

New Church c·o·n·n·e·c·t·i·o·n

Exploring the Bible

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www.newchurch.org



New Church Teachings



New Church Connection

Exists to inspire, inform, and connect people who are interested in the New Church. Every issue will have background information on New Church teachings; inspirational content from personal testimonies and quotes from the Word; and information about the organized New Church (the General Church of the New Jerusalem), and how to get connected. Each issue will have a theme that helps enrich your spiritual journey.

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- There is one loving, personal God, and He is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The life of religion is to follow the Ten Commandments, and to act honestly and faithfully in our daily occupations.
- The New Church is based on the Word of God, as revealed in the Old and New Testaments and the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.
- The Word of God (the Bible) has a deeper level of meaning, teaching about the Lord's essential nature and a person's spiritual development.
- Each of us continues life as a complete person immediately after the death of the body.
- God does not judge us, but we judge ourselves by what we love and how we live.
- People of every faith are saved if they live sincerely according to their religion.

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Experience how an Old Testament biblical story applies to your life. Explore *The Journey Realizing Spiritual Freedom*, by Tom Kline. An interactive workbook, designed to help you make tangible progress on your spiritual path.

Available from the New Church bookstore email bookstore@newchurch.org or call 267-502-4980.

How did you view the Bible when you were younger? Did you grow up with it as an honored book in your home? Did you interact with it at all? Today, have you opened the Bible for yourself to see what is inside?

This issue is focused on exploring the Bible. Whether you have written it off as an irrelevant, old, dated book, cherished it as such a holy book that you never touched it because it intimidated you, or always loved the Bible but want to understand it better, now is the time to explore it with a new approach and openness.

Discover the transforming power of the Lord's Word, in John Johnson's personal story of grief and healing, p. 8. Find answers to your questions about the Bible on p. 6 and p.18. Consider anew if the Bible is relevant to your life and if you can find new meaning in it, in Mac Frazier's article on p.13.

Give the Bible a chance, you might be surprised! Even better, you might realize the truth of the quote on the back cover that "the union of heaven with a person is through the Word" (*White Horse* 10).

Blessings on your journey,

Bronwen Henry
General Church Outreach



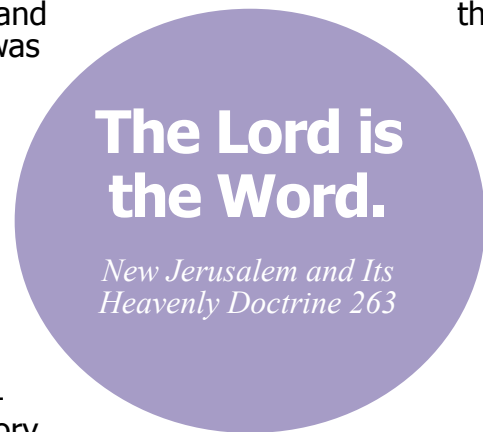
The New Church offers a unique outlook on this historic text.



"Unless we form the habit of going to the Bible in bright moments as well as in trouble, we cannot fully respond to its consolations because we lack equilibrium between light and darkness." - Heller Keller

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119:105

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory.
John 1:1,4



In every particular of the Word there is an internal sense in which are discerned, not the natural and worldly matters such as are in the sense of the letter, but spiritual and heavenly things.
Heaven and Hell 1

The Lord's second coming is not in person but in the Word, which is from Him and which He is.
True Christian Religion 776.7



Emanuel Swedenborg was an 18th century scientist and philosopher who continually studied the Word, later devoting his life to the revelation of the New Church. In the New Church we believe his later works are a divinely inspired revelation for the modern age touching on all the different aspects of religion with a very rational and common-sense approach. See www.newchurch.org/about/swedenborg for more information.

Seeking Answers

Questions about Worship, the Bible and More

Q. What is the foundation of New Church beliefs?

A. New Church teachings are firmly grounded in the Old and New Testaments. The most core teachings are that God is loving, the Bible is the guide for our lives, and that salvation is attained through faith in God and following the Bible to live a life of service to our neighbor.

