

**GLENVIEW NEW CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING PROGRAM**  
**Primary Lessons: Phase 2, Lesson 32**  
**The White Throne and the Book of Life (Revelation 20:11-15)**

**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. Today's reading is a symbol picture of the judgment that finally happened in the spiritual world when the Lord made His Second Coming. All the people, good and bad, from the Christian Church had been living together in the other world, waiting for the final judgment, which could not take place until the Lord had opened the Word to Emanuel Swedenborg.
- C. We are all writing our own "book of life" daily by the moral and spiritual decisions we make. This "book" will determine our eternal state, either in heaven or hell.
- D. Basic correspondences:
  - 1. The lake of fire = The burning of self-love, which is hell
  - 2. The Book of Life = The Word
  - 3. Death and Hades = Men of the church, impious at heart
  - 4. The sea = External of the church, which is natural

**II. Story Circle**

- A. Introduction
  - 1. Who remembers what book of the Word we've been learning about? (Revelation)
  - 2. Where in the Word is it— in the Old Testament or the New Testament? (New Testament, at the end)
  - 3. The book of Revelation is full of visions that the Lord showed to John by opening his spiritual eyes so he could see into the spiritual world.
  - 4. Last time we read about John's vision of the Lord on a white horse fighting the two evil beasts and casting them into hell where they belonged.
  - 5. In today's lesson, John sees the Lord on the great white throne in heaven that we've heard about before.
- B. Tell/Read the Story
  - 1. Read Rev. 20:11-15

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### C. Ideas to Discuss

1. Whom did John see standing before God? (The dead, small and great)
2. What was happening while the dead were standing there? (Books were opened)
3. What was written in these books? (The "works" or things they had done while they were in the world)
4. What else was opened? (The Book of Life)
5. What do you think would be another name for the Book of Life? (The Word; it is the book which tells us about life and how to live.)
6. What happened to the dead who were not found written in the Book of Life? (Cast into lake of fire)

### D. Further Ideas

#### 1. Books Were Opened

- a. When you die, you won't actually stand in front of the Lord on His throne and have your book of life opened and read aloud.
- b. You are writing your book of life every day. Everything you think and feel and do becomes a part of you that stays with you forever. Thoughts and feelings and things you do every day are like pages you're adding to your book of life the whole time you live in this world.
- c. Do you remember when we learned all about heaven and hell and the world of spirits? We learned that when we've been in the world of spirits for a while, what we really are like inside begins to show in how we look. If we've been kind, thoughtful people, we will become beautiful or handsome; but if we've been cruel and selfish, we will become more and more ugly.
- d. When we look like what we love, it's like opening our book of life for others to read. It becomes very plain and easy to see whether we belong in heaven or hell.

#### 2. Those Not in Book of Life

- a. Our lesson says, "And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life [the Word]. And the dead were judged according to their works..." There was only one Book of Life like this. It was the Word, the book that teaches us about life and how we should live.
- b. The people not found written in the Book of Life are those who have let themselves grow more and more selfish instead of trying to obey the Lord's Word. They are the ones cast into the lake of fire.

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- c. But if we follow the Lord's Book of Life— the Word— and try to do as He teaches, then we will be writing good things in our own books of life, and we will be found written in the Lord's Book of Life.
  3. The Lake of Fire
    - a. Our lesson says, "Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Do you think the Lord would throw anyone into a lake of fire? No! He loves us all, even evil people, too much to punish us so cruelly.
    - b. Why does the Word tell us that people were cast into the lake of fire when they really weren't? Remember that we've talked about everything in the Word being a parable, a story with a hidden or spiritual meaning. "The lake of fire" is a spiritual picture. But a picture of what?
    - c. Are you happy when you're angry, or hating someone, or jealous, or when you're wanting something that belongs to someone else? No! These selfish feelings are like fire burning inside us, destroying all the happiness we might be having. The lake of fire is this burning selfishness that keeps evil people from ever being happy.

### III. Enrichment Activities

#### A. Music

1. "You Shall Love the Lord Your God With All Your Heart and Mind," FIRST SONGS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN, p. 7. (This was taught and used extensively in the Life After Death unit.)
2. "Revelation," LORI'S SONGS FROM THE WORD II, Side 2, first song. (Words attached to Lesson #1.)

#### B. Activities: Our Books of Life

1. Everything we ever think, feel, or do becomes part of us and part of our own book of life. Have children describe some thoughts, feelings, and actions that might be in someone's book of life (not necessarily their own; better to keep the discussion impersonal!).
2. Examples: Angry when another child got better grade or finished first in a race; happy to surprise Morn by cleaning up the house/kitchen/bedroom while she's out; sharing candy with a friend or sibling; and so on.)

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### C. Project: A Book of Life

1. Staple a few pieces of paper together with a construction paper or wallpaper sample cover (or use paper fasteners through punched holes). Children can write and/or draw different things in their books of life:
  - a. Stories from the Word that they love and try to obey
  - b. Stories from the Word that illustrate an idea they think is important (good triumphing over evil, or the negative effects of an evil action)
  - c. An action that would be helpful, kind, or would make someone else happy
  - d. An action that would cause sadness, pain, anger
  - e. Thoughts of revenge, "getting even," plans to make someone else look or feel stupid, foolish
  - f. Anything that will illustrate to the children that all they think, do, and feel becomes a permanent part of them as well as of their book of life, is fine. (Some extra blank pages could be bound in for them to fill in at home when they have done or thought or felt something they would like to have or know will be in their book of life.)

### IV. Teaching Aids

- A. Select some pictures of stories from the Word whose meaning is straightforward so the children can make use of them in their project book. (Examples: Daniel protected by Lord in lions' den because he refused to worship anyone but the Lord; Adam and Eve cast out of Garden of Eden because they disobeyed the Lord; Noah and his family saved by means of the ark because they had been obeying the Lord; forgiveness shown by the prodigal son's father; and so on.)

### 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 (omit portions that concern Rev. 21:1-7, The Holy City).
- B. *Heaven and Hell* No. 462b, 463.
- C. *Apocalypse Revealed*, "Chapter Twenty— The Spiritual Sense" (between Nos. 839 and 840), the latter part concerning verses 11-15. (Optional: Also Nos. 866-874.)

