

GLENVIEW NEW CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM
Primary Lessons: Phase 2, Lesson 33
The Holy City, New Jerusalem (Revelation 21)

I. Underlying Ideas for the Teacher

- A. The book of Revelation is a prophetic vision of what would happen in the first Christian Church— of how it would gradually become perverted, as all the churches before it had been, through the selfishness and worldliness of its members, and of how it would finally be judged and brought to its end and a new church raised up to take its place.
- B. Our "holy city" is built of the principles we choose to rule our thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- C. Our "gate" into the holy city is through regular study of the Word and the Writings, together with consistent effort to apply the truths to life.
- D. The Lord alone is the temple and the light of the holy city, that is, of the New Church.
- E. Basic correspondences:
 - 1. City = Doctrine
 - 2. Street = The way of life
 - 3. Wall = The sense of the letter of the Word
 - 4. Length = The measure of goodness
 - 5. Breadth = The measure of truth
 - 6. Height = Good and truth together in every degree
 - 7. The holy city, New Jerusalem = The New Church in heaven and on the earth

II. Story Circle

- A. Introduction
 - 1. Who saw the things that are described in the book of Revelation? (John, the apostle whom the Lord had loved most when He was in the world)
 - 2. Where was he at the time? (On the Isle of Patmos, to which he had been banished)
 - 3. How did he see the things he wrote about? (He was "in the spirit," that is, the Lord opened his spiritual eyes so he could see into the spiritual world.)
 - 4. Most of the book of Revelation tells about the bad results of our choosing not to listen to the Lord. But the book doesn't end on that unhappy note. We have only 2 chapters of Revelation left, and the last 2 chapters show us the wonderful happiness the Lord has in store for us when we overcome our selfishness and follow Him.

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5. Today we'll study the next to last chapter in the book of Revelation. The vision described in today's reading is familiar to many of you. We're going to read what John has written about the holy city, New Jerusalem, which is a heavenly picture of the New Church, and of the beauty and strength of its teachings.

B. Tell/Read the Story

1. Read all of Rev. 21

C. Ideas to Discuss

1. At the beginning, what does John see? (New heaven, new earth)
2. What was the name of the beautiful city? (New Jerusalem)
3. Where did it come from? ("Down out of heaven from God")
4. To what does John compare the holy city, New Jerusalem? [Hint: "prepared as a _____ adorned for her husband"] (Bride)
5. What are some of the blessings people find in the city? (No death, no sorrow, no crying, no pain)
6. What does the Lord call Himself? (The Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End)
7. Does anyone know what alpha and omega are? (First and last letters of Greek alphabet, i.e. the beginning and the end)
8. Where was John taken to see the bride, the holy city, and who took him there? (To a great and high mountain, by an angel)
9. In ancient times, a wall was built around a city to protect it from enemies. The walls were made of stone and were very strong. What can you tell me about the wall of the holy city? (Had 12 foundations, each adorned with a different kind of precious stone, and each with the name of an apostle on it; was 144 cubits high = to the measure of an angel; was made of jasper [white stone; translucent— light could shine through])
10. What can you tell me about the gates? (12: 3 each on the N, S, E, and W; made of pearl; angel at each; each had name of one of 12 tribes of children of Israel on it)
11. What can you tell me about the city? (It was laid out in a square; it was 12,000 furlongs [about 1500 miles!] around; city and streets made of pure gold, like clear glass; its length, breadth [width] and height were equal.)
12. What does John say about the city's temple? (It didn't have a temple because the Lord is its temple.)
13. What does John say about the light of the city? (The Lord was its light, so it didn't need the sun or the moon.)

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14. In ancient times, there were guards to watch out for enemies as people went in and out of the city through the open gates. At night the gates were locked to keep out enemies. What was unusual about the gates of the holy city? (They were open all day, and there was no night, so the city was always open.)
15. Who can enter the city? (Only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. The Book of Life is the Word; people written in it are those who have lived according to its teachings.)

D. Further Ideas

1. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth."
 - a. Do you know what the "new heaven" was that John saw? It was the heaven where the good spirits went who were set free from the false [fake, pretend] heavens that the evil spirits had made. [If more explanation is needed here, refer to Lesson 4: The Multitude in White Robes, section on Further Ideas.]
 - b. And do you know what the "new earth" was? It was made of all the people in this world who wanted to learn from the Word about the Lord and who were willing to leave behind wrong ideas to become part of the New Church.
2. "The holy city, New Jerusalem"
 - a. The city of Jerusalem, which John had known in the world, was a large city with very strong walls to keep out its enemies. It was a special city on earth because that's where the temple was, and it was where three festivals were celebrated every year. All the men of the Jewish church were commanded to come to Jerusalem for the festivals. Jerusalem was the center of the Jewish church, and the center of its worship.
 - b. The holy city, New Jerusalem, is a spiritual picture of the New Church. John saw that the walls around the holy city were strong and beautiful. These walls stand for the stories of the Word, which are strong and beautiful.
 - c. The holy city that John describes is very beautiful, made from pure gold, like clear glass, and it shines brightly with the Lord's light. The city stands for the teachings of the New Church, which are very beautiful, and which shine brightly in our minds to show us how to live.
 - d. The teachings we choose to obey during our life in this world build a spiritual city inside us that we live in. The more we obey the Book of Life, the Lord's Word, the more beautiful a city we'll build. And when we die, the angel at a gate of the holy city, New Jerusalem, will see that we belong in that city—will see that we are written in the Lord's Book of Life— and we can live in the wonderful city of the Lord's New Church forever!

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III. Enrichment Activities

A. Music

1. "Jerusalem, the golden," Hymnal #186
2. "New hope of every nation, Jerusalem," Hymnal #179
3. "And I saw a new heaven," LORI'S SONGS, Tape 2, Side 2, 5th song.

B. Activities

C. Project: THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM

1. Make a three dimensional walled city— the city of gold, the walls of translucent white (tracing paper works). The gates should stand open, with an Israelitish tribe name on each. Use colored metallic paper or different colored sequins for the precious stones to decorate the 12 foundations. Write the name of an apostle on each of the foundations.

IV. Teachings Aids

- A. Picture of the New Jerusalem from the Revelation coloring book. Find pictures in a book on gems of the different colored precious stones to show the beauty and variety.

V. Further Reading for the Teacher

- A. Dole's *Bible Study Notes*, Vol. 6, "The Judgment and the Holy City," (Rev. 20:11-15; 21:1-7), pp. 286-301 (omit portions about the judgment); "The Holy City," (Rev. 21:9-27), pp. 302-317.
- B. *The Sower*, Vol. VI, "The New Jerusalem," (Rev. 21), pp. 353-359.
- C. *John in the Isle of Patmos* by George de Charms, "The New Jerusalem," (Rev. 21:1-10, pp. 143-146; "The Holy City," (Rev. 21:10-27), pp. 147-151.
- D. *Apocalypse Revealed*, "Chapter 21 - The Spiritual Sense," between nos. 875 and 87b (about 5 ½ pages).
- E. Lesson 4: The Multitude in White Robes, section on Further Ideas (a discussion of the Second Coming and the Last Judgment, accommodated to children; may be helpful as background for explaining today's lesson).