Q. Is there a worship style preference in the New Church?

A. New Church congregations around the world worship in different ways, from formal cathedral services, to contemporary outdoor services, to services in homes. The New Church teachings state that “the different ways the Lord is worshiped—in variations that stem from the difference of activity from one community to another—do not cause harm but bring benefit, because they are a source of heaven’s perfection” (*Heaven and Hell* 56).

Q. How do the Writings for the New Church shed light on the Bible?

A. The Writings are very thorough in their approach to revealing truths in the Bible. Here is an example from the

book *Secrets of Heaven* which goes through Genesis and Exodus verse by verse: “And God said, Let there be light; and there was light. (Genesis 1:3). This is when a person starts to realize that good and truth are something superior” (*Secrets of Heaven* 20).

Is there a worship style preference in the New Church?



Q. I heard that The New Church uses a form of the Bible called “The Word”. I also understand that “The Word” doesn’t have all the books of the Bible in it. Please explain why.

A. The New Church has its own biblical canon which recognizes some books of the Bible as having a deeper, more spiritual meaning than others. For example, the Gospels, which contain the

Lord’s own words, have a more spiritual quality than Paul’s letters. Deuteronomy 4:2 says; “You shall not add to the Word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God.” Deuteronomy is the 5th book of many in the Bible. No person shall add to the Word of God, but God can add to it, and He has. Since Deuteronomy, God has spoken through many people—David, the prophets, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John—all of them commissioned by the Lord. Is it not possible that Swedenborg was one of these men so commissioned? The Word of God does not state that revelations would stop, as some seem to assume. In fact, the Lord clearly indicated that there would be more to come, when people would be better prepared to receive them. We are told in the Gospel of John, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now” (John 16:12). The Lord also says, “these things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father” (John 16:25).

Q. What is the New Church approach to tithing?

A. When visiting a New Church congregation you may notice a different approach to donations. There is a strong emphasis on free will and an individ-

ual’s choice to contribute. Therefore, offertory baskets are not passed around during the service, but kept at the back of the sanctuary for people to donate as they see fit. The organization does not require tithing of its members.

Q. I believe that there must have been some divine inspiration through Swedenborg but isn’t it a bit of a stretch to label his works a third Testament?

A. This decision must be part of your own personal journey. Many people believe the Writings for the New Church are a third testament, not because Swedenborg says they are, but because of how the truth of their message resonates in life. Continue to look to the Old and New Testaments and the Writings for the New Church with a prayerful spirit, and see where the Lord is calling you on your journey.

Questions Wanted

We want to answer questions that are relevant and compelling to you. Send your questions to outreach@newchurch.org.

Changing Lives

Exploring the Bible

In each issue we include stories of lives changed by the teachings of the New Church. In this issue John Johnson shares how the New Church led him through grief to healing and hope.

I was 41 when the New Church came into my life. My wife and I had been together for 25 years; we met as kids and married after high school. In August of 2001 my wife and 14-year-old daughter were killed instantly in a car accident near our home. I had come home from work on my lunch hour to be with them—they had been out enjoying the day and were to meet me. A friend pulled into the driveway and let me know there had just been a terrible accident up the road and it looked like our car was in it. When I made it to the site, I was informed by the highway patrol that my wife and daughter were deceased.

I am unable to put into words my feelings at that point, but one thing stands out that I will always remember—I knew right there that they both went somewhere—that life did not end by the side of the highway. My marriage wasn't gone, my daughter wasn't gone—I would see them again. This presented a problem though, finding the truth about where we go after physical death. I prayed to God long and hard to know the absolute truth, even if what was true was something I did not want to hear. The following months found me on a great spiritual journey to find the truth about the afterlife.

I was brought up Catholic. Mom was Catholic, Pop was Lutheran, and I had known a couple different views on death, neither of which was helpful. In searching for the truth, I checked out just about every religion and belief in our world—this took several months. I was having a terrible battle with the philosophy of reincarnation, something that greatly added to my grief—I was strongly considering taking my life. I did not have the solid spiritual grounding one should



John Johnson shares his journey to the New Church.

