

Lesson 22: THE LORD APPEARS TO SWEDENBORG

INTRODUCTION:

Emanuel Swedenborg was a good man who was called by the Lord to do a very important job. The Lord wanted to tell people much more about the spiritual world and the way to heaven, about Himself, and the deeper meaning within the Word.

Why did He choose Swedenborg for this work? He was a brilliant man who loved the Lord and had a keen interest in science, philosophy and religion. The Lord was preparing Swedenborg for this important work from the time he was a young boy.

Emanuel was the third child of his parents, Jesper and Sara Swedberg, and his name means “God with us.” Don’t you think that was an appropriate name, since later he would write things that would bring God to us in a new way? Later, the Swedberg family was made into a noble family, and then their name was changed to Swedenborg.

Emanuel’s father, Jesper, was a minister who loved the Lord and His Word. He encouraged Swedenborg to read the Word, pray to God, and think about religion.

The Lord had given Emanuel an intelligent mind. When he was eleven, he went to study at Uppsala University, which is like a college! The lessons there were given in Latin, and later Emanuel would master eight more languages! Emanuel spent several years living with his sister, Anna, and her husband, Eric Benzelius. Eric Benzelius loved science, and encouraged Emanuel in his studies.

When Swedenborg graduated, he traveled around Europe visiting many important scientists. (While on this journey, Swedenborg’s life was in danger several times! The ship ran into a sand bar, pirates came aboard, and an English boat fired guns at the ship mistaking it for a pirate ship. But Swedenborg made it safely ashore.)

Swedenborg spent many years studying all kinds of science. He was a genius, and became an expert and an inventor in many fields. But he became especially interested in one certain subject—the human body and the human brain. What he was really trying to find was the human soul. But he came to realize that he couldn’t find a person’s soul, or spirit, by studying the human body. Swedenborg would soon be called by the Lord to become a revelator.

The Lord appeared to Swedenborg several times. We are going to read about the second time. Swedenborg was still trying to understand what the Lord wanted him to do with the rest of his life on earth. It is interesting that Swedenborg was also trying to look to the Lord more fully. He was a brilliant man and it was tempting to take pride in his own intelligence and what he had accomplished. But he struggled against these thoughts and feelings and focused on the Lord being the source of all goodness and wisdom. This was an important step toward being able to serve the Lord as His humble and obedient servant. And what happened that night changed what Swedenborg did for the rest of his life in this world.

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Procedure Notes for the Teacher:

- Use the pictures and the enclosed reading to talk about how the Lord called Swedenborg.

READ:

Read the enclosed **The Lord Calls Swedenborg.**

DISCUSSION IDEAS:

1. How did the Lord first call Moses? (He appeared to Him in a burning bush.)
2. Are there any similarities with Elijah's sensing the Lord's presence? (God told Elijah to stand on the mountain before the Lord. A great wind tore into the mountains as the Lord passed by, followed by an earthquake and fire. And then Elijah heard a still small voice. See 1 Kings 19:11-12.)
3. How did the Lord call John on the island called Patmos? (Summarize John's vision of the Son of Man as described in Revelation 1:9-19, emphasizing John "hearing a loud voice as of a trumpet," "His countenance like the sun shining in its strength" and God laying His right hand on John after the apostle had fallen "as dead" at His feet.)
4. What did Elijah and John experience that is similar to what Swedenborg described?
5. What is unique about the way the Lord appeared to Swedenborg? (He saw the Lord's face and felt His love, His goodness, and His holiness.)
6. What does the certificate of health mean? (It would seem that the Lord seemed to be asking if Swedenborg was spiritually prepared to enter into the work of a revelator.)

PROJECT: Make a Poster with Pictures and Text

- Use the pictures and text to make a poster about "How the Lord Called Swedenborg."
- Color the first 4 pictures, adding rays of light when appropriate. Use the text slips that go with each picture or write a brief caption summarizing what happened.
- Optional: Have a student draw a picture of the open Word with rays of light coming from it. Or color the last picture showing Swedenborg writing.
- Optional: Finish the poster by adding the name the Lord told Swedenborg to write in the last book of the Writings, *True Christian Religion*: Emanuel Swedenborg, Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Or cut out the name given on the last page.
- Display the poster at church.

Reading
How the Lord Called Swedenborg

One night, Swedenborg woke up and heard a loud noise. It was as if many winds clashed against each other. He felt a holy presence and prayed that the Almighty Jesus Christ would make him worthy of having the Lord visit him.

Swedenborg continued to pray with his hands folded together. A hand reached out and squeezed his hands.

Then Swedenborg was sitting with the Lord God Jesus Christ, seeing Him face to face. Swedenborg was aware of His holiness but could not begin to describe what he saw. When the Lord smiled, Swedenborg was convinced that His face had been like this when He lived on earth.

