

THE COLOR WHITE AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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Lessons: Revelation 19:6-14, Conjugal Love 26

Our subject is whiteness—being dressed in white, seeing bright white things, and feeling that the whiteness means something good and valuable. But let us begin by thinking about colors.

Who has not enjoyed using crayons and paints? Who has not enjoyed color in home decoration and in clothing? Who has not loved to see the colors in birds and flowers, in mountains and fields, in sunsets and in the rainbow? It is natural for people to expect and hope that there will be color in the Lord's kingdom into which they will come after death.

And they will find that it is beyond their hopes and expectations. Such bright colors. Such a variety of colors—colors that can hardly be described. Swedenborg saw rainbow gardens. He saw rainbow heavens with colors so bright that “the colors of this world cannot be compared to them” (*Arcana Coelestia* 1624). The angels have clothing of beautiful colors, as they also have garments of a lovely white.

The book of Revelation presents bright scenes to us, and we enjoy coloring drawings from this book. For it speaks of such bright things, the New Church as a city with streets of gold and foundations garnished with “all kinds of precious stones” (Revelation 21:19). And we picture the lord upon a throne that is surrounded with a rainbow (Revelation 4:3).

Unseen within the glowing white light of the sun are the colors that can become visible to us in rainbows and crystals. Knowing this we will now consider the whiteness that is from the Lord.

Certain disciples would never forget seeing the Lord with His face shining as the sun, and His garments were then shining as “white as the light” (Matthew 17:2). One of those disciples was John, who saw the things and described them in the book of Revelation.

When John turned to see the Lord (as described in the first chapter of Revelation), he saw coming from the Lord's head whiteness as of wool, or as snow. And the Lord made promises of gifts to those who were faithful. One of the gifts was a white stone (Revelation 2:17), and one of the beautiful promises for good people goes like this: “They shall walk with Me in white; for they are

worthy. He who overcomes, shall be clothed in white garments” (Revelation 3:4-5).

The highest wish for someone else or for yourself is the wish to walk with the Lord. The Lord, who is the very light of the world says, “Walk while you have the light” (John 12:35), and in the Word are beautiful sayings, such as “Let us walk in the light of the Lord” (Isaiah 2:5). “Have You not delivered my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?” (Psalm 56:13). “We will walk in the name of Jehovah” (Micah 4:5). (See *Apocalypse Revealed* 167)

Even if we should walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we can be without fear, knowing the Lord walks with us. That idea of “walking” includes all our doing and all our trying all our living. And no matter how we may be dressed, we can call to mind the thought of being dressed in white.

Think for a moment simply of your own experiences of white garments. At this time of year are there men who dress in white for graduation or a celebration? Are there white graduation dresses for girls? Will this month of June see young women dressed for their special day when they shall be as a bride adorned for her husband?

This is one of the themes or images that come to us in the book of Revelation - that of being dressed in white. In the third chapter, after the saying about walking with the Lord in white and being clothed in white raiment, there is advice to some that they should buy white raiment that they might be clothed (Revelation 3:18). In the next chapter, those gathered around the Lord’s throne are said to be dressed in white (Revelation 4:4). And in the sixth chapter, we read of the rescuing of some people, “and a white robe was given to each of them” (Revelation 6:11).

The book Revelation speaks of a great multitude of people beyond counting, people of all nations praising the Lord with palms in their hands “clothed with white robes” (Revelation 7:9). And the question is asked who are these people “arrayed in white robes. And the answer is given that through their striving in hard times they have “washed their robes and made them white” (Revelation 7:13-14).

(Did you know that the hymn, “Jerusalem the Golden,” is about the book of Revelation, and from the seventh chapter speaks of people with boughs of palm “arrayed in robes of white?”)

The fifteenth chapter speaks of seven angles “clothed in pure bright linen” (Revelation 15:6). And the nineteenth chapter that we have just had as a lesson talks particularly about those “clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (Revelation 19:14).

Notice the word “clean” is mentioned with whiteness. When a baby is baptized (and usually is dressed in white and baptized by a minister robed in white), it is said that baptism is spiritual washing. It promises that there will be in life a continual cleansing. It is important to know that no one is completely pure and clean (not even the angels), and when we talk of purity, clean and white, we should not think of it as something so high and holy that it has nothing to do with our lives. It should be known that the Lord does not look for perfect pureness in us, but He looks at our intention - what we want, what we hold up as a goal. If we love what is pure and clean, then He Himself will walk with us and He Himself will very gradually purify our loves (*Conjugal Love* 71, 146).

Think of bright whiteness as belonging to the Lord. We think of the Lord when we read of the “great white throne” (Revelation 20:11) as we do when we read of the quality of the Lamb, and the rider of the white horse. And we think of the Lord when we read, “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man” (Revelation 14:14).

Because of the shining brightness of the Lord’s truth, there is a “whiteness” in the heavens (*Apocalypse Explained* 905). The angels are glad to receive from the Lord, and inwardly they are in “that bright -white light, and so are dressed in white” (*Apocalypse Revealed* 231).

Let us today think of brightness as a sign of safety and the Lord’s protection against any fear of darkness. We would be lovers of light and not of darkness (cf. John 3:19-21). We find in the book of Revelation many, many pictures that flash upon our minds as the story is told. And behind those pictures is the Lord’s truth and goodness and His power to save. Choosing but one of those pictures of white, think of being given a white garment that you love, that makes you feel safe when you put it on. And hear this teaching about the Lord’s protection.

By Divine truth the Lord protects His own, for He surrounds them with a sphere of light, from which they have white robes; and when encompassed by this sphere they can no longer be harmed by evil spirits.... This takes place with those who are lifted into heaven by the Lord. They are then clothed with white garments, which is a sign that they are in Divine truth, and thus in safety (*Apocalypse Explained* 395:2).