Life Faith Action

Quotations from the teachings of the New Church and thoughts on how to bring these ideas into life.



“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.”

Luke 16:10

Take responsibility to act honestly and with integrity in everything today. As we learn to be true to ourselves and others in simple tasks, we are preparing to continue to act this way throughout the more major ups and downs of our lives.



“As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:15

“No one can be conjoined with the Lord except through love and charity.”

Secrets of Heaven 2349

It is through our actions that we serve the Lord and show our love for Him. Today, show your love for the Lord through kind actions toward other people.



“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” James 2:26
“All religion has relation to life, and the life of religion is to do good.”

Doctrine of Life 1

What is the core of your faith, religion, and connection to God? Through our actions our beliefs are made real. Take a step today to live a life that reflects your belief by doing something that shows your faith.

“I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.”

Psalm 40:1

Today, in the business of life, pause and be still. Breathe deeply and try to clear your mind of distractions. Turn off the radio, TV, or cellphone, and create a space for the Lord’s presence.

“Therefore everyone, even at the present day, who, while reading the Word, approaches the Lord alone, and prays to Him, is enlightened.”

Doctrine of the Lord 2

When we pray to the Lord and then read His Word, we can gain insight and enlightenment from Him. Make it a priority in your life to go to the Lord once a day for this spiritual food.

Continued from page 8

have for dealing with something like this.

One website I ran across mentioned eternal marriage and linked that to a man named Emanuel Swedenborg. I had never heard of him, or of the Swedenborgian faith. About a week later I ran across Mr. Swedenborg’s name again, just his name though, no links to anything else. This time I “heard” in my head to read more on him, but I have a pretty thick skull, and it took awhile to listen to that small voice. To shorten this up a bit, I was on eBay one evening and typed in “Swedenborg.”

One person was selling a book called *Heaven and Hell*, and it had a description of the contents and one thing caught my eye—eternal marriage. I ordered this used book and also sent a message to the seller asking if he knew anything about Swedenborg. His reply was yes, in fact he did!—I had contacted the Rev. Lee Woofenden! From that point on, I read a great deal of the Writings and other New Church related books—this led me into a wonderful understanding of the Lord, His Word, and comfort in knowing the truth. Lee stuck with me through long emails and phone conversations,

answering my questions and keeping my mind busy. I can only explain my love for finding the New Church as walking in the door at home, the search was over. The Bible and the Writings, what a beautiful package.

I read a great deal of the Writings and other New Church related books—this led me into a wonderful understanding of the Lord, His Word, and a comfort in knowing the truth.

Looking at the past 6 years in retrospect, I can see the Lord’s providence at work from that very first day of the accident. Life went from a state of hopelessness to happiness, and I could never see that at first.

I’ve since become a confirmed member of the New Church, visited the New Church congregation

in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania several times, and made many dear friends who were instrumental in helping me through a difficult time. Many wonderful things have happened and I am able to see the beauty in life again, but that is a beautiful story in itself. To sum up everything, I know the Lord listens to our prayers and makes available every opportunity to see that goodness can come again after tragedy. As Jesus said, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you... and then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Seeking Guidance

The following is excerpted from Rev. Frank Rose's workbook *New Church Foundations* exploring core New Church teachings, including a chapter on 'Seeking Guidance from God's Word'

Exploring the Bible

After language developed and before writing was invented, messages from God could be communicated by word of mouth, and these messages could be passed down through the generations. Eventually some of these stories took written form, and are preserved in the Bible. The Bible is written in human language and concerns the history of a people in a fairly small part of the world. It can still contain the Word of God because of the way God uses images and language that correspond to higher levels of wisdom. This means that all of the Bible is true, but not all is literally true. The truth lies not in the Bible as history, but in the Bible as the wisdom of God wrapped up in

human language and human stories.

The Bible has been called "the book of heresies" because it seems as if people can prove any-

Revelation is given not to teach us how to think but to teach us how to live.

