



The Second Coming

FaithBuilder 3 | Lesson 30 | New Church Day

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.

3. 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?

The New Testament was written between 40 and 140 AD, years after Jesus' death. Why was nothing written sooner? Many think it is because Jesus' followers expected Him to return soon after His ascension. 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...." Also, "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, oral accounts of His life were written down as the Gospels we have today.

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 quotes 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?

New Church Concept Coming of the Lord

"I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse" (Rev. 19:11) signifies the spiritual sense of the Word revealed by the Lord, and thereby the interior understanding of the Word disclosed, which is the advent of the Lord.... That this is the advent of the Lord, is because by that sense it manifestly appears that the Lord is the Word, that the Word treats of Him alone, that He is the God of heaven and earth, and that the New Church exists from Him alone.... The spiritual sense of the Word is at this day revealed.... *Apocalypse Revealed* 820

The coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, signifies His presence in the Word, and revelation.... Hence it is manifest that by these words of the Lord is meant that at the end of the church, when love and thence faith would be no more, the Lord would open the Word as to its internal sense, and would reveal the arcana of heaven. The arcana revealed in the following pages are concerning heaven and hell and at the same time concerning the life of people after death.... That at this day there exists such an immediate revelation, is because this is what is meant by the Advent of the Lord. *Heaven and Hell* 1

The second advent of the Lord is the revelation of Himself, and of Divine truth from Him, in the Word through the internal sense; elsewhere than in the Word the Lord does not reveal Himself, nor there otherwise than through the internal sense. *Apocalypse Explained* 36