The Second Coming

Lesson Overview

1. Will Jesus Return
   Jesus predicted He would return. How does the New Church understand this?
2. Read
   The Writings teach they are the second coming of the Lord; new truth from heaven to shine a light on the Word.
3. Watch a Video
   Watch What will the Second Coming of Jesus Christ Look Like? (4min 20sec) at bit.ly/SecondComingJC.
4. Discuss
   Choose questions for discussion.

New Church Concept
Clouds of Heaven

“And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” signifies that then the Word shall be revealed as to its internal sense, in which the Lord is. The ‘Son of Man’ is the truth Divine which is therein. Arcana Coelestia 4060.7

It has now pleased the Lord to reveal many arcana of heaven, especially the internal or spiritual sense of the Word, which hitherto has been entirely unknown; and therewith He has taught the genuine truths of doctrine; which revelation is meant by the Advent of the Lord in Matthew 24. Apocalypse Explained 641.3

Will Jesus Return?

Accounts of Jesus life given in the New Testament were written between 40 and 140 AD, years after Jesus’ death. Why was nothing written sooner? Many think this is because Jesus’ disciples and followers expected Him to return soon after His death. He had prophesied: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself...." And, “Behold, I am coming quickly!” (Rev. 22:12); “Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” (Mt. 16:28) Early Christians anticipated a trumpet would sound, the wicked would be destroyed, and the good would be saved and given immortal bodies. Revelation prophesied He would come "with clouds, and every eye will see Him." (Revelation 1:7) As time passed and Jesus didn’t come, the Gospels were written by followers. They are based on oral accounts of His life.

1. How does the New Church view predictions of Jesus’ return?
2. How will prophecies of Jesus’ return be fulfilled?

Read

The Writings teach that the Lord has already come again—but not in the way His disciples and followers anticipated. While they expected the Lord to appear in human form, as Jesus Christ, He has come again in the Word through His servant, Emanuel Swedenborg.

The coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven means that when He comes to judgment He will appear in the sense of the letter of the Word. And because He now has come, He has therefore appeared in the Word through this that He has revealed that there is a spiritual sense in every single thing of the sense of the letter of the Word, and that in it He alone is treated of, and that He alone is the God of heaven and earth. These are the things meant by His advent in the clouds of heaven. Apocalypse Revealed 642

This Second Advent of the Lord is effected by means of a man before whom He has filled with His spirit, to teach the doctrines of the New Church through the Word from Him.

...It follows that He is to do it by means of a man, who is able not only to receive the doctrines of this Church with his understanding, but also to publish them by the press. That the Lord has manifested Himself before me His servant and sent me on this office, and that, after this, He opened the sight of my spirit and thus let me into the spiritual world and gave me to see the
heavens and the hells, and also to speak with angels and spirits, and this now for many years, I testify in truth; and also that from the first day of that call I have not received any thing which pertains to the doctrines of that Church from any angel, but from the Lord alone while I read the Word. True Christian Religion 779

These passages emphasize the coming of new spiritual light by means of the new revelation or written Word—much as Jesus’ first coming did through the Lord’s physical presence on earth.

Another way to look at the coming of the Lord is to see it as an inner event; as the way He comes into the life of a person who seeks Him. His advent into the world becomes a reality within a person when he or she is touched by the spiritual significance of the Word in their life. Then the “letter” of the Word (which reveals His advent to us) must become “spirit and life.” This second coming happens as we allow the Lord to act in our lives from within.

The “son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven” describes the outer aspect to the Lord’s second coming, which is the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit truly comes to those who live the truths they have learned in the Word from a love for the Lord and for their fellow human beings.

Watch a Video
Watch the first 2min 10sec of What Will the Second Coming of Jesus Look Like? S&L Short Clips at bit.ly/SecondComingJC (4min 20sec). (Enter link in the web browser bar at the top of your screen.)

Discuss
Choose questions for discussion.

1. Why, in providence, might the Lord have waited years after His death to inspire men to write the Gospels? How does the passing of time give greater perspective on events? In what ways might the New Testament been different if it had been written during or immediately after the Lord’s life?

2. How do New Church teachings shed light on statements in the literal sense of the Word that are hard to understand?

3. Some teachings about the second coming are in the Bible, but not in the Word, e.g. a trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised. These give insight into Christian understanding of the second coming among early Christians. Many Christians use these as a guide to understanding the second coming. What difficulties does this pose for sharing New Church teachings on the second coming given in the New Testament?

4. The Lord often spoke in parables. Some sayings about the second coming appear to be veiled, like parables. What protection might this give?

5. How and when does the Lord come to us for the first time? For a second time?

6. Why is it important for the Lord to come to a person a second time? What impact can the Lord’s second coming have on a person’s life?