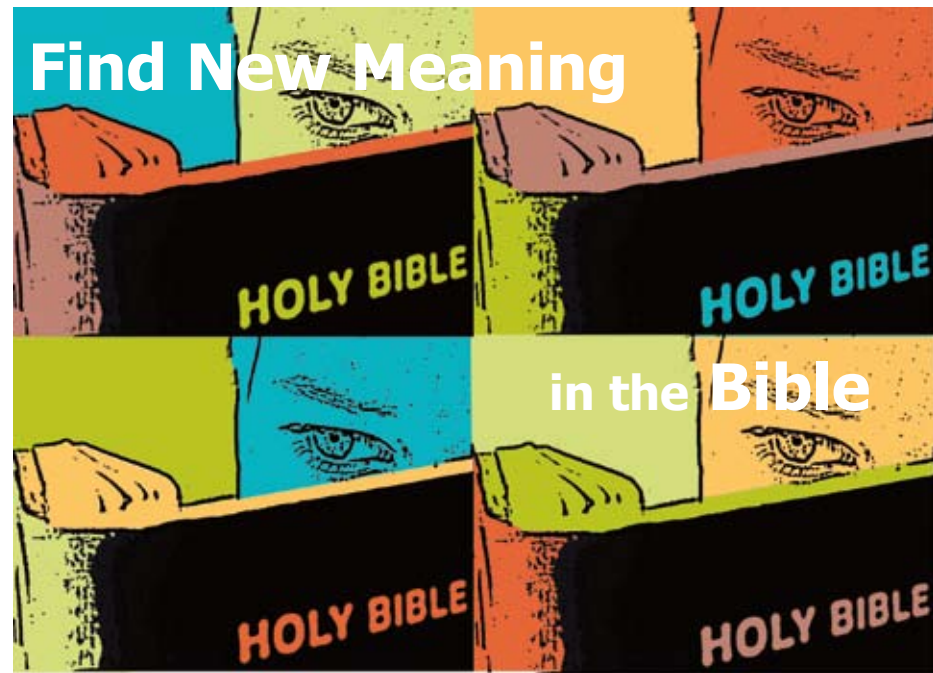
thing they want to from the Bible. The challenge is to be open to the Lord communicating with us through the Bible. Those who read the Bible searching for truths that will guide them in their lives can find moments of insight when the truth they need for that moment becomes clear to them. We need to learn the path of life from reading about it, but we come

to know the path of life by walking in it. As Jesus said: "If you know these things you are happy if you do them" (John 13:17).

Emanuel Swedenborg claimed that what he wrote was written not from his own mind but from divine inspiration. The teachings Swedenborg wrote down are that "spirit of truth" an opening and new understanding of the Old and New Testaments. Revelation is given not to teach us how to think but to teach us how to live. The Word becomes alive and true for each of us when we live it.

New Church Foundations is available from the New Church Bookstore: bookstore@newchurch.org; 267-502-4980.

Find New Meaning



Finding new meaning in the Bible may seem a lot easier said than done. We invite you to take a second look, as Rev. Mac Frazier explores the New Church perspective on the Bible and how it can have greater relevance in your life.

Over the last two thousand years, millions of people have turned to the Bible for guidance, for wisdom, for hope, and for answers. Even today, millions look to it as God's holy Word. But there are an even greater number who see it and have questions: "Is the Bible still relevant?" "If this is God's holy Word, why does it contain so many stories involving violence and conflict?" "How

How do I understand such a confusing book?

Is the Bible still relevant?



am I supposed to understand such a confusing book?” These are all reasonable questions for which many different groups have many different answers. I’d like to share with you my own understanding, as a New Church person and pastor, of what I believe God teaches about His Word.

Some parts of the Bible are straightforward and easy to grasp quickly. For instance, when Jesus says, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12), it’s quite clear what we are supposed to do. Other parts are more complicated, especially when we start to compare them with one another. For example, sometimes it talks about Jesus and Jehovah as if they are the same person: “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). At other times, though, it seems as if they are two different people: “I am

going to My Father, for My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28).

Sometimes it can be hard to get more than even a general idea of what is being

described, as in some of the more confusing prophecies and in some of the stranger visions. There are also the parts that are not hard to understand, but which seem incompatible with our modern ideas of science and history.

So, what are we to do?

