

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST REIGNS

Unknown Author

Reading: Revelation 21:1-5

The Lord called together His twelve disciples, who had followed Him in the world; and a day later He sent them all forth throughout the spiritual world to preach the Gospel, that the Lord God Jesus Christ is king, and His kingdom shall be for ever and ever.... This happened on the nineteenth of June in the year 1770 (*True Christian Religion* 791).

The vision of the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, which John, the apostle, saw when he was an old man on the Isle of Patmos, was prophetic of the New Church which the Lord was to establish at His Second Coming.

This New Church was called the “New Jerusalem” because Jerusalem for hundreds of years had been the center of the Jewish Church. There, in Jerusalem, was the temple, and only there, at the temple, could sacrifices be made which were the central and essential things of Jewish worship. And there, at the temple, their holy religious feasts were celebrated. And so over the years, Jerusalem became not only the recognized center of the Jewish religion, but also a symbol of a church where the one and only God is acknowledged and worshiped. Since in the New Church the Lord Jesus Christ is worshiped as the one and only true God, it was prophetically represented to John as the holy city, New Jerusalem.

In his vision John saw the holy city coming down from God out of heaven. This is because all the things which make a true church—all the truths of faith and the goods of love—are not from any person, but from the Lord Himself. They are first received from the Lord by the angels of heaven; then they descend from heaven to be received by men and women here on earth.

Before he saw the holy city descending in his vision, John saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and earth had passed away. He also heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5). What is meant by this is not a new sky or a new world. The sky we have now is the same sky that there was when the Lord lived on earth, and the world in which we now live is the same world. The meaning is that not long after the Lord’s life on earth His teachings began to be misunderstood, more and more.

To begin with, these misunderstandings were not made on purpose. They were the kind of misunderstandings that children often have of the teachings of the Word. Take, for instance, the Golden Rule, which is a law of charity. This rule says, “Do unto others as you want them to do unto you.” Very often children twist this around and think it means that you have to do to others what they do to you. So that if somebody hits you, you must hit them back. When you think it means this, the Golden Rule is no longer a law of charity, but is turned into a law of revenge. You then no longer see the truth that the Lord meant when He gave the Golden Rule, but a falsity you

yourself invented. By misunderstandings of this kind, many of the true teaching of the Lord became hidden and falsified.

Besides misunderstandings of this kind, the teachings of the Lord in the Word also became falsified by people who had no love for truth, but made use of the Word and of the Church to gain power for themselves. For these two reasons—misunderstandings and purposeful falsifications—less and less of the truth of the Word could be seen, and, in the course of time, scarcely any truth could be seen in the Word—even by those who loved truth and eagerly sought it.

Now, when little or no truth of the Word is known, people are easily misled by evil spirits and come under their power. This was the case on earth before the Lord's second coming, and also in the spiritual world. There, we are told, the World of Spirits, which is between heaven and hell, became filled with false heavenly societies, which had been formed by interiorly evil spirits who gathered good spirits into their societies and ruled them. The good spirits, because they did not know the truth, thought they were in heaven and that they were being ruled by angels. And as long as this was the case the Lord could not separate the evil spirits and cast them into hell, without the danger of harming the good spirits. Nor could the good spirits be raised into heaven.

It became necessary for the Lord to reveal His truths anew—in a new form in which they could be clearly seen. This the Lord did through His servant Emanuel Swedenborg in the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church. These new truths were made known in the spiritual world as well as here on earth. And when enough of these new truths became known, a great judgment took place in the World of Spirits—that is to say, a separation of the good from the evil.

Good spirits, who at heart loved truths and goods, eagerly accepted the truths the Lord revealed at His second coming. And when they became known, they obeyed them, rejecting their false ideas. Because they received the truths with love, they were led by them into heaven. But the evil spirits, who at heart hated truth and good, rejected the new truths the Lord revealed. They tried to falsify them, but they couldn't. Not being able to bear it, they fled from the light of those truths, and sought refuge in hell. This great judgment, we are taught, took place in the year 1757.

Now, when all the truths of the New Church, which the Lord was revealing through Emanuel Swedenborg, had been revealed, the Lord called together His twelve disciples who had followed Him on earth, and the next day He sent them forth, throughout the whole spiritual world, to preach the gospel that the Lord Jesus Christ reigns, and that His kingdom will last forever. This took place thirteen years later on June 19th, 1770.

The message the disciples preached was an important one, and it is a cause for rejoicing. For the Lord is able to rule the hearts and minds of people here on earth, and also in the spiritual world, by means of His truths. And the truths that the Lord revealed in His Second Coming are in a form that cannot be falsified. Those who love truth, and seek it, will always be able to see the truth clearly in the Heavenly Doctrine of the New Church. And those whose hearts and minds are ruled by the Lord—those who come into His kingdom—are able to know the peace and joy of heaven to eternity.

Amen.