

# Swedenborgian Sunday School Notes for the Revised Common Lectionary

## Luke 1:39–56 • Blessed Are You—Christmas Sunday

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Luke 1:39–56 . . . . . Blessed are you  
Micah 5:2–5a . . . . . A ruler from Bethlehem

### Overview

On this Christmas Sunday, our lesson is about the blessing and the power of God coming to us in the human form of our Lord Jesus. This is one of the best times to impress on the children the core of our faith: that Jesus is God himself come to save us from the pain and destruction that come to us from our own selfishness and greed. When we accept the Lord into our lives, the Lord will overcome the bad things in us, and powerfully bless us with love and truth.

### Key Points

- Jesus is God himself come to save us from our own misguided ways.
- The Lord comes to us in the places where we have both love and truth together.
- We can feel the blessing and the power of God’s love and truth coming into our lives in new ways!

### Example for Teaching Children

Are you all ready for Christmas? It’s only four days away now! School vacation has started, and you can play and have fun while you wait for Christmas Day.

Christmas is the biggest holiday of our year. There is a good reason for this: at Christmas we celebrate the most important thing that ever happened in the history of the world: the birth of Jesus. For us as Christians, and especially as Swedenborgians, this is the most important thing that ever happened—or ever will happen—because it is when the Lord, the God of the universe, came to be with us and save us from all the bad things we get ourselves into.

Now that Jesus is born, we don’t have to think of God as some invisible, cloudy being way up in the sky or somewhere in heaven. Now we know that God is a *person* who loves us and understands us, who cares for us and tries to show us how to live so that we will be happy.

Imagine that you have a pen pal you have never met, who lives all the way across the country, or in another country. You can write letters back and forth, but it’s not quite the same as actually seeing your pen pal friend. That’s how it was before the Lord was born. We had the Hebrew Bible, which was like a

letter that God wrote to us. But we couldn’t see God’s face and know what God looked like. When Jesus came, it was like getting a chance to visit our pen pal and spend time together with him or her.

Jesus did come into our world, and Jesus wants to come into each of our lives too. Would you like to feel what it is like to have Jesus come to you? You can! If you decide to love and care for everyone around you, and try to understand the way they think and feel, you will be experiencing Jesus coming into your life. Because whenever we love people and try to understand them and care for them, that is God within us—God is love and truth together. This is the blessing that our Lord Jesus wants to give us.

### Basic Correspondences

- Bethlehem = truth and goodness together
- strong arm = divine power
- Son of God = God’s human side

### Thoughts from Swedenborg

God himself, who from eternity is one, came into the world, as is clear from the way the Lord the Savior was born: he was conceived by the power of the Most High through the Holy Spirit, and from this conception his human side was born of the virgin Mary. It follows from this that his soul was the Divine itself, which is called the Father, since God is indivisible; and that the human born from him is the human of God the Father, which is called the “Son of God.”  
*True Christian Religion #538.2*

“Bethlehem” symbolizes truth united with goodness in our earthly side. This is why David was born there, and also anointed as king there (1 Sam. 16:1–14; 17:12). David as a king represented the Lord as to truth that comes from goodness—which is also the meaning of “king.” The Lord was born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1, 5, 6) for the same reason: he was born a king, and truth united with goodness was in him from birth.  
*Apocalypse Explained #449a.3*

A “stretched out arm” means omnipotence, or divine power, because when an arm appears stretched out in heaven, it represents power from the divine. . . . This is why divine power is often expressed in the Bible by “a stretched out arm,” and “a strong hand.”

*Arcana Coelestia #7205*