God asked Swedenborg if was in good health, and he answered “Lord, Thou knowest better than I.” Then God said to him, “Well, then do” which Swedenborg understood to mean “Love me truly.”

When Swedenborg thought about his experience that night, he was sure that it was the Son of God Himself. And he prayed to receive the love of Jesus Christ.

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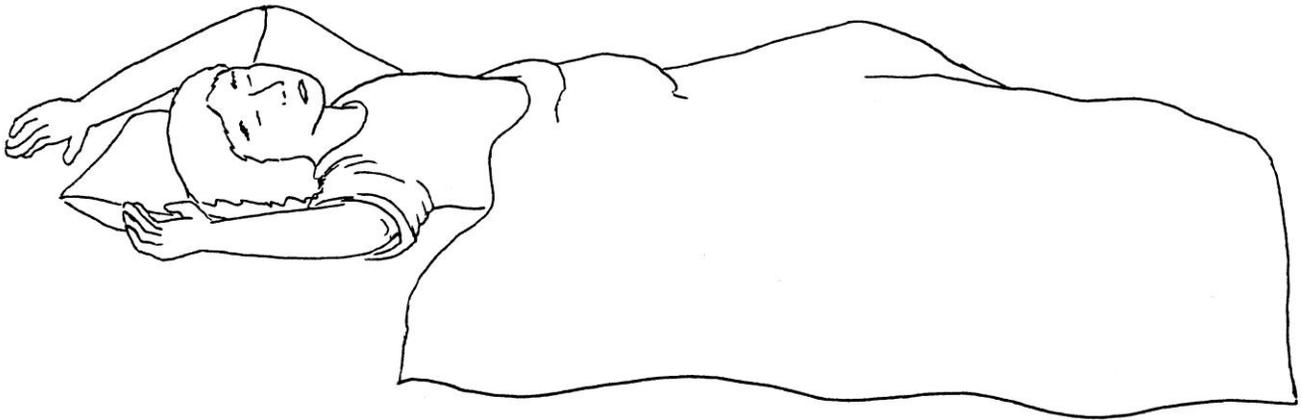
Over the next year, Swedenborg learned more about how he would serve the Lord as a revelator. The Lord told him that He had chosen Swedenborg to tell people about the spiritual meaning of the Word, and that He Himself would tell Swedenborg what to write. It was clear that the Lord wanted him to focus on spiritual things.

In November 1745, Swedenborg wrote these words: “Lord Jesus Christ, lead me to and on the way on which Thou willest that I shall walk.” This humble prayer asks the Lord to lead him and show him the way to walk with God.

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When Swedenborg published *True Christian Religion*—the last book of the Writings or Heavenly Doctrines—the Lord told him to sign his name as “Emanuel Swedenborg, Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Pictures and Text for Poster

