterlife?

3. Read

Life after death

4. Discuss

How does knowing about life after death change the way you live?

New Church Concept During Resurrection

The highest or celestial angels take the greatest care to shield the awakening person from any concept that does not partake of love. Then they tell the individual that he or she is a spirit and they do everything for the newly arrived spirit that they could wish for in that state. They teach the person about the realities of the other life. See *Heaven and Hell* 450

FaithBuilder 2 | Lesson 6 | Eternal Life

Video

Watch *What the Afterlife Is Like* (1min 43sec) online at bitly.com/AfterlifeLike. (Enter bitly link in the web browser at the top of your screen.)

Discuss

1. What evidence did the speaker give for Swedenborg's claims about what the afterlife is like? (Swedenborg visited the afterlife for 29 years and reported what he saw there.)
2. Which of the "superpowers" people have in the afterlife appeal to you most? New colors? Communicating your thoughts directly to people? Being able to spontaneously display pictures?
3. Why do some people look ugly in the afterlife, while others look beautiful?

Read

The Old and New Testaments give clues about the life after death. The book of Genesis tells the story of three generations of one family—the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When they die, the Word says they are “gathered to their fathers.” The ancient people understood that they would see their family again after they died. In the New Testament, Jesus refers to this, and says that many will sit down with the patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 8:10-11).

Both the Old and New Testaments say that the process of resurrection happens about the third day after death. The prophet Hosea wrote:

After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up (Hosea 6:2).

And Jesus taught His disciples that:

[He] must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again (Mark 8:31).

So the Old and New Testaments teach that when people die they are raised up into the spiritual world within about three days. And there, they will be reunited with family and friends. The Writings for the New Church go further, and tell us how people make the transition from this world into the next.

New Church Concept Spiritual Body

When a person passes from the natural world into the spiritual, he takes with him everything that belongs to him as a person, except his earthly body. He is in a body as he was in the world that seems no different to him. But his body is then spiritual. He thinks that he is in the same body that he had in the world and does not know that he has died.

A person's spirit enjoys every sense that he enjoyed in the world. He sees, hears and speaks as before. He smells, tastes, and when touched, he feels the touch as before. He also longs, desires, thinks, reflects, loves, and wills as before.

When a person passes from one life into the other, or from one world into the other it is as if he moves from one place into another. He also remembers everything that he has heard, seen, read, learned, or thought, in the world. See *Heaven and Hell* 461

There is a great difference between a person's life in the spiritual world and his life in the natural world in regard to his senses and affections. Those in heaven have more exquisite senses, that is, a keener sight and hearing, and also think more wisely than when they were in the world.... This difference in respect to outward senses is like the difference between clear sunshine and dark cloudiness in the world. See *Heaven and Hell* 462

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772)

Occasionally people have dreams or near-death experiences that help them feel close to the spiritual world. Sometimes these experiences completely change their lives and give them a renewed sense of purpose and conviction that life continues after death. In the history of the human race though, only one person has fully experienced the process of death and resurrection without actually dying. This person is Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish scientist, philosopher and theologian. Later in his life (at age 55), the Lord opened Swedenborg's mind to the world of the spirit so that he could learn about life after death, for the purpose of teaching the world about the process of resurrection or resuscitation. He experienced the process of dying and wrote down what happened.

The Resurrection Process

After a person's body functions cease the Lord gently resuscitates him or her and the person's life continues in a body made from spiritual substance (*Heaven and Hell* 445).

After the [spirit is separated from the body], the spirit continues in the body for a short time, but only until the heart's action has completely ceased.... As soon as this motion ceases the person is resuscitated. This is done by the Lord alone. Resuscitation means the drawing forth of the spirit from the body and its introduction into the spiritual world. This is commonly called the resurrection. *Heaven and Hell* 447

As a person transitions into the new world the Lord sends angels from the highest heaven to care for him or her. These angels love the Lord above all else, and tenderly care for people during the process of dying and reawakening. They look into the person's face and silently share their thoughts. When the person responds by receiving their thoughts, the celestial angels know that the person's spirit is ready to be withdrawn from the physical body.

The angels first try to find out what the spirit's thoughts are. The thoughts of those who are dying are usually about eternal life. They want to keep the spirit's mind in those thoughts. *Heaven and Hell* 249

The celestial angels do not leave until the spirit of a person resists their presence. Then spiritual angels come to take their place. These angels appear to roll off a covering from the left eye towards the nose which opens the eye and allows the person, who is now a spirit, to sense a dim heavenly light—like the kind of light we see through our eyelids when we first wake up. Then the person feels like something is being gently rolled off the face, and then he or she passes from natural thought into spiritual thought.

Discuss

1. How could having this idea of eternal life affect the life-choices a person makes?
2. If you did not know about life in heaven, what might you do differently?
3. What if you thought that getting into heaven depended on what church you joined rather than having to do with your behavior and attitudes?

Use the T Chart below to explore the potential impact that knowing about eternal life has on your attitudes toward marriage, education, what constitutes the “good life,” etc.

Concept of Eternal Life

No Concept of Eternal Life

--	--