The New Church teaches that the Bible has multiple

layers of meaning. The more significant meanings are the deeper ones. These deep, previously-hidden meanings are now unlocked for anyone to see, in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Does this mean that we should ignore the more plain “surface” meaning of the text

The New Church teaches that the Bible has multiple layers of meaning. The more significant meanings are the deeper ones.

of the Bible? No way! In fact, the book *True Christian Religion* says that there are places in the Bible where the deeper meaning rises to the surface of the plain text, where anyone can see it:

“...The Word in that sense resembles a person wearing clothes, but whose face and hands are bare. Everything needed for a person’s faith and life, and so everything needed for his salvation, is there uncovered, though the remainder is clothed. In many passages where it is clothed it still shows through, like a woman’s features through a thin silk veil over her face. Moreover, since the truths of the Word increase in number as they are loved and this love gives them shape, so they show through and become visible more and more clearly” (*True Christian Religion* 229).

In other words, the most critical, soul-saving, life-giving teachings in the Bible are the ones that are easiest to understand: for example, the ten commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), the two great commandments (Mark 12:29-31), the new commandment (John 13:34-35), and the Lord’s prayer (Mathew 6:9-13). What’s more, there are places where the deeper meaning is only thinly veiled; once you know to look for it, it isn’t very hard to find. But what’s perhaps

most exciting is the final implication of the above paragraph: once you realize that the Bible has this deeper truth in it, you become more and more attuned to it the more you read!

So, with the help of the explanations in the Writings of the New Church, along with prayer to the Lord for enlightenment along the way, you will find the deeper meaning of the Bible becomes gradually less and less hidden the more you read. And what you will find is that underneath the plain text of the Bible are new living, spiritual ways of understanding the Lord’s Word. Every story in the Bible contains within it deeper truths that relate to God, the church, and your own personal spiritual journey.



God uses the Bible to

tell us about deep, eternal, unchanging truths.

Genesis. But in the first volume of the book *Secrets of Heaven* we discover that the literal statements in this story are vessels for deeper ideas. The inner truth of this story is all about the series of internal steps God takes people through as they develop spiritually. The Bible and science become compatible once we realize that the Bible is not really concerned with scientific facts, but instead uses ideas suited to illustrate important truths about humanity's inner, spiritual reality. God's primary focus is not to teach us science. What God wants to do is use the Bible to tell us about deep, eternal, unchanging truths that will have a much greater impact on us than our mere understanding of the physical world.

Likewise, this explains why so many of the stories in the Bible are full of violence and brutality. The deeper truth of the Bible is all about the inner life we each face, with all of the temptation, suffering and striving that we inevitably face. Our spiritual lives are full of conflicts between our lower, selfish natures and the higher, loving selves that God created us to be. If the Lord is going to talk to us about how to face spiritual battles, then it makes sense that he uses stories of natural conflict as the foundation and container for these lessons.

Remember, the most basic and the most important ideas in the Bible are the clearest and most obviously relevant ones. So don't worry that the more complicated parts of the Bible may take time to decipher. God loves you and is merciful to you, and so He has already given you enough to live by, in the parts that don't need further interpretation.

Now, once you start to really get this idea of there being deeper layers of meaning within the stories of the Bible, you can begin to find answers to other questions. For instance, there are parts of the Bible which seem no longer relevant because modern science has proven them "wrong."

One example is the story of the creation of the world in seven days as told in

But don't take my word for it. I invite you to investigate this for yourself. Start reading the Bible, and when you have questions, look for the deeper truth behind the plain text of the story. To aid you in your search for meaning, turn to the Writings of Swedenborg, and reach out to someone in the New Church. There are many New Church members and ministers who would love to help you find your way as you begin this new journey of exploration. Contact us

at outreach@newchurch.org or call 1.877.411.HOPE (4673), and we will be happy to put you in touch with someone to answer your questions.