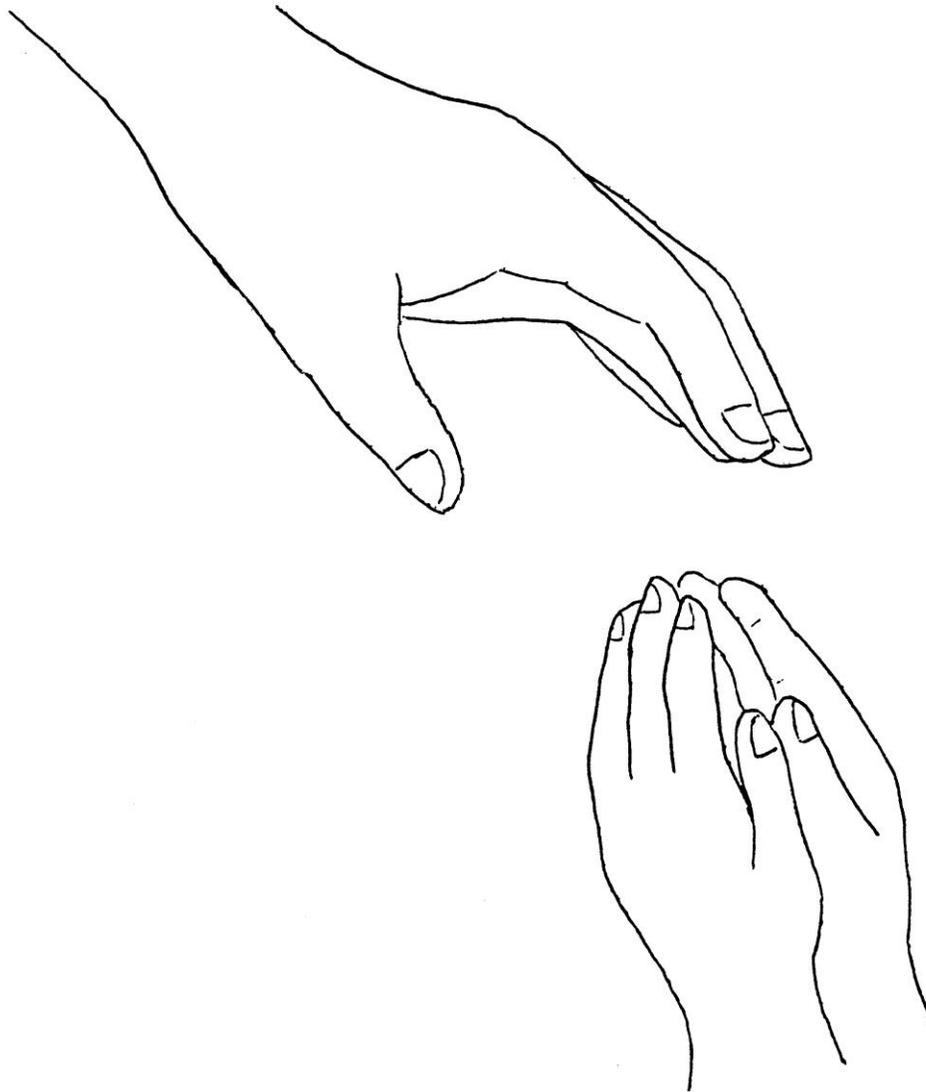


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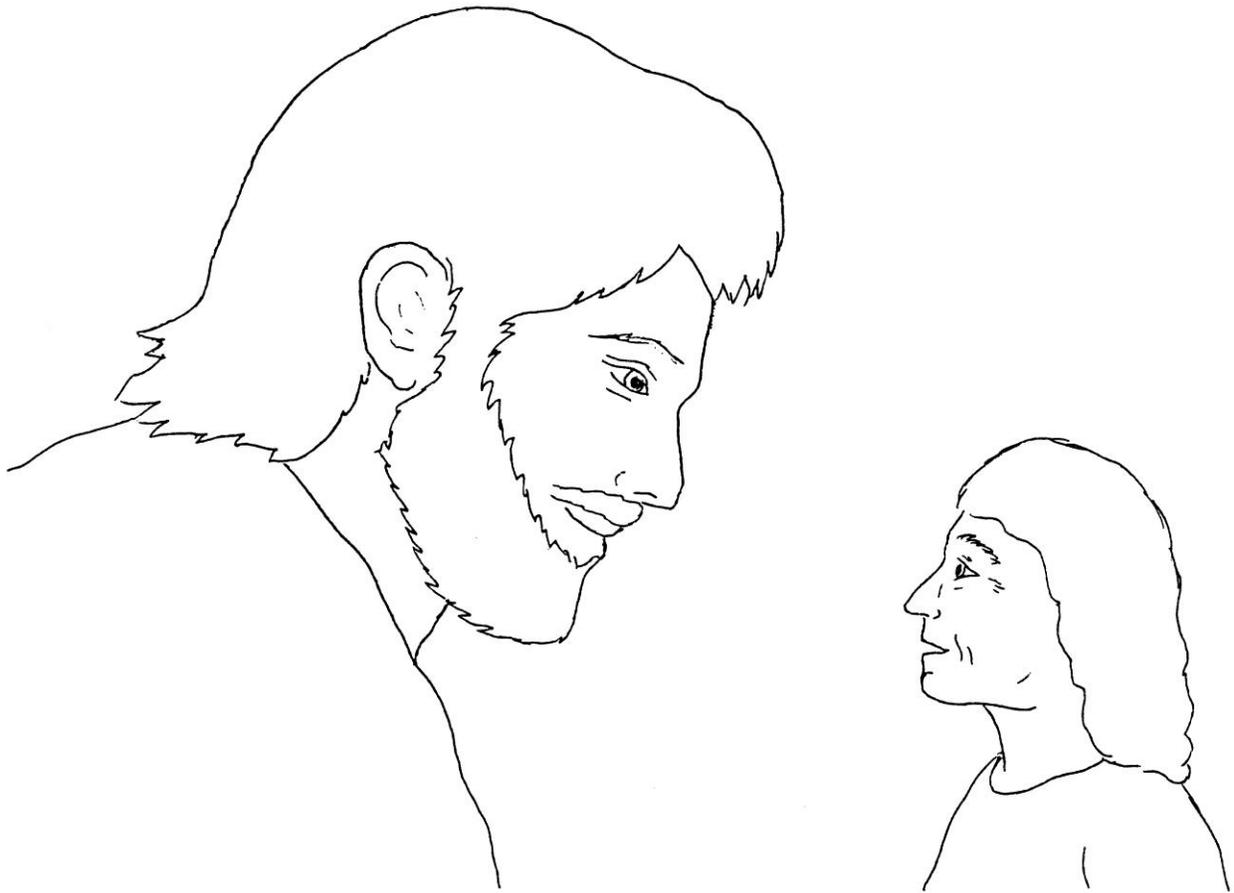


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*Emanuel Swedenborg
Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ*

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