

# Swedenborgian Sunday School Notes for the Revised Common Lectionary

## Isaiah 35 • Joy in the Lord's Redemption

Prepared by the Rev. Lee Woofenden

---

---

Isaiah 35 Joy in the Lord's Redemption  
Matthew 11:2–11 . . . Signs of the Lord's reign

### Overview

Today we have a beautiful prophecy of peace and joy in the Lord's coming. Yet the prophecy recognizes our resistance and pain when we must give up parts of ourselves that are not good in order to receive the Lord. Our focus today is on communicating to the children that the happiness we gain from following the Lord is well worth the pain and struggle we must go through to give up what blocks the Lord's way.

### Key Points

- The Lord's coming is a time for cleaning out and healing what is bad and harmful in our personality.
- The Lord is never angry with us; it only looks that way when we are angry with the Lord.
- True peace and joy come from following the Lord.

### Example for Teaching Children

*(The first part can also be adapted as a guided meditation, accompanied by meditative music.)*

Have you ever been really, really thirsty? So thirsty you thought you could drink a gallon of water? *(Pause)* Now imagine you are *that* thirsty, and you are in the middle of a dry, dry desert. The sun is beating down on you; you are so thirsty and hungry that you can't go on anymore. How awful!

Now imagine that just as you are falling down onto the sand, you notice some trees way off in the distance. When you are in the desert and you see trees, what does it mean? *(Pause)* It means there is water! How would you feel when you saw the trees? *(Pause)* Do you think you would have the energy to get up and go to them? *(Pause)* I'll bet you would!

This is what our reading from Isaiah is about: turning the dry desert into a place of rivers and ponds where beautiful plants grow. This is what Christmas is about too: the Lord coming to help us turn the bad parts of our lives into something beautiful and happy.

In Sunday School we talk a lot about admitting what we are doing wrong and not doing it anymore. Wouldn't it be more fun to talk about something else? *(Pause)* Why do we talk about that so much? *(Pause)* The only way we can be really happy is to love and care for each other instead of fighting and

hurting each other. We talk about giving up our bad habits because the Lord wants us to be happy!

Our Bible reading tells about how happy we can be if we listen to the Lord, stick with it, and be good to others even when we don't feel like it.

Can you think of a time when someone was mean? *(Pause)* How did it make people feel? *(Pause)* Now imagine the person had been nice instead. How would everyone feel then? *(Pause)* When we are nice to others, we have a lot more fun than when we are mean, don't we?

This Christmas season, let's welcome Jesus by being especially good and kind to each other!

### Basic Correspondences

blind = not knowing what is true  
blindness healed = understanding what is true  
deaf = not knowing what is good  
deafness healed = learning & obeying what is good  
desert = lack of goodness and truth  
streams, pools = true ideas from faith in God

### Thoughts from Swedenborg

Isaiah 35:4–6 speaks of the Lord's coming. It means that at that time people who believe in him will be saved. "The eyes of the blind will be opened" means that those who do not understand the truth will then understand. "The ears of the deaf will be unstopped" means that those who have no sense of what is good or desire to follow it will then obey and live according to what is good. This is why it says "water will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert." A "desert" is where there is no goodness because there is no truth; "water" means truth, and "streams" understanding that comes from truth.

*Apocalypse Explained #239b.7*

Anger and revenge are attributed to the Lord when evil people are separated from good ones and thrown into hell—which happens at the day of the Last Judgment. So that day is called "a day of anger," "anger," and "a day of vengeance." Yet the Lord is not angry or vengeful. Rather, evil people are angry with the Lord, and breathe revenge against him. It is like when a criminal is angry with the law after the sentence has been passed, and breathes revenge against the judge; the law is not angry, nor is the judge vengeful.

*Apocalypse Revealed #806*