As is taught in Corinthians: "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life." Go to God's Word and seek out the spirit, and you will find that it gives the Bible new life and new meaning. ■

Find Support in Exploring the Bible



One great way to explore the Bible is by getting together with friends and neighbors in a small group. In this setting you can read together, ask questions, have accountability, and deepen friendships. Call a few friends today and find time to encourage one another in reading the Bible.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My Name,
I am there in the midst of them."
Matthew 18:20



Some stories in the Bible can be confusing. Abigail Echols explores how New Church teachings help to answer many biblical questions.

Cut off My Right Hand?

“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.” Matthew 5:29-30

Can my eye cause me to sin? Am I actually supposed to gouge out my eye or cut off my hand if I want to stop sinning? The Writings for the New Church explain that these instructions are not meant literally: “The ‘eye’ represents in the spiritual sense everything belonging to the understanding and to thought, and the ‘right hand’ everything belonging to the will and to affection, it is evident that ‘if your right eye causes you to

sin, gouge it out’ represents that if one thinks evil, the evil must be rejected from the thought; also ‘if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off’ represents that if evil is willed the evil of the will must be cast out. For the eye itself cannot cause sin, nor can the right hand, but the thought of the understanding and the affection of the will, to which they correspond, can.” *Apocalypse Explained* §600:8

Is Jesus Coming in the Clouds?

“Men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And He will send His angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.” Mark 13:26-27

Will this really happen on earth? When? This passage refers not to an anticipated

event, but an event that has occurred on a spiritual level: “By ‘the clouds of heaven’ in which He is to come, nothing else is meant but the Word in its literal sense (which sometimes hides/obscures the true meaning such as a cloud obscures the sun); and by ‘the glory’ in which they will see Him, the Word in its spiritual sense (in which all is revealed)” *Apocalypse Revealed* §24. The Writings for the New Church give us the spiritual sense of the Word, which descends through the clouds, and then the literal sense becomes accessible and applicable.

Did a flood cover the earth?

“Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth. So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood...and it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. The windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.” Genesis 7:6-12

The story of Noah and the flood is not a literal story about life being wiped off the earth, but rather a story that represents the personal struggle and tempta-

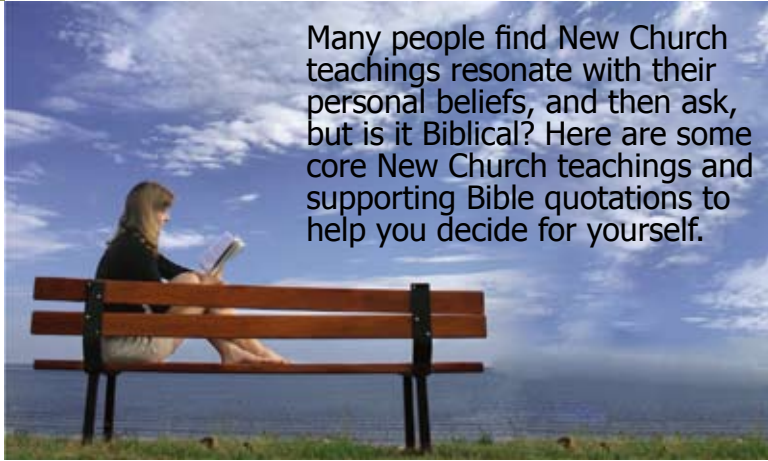
tion that each of us faces in life—and the ways we can protect ourselves in these times of spiritual trials. The book *Secrets of Heaven* explains the inner meaning of this story: the ark that Noah,

The Writings for the New Church give us the spiritual sense of the Word.

his family, and the animals go into for protection from the flood represents the church that carries us through hard times (§639). “By the ‘flood of waters’ is signified the beginning of temptation” (§739-740). The flood represents the temptations that come in life and threaten to wipe out everything good if we give in to them.

It is further explained that “Noah went into the ark, from before the waters of the flood’ signifies that he was protected in temptation.” In the story Noah’s wife, his sons, and his sons’ wives came with him into the ark because they represent the resources Noah had to help him resist temptations. Noah’s wife represents goods, his sons represent truths, and his sons’ wives represent truths that are connected to goods (§742). We can see that while the story seems literally impossible it stands for something very real in our lives—turning to the church and the goods and truths that sustain us when we are faced with temptation. ■

Is it Biblical?



