

NEW CHURCH DAY

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Lesson: Revelation 12:1-6, 21:10-27, True Christian Religion 791.

Ever since the Lord rose on Easter morning so long ago, people who loved Him looked for Him to come again. While He was still in the world, He had told his disciples that He would come again to men. The Apostle John saw beautiful visions that were like prophecies or promises that He would come again and that He would then begin a New Church. You probably remember some of these visions. For instance, John saw a beautiful woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head. The Lord tells us that the New Church is to be like that beautiful woman clothed with the warmth of the sun shining around it.

You know that weddings are very wonderful things. There is something extra special about a bride in a wedding. She is particularly beautiful. The Lord tells us that the New Church is to be as a bride adorned or dressed up for her husband, for the New Church is the beautiful “Bride” of the Lord.

And the Lord also tells us that the New Church will be a “Holy City,” with its gates of pearl ever open to welcome people to enter in. It will be a wonderful city, shining with light like a stone most precious. You know how beautiful jewels look in a ring when light shines on them. Only the city was like a jewel so big and beautiful that we can hardly imagine it. The Lord Himself was the light in this city.

Now you know that the Lord has promised that the New Church will be most beautiful and wonderful—both a “Bride” and a “Holy City.” Do you know how the Lord made the New Church beautiful? It was by giving it new and wonderful teachings or truths that are like light shining all around it. We find these new truths given to the New Church in the Writings, which the Lord gave us through Emanuel Swedenborg. When we truly see the things that the Lord tells us then we find that they are the most beautiful things of all.

What are some of these beautiful truths that shine for the New Church? The most important is that the Lord shows Himself to us. He sent His twelve disciples throughout the whole spiritual world to tell everyone about Him. This was how He began the New Church. If we read the Word and the Writings, we can see the Lord in our minds. He is like a wonderful Heavenly Father, who watches over us, taking care of us, and always providing for us. You know that the Lord knows about everything that happens to us. Sometimes we wonder how the Lord lets things happen the way they do. But the wonderful thing is

that the Lord is not just working for us to be happy right now, the Lord is planning how He can make us happy forever and ever. The Lord knows what is really best for all of us, far better than we do. Not one thing happens that the Lord does not know about. To be able to learn about the Lord and how He takes care of us and to believe in Him is truly a wonderful and beautiful thing.

As a special thing for the New Church, the Lord took His servant Emanuel Swedenborg all over heaven, even while Swedenborg was still living here on earth. Then the Lord told Swedenborg just what to write down to tell people about how to get ready to go to heaven. The Lord tells us in the Writings given through Swedenborg many beautiful things about heaven. He explains how married people who really love each other live together after death in wonderful homes. He tells us about the jobs that people do, for everyone in heaven has a job which they love and which makes them happy.

Swedenborg saw beautiful gardens and homes there. Certainly it is wonderful that the Lord has told the New Church all about heaven.

These are just two of the wonderful things that the Lord has given the Church. But the Lord has explained that we are not in the Church by simply knowing these things, or by being born and raised in it. No one gets to heaven by just learning about the Church. Many people who know nothing about the New Church will get to heaven. No one however, really understands these beautiful teachings, or really is a member of the New Church until he tries to live by what the Lord teaches. No evil people can really enter the church; just as anything that “defileth” or “worketh abomination” could in no wise enter Into the Holy City.

If the light of truth is really going to shine in the New Church, all the members of it must love that light. We must have something of the love for truth or desire to learn meant by the woman clothed with the sun, and the bride adorned for her husband. We must have solid foundations of truth as did the Holy City. Only the Lord God can enlighten our understanding of the doctrines of the New Church, just as He alone could inspire the Writings. The New Church is truly the Crown of all the Churches, the most beautiful of all.

But this beauty comes from no man. True beauty comes from the Lord alone. The truth alone can uncover and reveal it. If we would know the beauty of the New Church, there is but one way—to enter that Holy City which corresponds to the doctrines of the New Church. These doctrines alone, Divinely inspired by the Lord, and shining with his light, can fill our hearts with a sense of beauty from the Lord.

Now the doctrines tell us that all beauty is from good or love in which there is innocence (AC 3080). When love or charity rules in man’s heart, it takes on an expression from the truth, which is like a beautiful face. Beauty radiates from

the face, shining, bathing it with warmth and light, as it were clothing it with the heat and light of the sun. That love to the Lord that makes the Church is clothed with the Sun, glorious in beauty almost beyond human comprehension. Wisdom and intelligence are given those in that love, like a crown of twelve stars. These stars are like knowledges which are guideposts to man as he navigates the darkness of trials and temptation—stars, which, as it were, lift man up to behold the infinity of His Heavenly Father.

Yet these states of love are not to remain on high, above the daily life of man. While love and wisdom dwell within man, they must also come as it were down to earth to express themselves, that we may grasp their beauty, and that we may give of our spiritual possessions to others through use. The woman is clothed with the sun, and yet the moon is under her feet. Good and truth must rest on earth. There can be no heaven without a true church on earth where it can stand. There can be no heaven within man without its expression and foundation in his life.

Yet in the beginning the Church must undergo struggles. The woman travails in birth, and she brings forth a man-child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. If the New Church is to succeed, it too must bring forth doctrine. It must labor to see the new Revelation which God has given. Travailing to teach all nations the rational truths of the Word. It must wield the Letter of the Word until it becomes as powerful as a rod of iron. No Church can grow and succeed without doctrine. It cannot succeed unless its people understand and love its teachings. We cannot progress without a continued growth in our understanding of the truths of the Heavenly Doctrines. We will never behold the beauty of the New Church—we will not be able to enter in unless we see the man-child of doctrine.

While in the beginning these beautiful teachings are protected as it were within, like the man child in heaven by the Lord, there will come a time when the truths will descend, glorious to behold as a bride adorned for her husband—a time when the balanced foursquare city of doctrine will shine for all men. A vision marvelous beyond human measure will come to man, and the Church will be established in his life on earth. First through that wonderful innocence of the woman clothed with the sun. Later by doctrines as it were snatched away into heaven, fostered tenderly and protected against attack, but finally by that Holy City of Doctrine descending from the source of all happiness and beauty, descending from God out of heaven. *Amen.*