

Swedenborgian Sunday School Notes for the Revised Common Lectionary

Luke 13:31–35 • Jesus' Sorrow for Jerusalem

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Luke 13:31–35 Jesus' sorrow for Jerusalem
Psalm 27 In the protection of the Lord

Overview

Last week we talked about temptation, and how we can overcome through the Lord's power. This week's lesson shows the results when we go in the other direction: we destroy ourselves spiritually. Today, our focal point with the children is how the Lord *always* loves us, and is *sad* when we turn away because of the pain and sorrow this brings to us. Yet the Lord offers us comforting protection and new life if we will only turn back toward goodness and truth!

Key Points

- God loves us no matter how much we reject what comes from God. The Lord will try to reach us in any way possible.
- The Lord grieves when we reject what is good and true because this causes us great pain and sorrow.
- The Lord protects us from harm whenever we turn to the Lord with prayer and thanksgiving.

Example for Teaching Children

Last week we talked about temptation. Do you remember what temptation is? (*Give them a chance to explain.*) Right! Temptation is when we are struggling inside of ourselves about whether or not to do something we know is wrong. It can also mean fighting against a feeling that we might as well give up trying to be a good and happy person.

What happens if we do give up or give in? Let's think about the example we used last week. (*Use the same example if you can.*) What might happen if we shoplift? (*Allow time for discussion.*) The problem with doing things that are wrong is that it *hurts* other people *and* ourselves. Shoplifting hurts the owners of the store, because they have to pay for what we stole.

But it also hurts us. How? Yes, we might get into trouble. But it also hurts us *inside*. We are afraid of getting caught; we start thinking stealing is okay—and people stop trusting us; we become dishonest and fearful people. And that hurts us!

Do you think God gets mad at us when we do something like this? Does God get angry when we give in and do things we know are wrong, or when we give up and don't even *try* to be good people?

Some churches teach that God is angry at people who break God's laws, since there places in the Bible that say this. If thinking God will be mad helps us not to do wrong, God will let us believe it! But in our church, we don't think the Lord is ever really angry at us. Instead, the Lord is *sad* when we do things that are wrong, because the Lord knows it will hurt us.

Jesus shows us these feelings of sadness in our reading today. When he sees the city of Jerusalem, knowing how corrupt and far from God it is, he cries over it (Matt. 19:41) because he knows the suffering and pain this corruption brings to its people.

The Lord *loves* us and will care for us and protect us if we turn back to the Lord and allow the Lord into our lives. We always have another chance!

Basic Correspondences

- Jerusalem = our church or religion
- prophets = God's truth speaking to us
- wings = divine truth protecting us

Thoughts from Swedenborg

It is well known that crying is an expression of grief and love. Because of this, it is an expression of mercy, since mercy is love grieving. Divine love is called mercy because left to itself, the human race is in hell; when we recognize this within ourselves, we pray for mercy. . . .

The Jerusalem for which Jesus cried and had feelings of mercy and grief was not only the actual city of Jerusalem, but also the church, whose "last day" (when there is no longer any kindness, nor faith from it) is referred to in the inner meaning. Jesus' feelings of mercy and grief moved him to cry.

Arcana Coelestia #5480

In the spiritual sense, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the prophets and stones those that are sent to you" means destroying all divine truth that we have from the Bible. *Apocalypse Explained #642d.16*

"The Spirit of God" [Gen. 1:2] means the Lord's mercy, which is said to "brood," like a hen over her eggs. It broods over the things the Lord stores up in us, which are often called "remnants" in the Bible. These remnants are insights into truth and goodness that never come to the light of day until superficial things have been destroyed *Arcana Coelestia #19*