Many people find New Church teachings resonate with their personal beliefs, and then ask, but is it Biblical? Here are some core New Church teachings and supporting Bible quotations to help you decide for yourself.

The Bible's Deeper Meaning

New Church Teaching: The Bible has a deeper meaning that teaches about the Lord's essential nature and a person's spiritual development.

"I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old." (Psalm 78:2)

"All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them." (Matthew 13:34)

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to

come... These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father." (John 16:12, 13, 25)

"The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63)

Marriage in Heaven

New Church Teaching: Marriage can last forever, for God blesses people with a special love in marriage that goes on after death, even to eternity.

"They are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore, God has joined together, let no one put asunder." (Matthew 19:6, Mark 10:9)

"It is not good that the man should be alone." (Genesis 2:18)

"He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord." (Proverbs 18:22)

[comparing the marriage relationship to our relationship with God] "I will betroth you to Me forever." (Hosea 2:19)

Salvation through Faith and Charity

New Church Teaching: God does not judge us, but we judge ourselves by what we love and how we live.

"Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (Matthew 7:19-20)

"For the son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and

then He will reward each according to his works." (Matthew 16:27)

"Jesus answered and said to them, 'My mother and My brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it!'" (Luke 8:21)

"The holy scripture or Word is Divine Truth."
Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 1

"And [they shall] come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil,

to the resurrection of condemnation." (John 5:29)

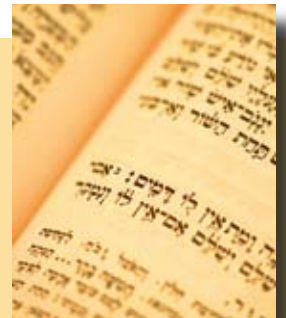
"If you know these things, happy are you if you do them." (John 13:17).

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give everyone according to his work." (Revelation 22:12)

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness." (Psalm 37:3)

Did you know?

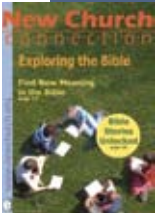
At the time of His crucifixion, the words on Jesus's cross were written in Greek, Latin and Hebrew? "An inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: This is the king of the Jews" (Luke 23:38). Interestingly, these are the languages of the Old Testament (Hebrew), New Testament (Greek) and Writings for the New Church (Latin).





The New Church (General Church of the New Jerusalem) has congregations on every continent around the world. When you travel to different congregations you will notice that they may emphasize different worship styles. One congregation might have recorded music, another might have drums and guitars, and yet another an organ or choirs. As various as the music and styles of worship may be, you will find people at each congregation inspired and dedicated to the powerful teachings of the New Church. All people are welcome to join in worship and participate in the life and community of the church.

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Did you know?

To say that the New Church is biblically based, might be an understatement. The Writings for the New Church quote from the Bible more than 50,000 times.

- **God is Love** and nothing but what is good can come from God, because His very nature is Love. God came to this world in the form of Jesus Christ, who is the one and only God.
- **The Old and New Testaments** have a deeper meaning, revealed in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, which help people learn how to live happy and useful lives to eternity.
- **All religions have goodness** in them. There are many paths and gates into the heavenly city, New Jerusalem.
- **Heaven is for everyone** who wants to live a heavenly life. Heaven is where people (angels) love God and others and want to be useful. While people are free to choose to live in hell, God wants everyone to live with Him in heaven to eternity.
- **The Last Judgment predicted** in the Bible is not about the physical world; nor does God impose His will on us. He affirms the judgment we make upon ourselves according to the way we live. People who love God and try to live a good life according to what they believe are saved.
- **Marriage can last forever** for God blesses people with a special love in marriage that goes on after death, even to eternity.
- **God's providence is powerful** and unending. God guides each person's spiritual path, from the smallest things up to the biggest things, and His angels are with us every moment.



The Lord is present with you through the reading of the Word; but He is conjoined with you through your understanding of truth from the Word.

Doctrine of Sacred Scripture 78

The union of heaven with a person is through the Word.

White Horse 10, Emanuel Swedenborg

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