

GLENVIEW NEW CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM

Primary Lessons: Phase 2, Lesson 35

Conclusion: Sending Out the Twelve Disciples (Revelation 22:8-21; TCR 791)

I. Underlying Ideas for the Teacher

- A. The holy city, New Jerusalem, is a picture of the New Church as it is in heaven. This city is descending to earth as fast as men and women on earth are willing to receive the truth and obey it.
- B. The book of Revelation is a prophetic vision of what would happen in the first Christian Church— of how it would gradually become perverted, as all the churches before it had been, through the selfishness and worldliness of its members, and of how it would finally be judged and brought to its end and a new church raised up to take its place.
- C. That four churches...have existed on this earth; and as all churches depend on the knowledge and acknowledgment of one God with whom the man of the church may be conjoined, and as all the four churches have not been in that truth, it follows that a church is to succeed the four which will be in the knowledge and acknowledgment of one God.... (TCR 786)
- D. This New Church is the crown of all the churches, which have hitherto existed on earth because it will worship one visible God in who is the invisible, like the soul in the body.... For all conjunction of God with man must also be reciprocally of man with God, and there cannot be this reciprocation on the other part except with a visible God. (TCR 787)

II. Story Circle

A. Introduction

- 1. The last two lessons came from the last two chapters of Revelation. They were about the holy city, New Jerusalem, and what it looked like, inside and out.
- 2. Can you remember what the holy city is a spiritual picture of? (The New Church)
- 3. Today we'll read the last part of the last chapter of Revelation. This is the end of John's vision, the end of his seeing into the other world with his spiritual eyes; and it is the end of the Word.
- 4. The angel who showed John the holy city is in today's reading. Sometimes the angel speaks for the Lord, as if he was the Lord, and sometimes he speaks as just an angel. See if you can tell which is which while I'm reading.

B. Tell/Read the Story

- 1. Read Rev. 22:8-21

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C. Ideas to Discuss

1. Who talked with John? (The angel)
2. Why would he not let John worship him? (We should worship only the Lord. Angels aren't divine; they are just people who used to live in this world and who now live in heaven.)
3. Verse 11 says, "He who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still."
 - a. This lets us know that if we've chosen to be selfish and evil, filthy, while we're in this world, then we will still be that way after we die; and if we've chosen to do what's right while we're in this world, then we'll still love to be good after we die.
 - b. Once you arrive in the other world, can you change from loving evil to loving good, or the other way around? No. Life in this world is like planting a seed in the ground. Life in the other world is like having that seed grow into a tree with blossoms and fruit. If we plant bad seeds here, we will grow like a bad tree with rotten fruit after we die; but if we plant good seeds here, we will become like good trees with lovely fruit after we die.
4. Who "may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city"? (Those who do the Lord's commandments)
5. Does everyone enter the city? (No, "whoever loves and practices a lie"— anyone who loves evil and disobeys the Lord's commandments— is outside the city, that is, in hell.)
6. In verse 17, the Lord invites everyone to enter the holy city. "And the spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."
 - a. Some people refuse the Lord's invitation and won't enter the holy city. Can you think why? (Some people really like to do what is wrong— sometimes we do, too— and that means they like ugly, bad things better than beautiful good ones. They don't WANT to live in the holy city.)
7. What two things are we warned not to do to the Word? (v. 18-19: not to add to it; not to take away from it)
 - a. To add to and take away from the Word means to think our own ideas are better than the Lord's about what is right and wrong, and about what will bring us happiness.

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8. Twice in today's reading the Lord says, "I am coming quickly." What "coming" do you think He is talking about? (His Second Coming!)
 - a. The Lord is letting John know that He will come a second time, and that when He does He will establish the New Church. So John wrote these prophecies in the book of Revelation.
 - b. And hundreds and hundreds of years after John wrote down the book of Revelation, the Lord did make His Second Coming! Do you remember how? (He wasn't born into the world again; instead He told the inner meaning of the Word to Emanuel Swedenborg, and Swedenborg wrote the inner meaning in books which we call what? (The Writings) The Writings are the Second Coming of the Lord!
 - c. As Swedenborg wrote down and published [had printed] the books of the Writings, the Lord could use them to establish His New Church. This New Church is very special, so special that Swedenborg called it "the crown of all the churches" that had ever existed on earth.
 - d. The New Church is the crown of all the churches because the people of the New Church can know and understand more about the Lord than has ever been possible before. It's important to know and understand the Lord so we can love Him; after all, you can't love someone you don't know, can you?
 - e. Everyone who has ever lived needs to know that the Lord is the one God of heaven and earth. How could the Lord make sure EVERYONE would learn that He is God?
 - f. At the end of the last book of the Writings, the book called TRUE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, Swedenborg wrote this (and some of you may be able to say this along with me):

After this work was finished the Lord called together His twelve disciples who followed Him in the world; and the next day He sent them all forth into the whole spiritual world to teach the Gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns, whose kingdom shall be for ages of ages.... This took place on the 19th day of June, in the year 1770. (TCR 791)

III. Enrichment Activities

A. Music

1. "Jerusalem, the golden," Hymnal #186
2. "New hope of every nation," Hymnal #179
3. "And I saw a new heaven," LORI'S SONGS I, Side 2, 5th song.
4. "The Lord God Jesus Christ doth reign," Liturgy, p. 506

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B. Activities

C. Project: THE CROWN OF ALL THE CHURCHES

1. What an exciting job to be one of the twelve disciples whom the Lord sent out, to be able to go and tell all the people in the whole spiritual world such important news: that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns! The disciples would be helping to build the New Church, the church that is called "the crown of all the churches."
2. Today we're going to make a crown, a beautiful one that will remind us when we look at it that the New Church is the crown of all the churches that have ever existed on the earth.

IV. Teaching Aids

- A. Pictures of the Lord sending out His twelve disciples.
- B. Picture of Swedenborg (at his desk, writing "the Second Coming of the Lord").

V. Further Reading for the Teacher

- A. Dole's *Bible Study Notes*, Vol. 6, "The End of John's Vision" (Rev. 22:8-21), pp. 333-346.
- B. *The Sower*, Vol. VI, "The Time is at Hand" (Rev. 22), pp. 360-365.
- C. *Apocalypse Revealed*, "Chapter 22 - The Spiritual Sense," between nos. 926 and 932, the portion concerning v. 8-21 (about 2 ½ pages).
- D. *True Christian Religion* 786-791.

