

Family Lesson - The Baptism of Jesus (Mark 1)
Level 5 – The Meaning of Baptism



This picture of the baptism of Jesus was drawn in 1834 by Julius von Carolsfeld.

In it we see many of the elements of the Lord's baptism mentioned in our lesson from the first book of Mark—the dove, the river Jordan, and John the Baptist, who is clothed in camel's hair with a leather belt. Note also the wilderness in the distance and the people who came to be baptized, called, "*All the land of Judea and those from Jerusalem.*"

This artist has pictured angels hovering solicitously over the Lord as He is baptized. While they are not mentioned in the Gospel of Mark, the Word does teach that by baptism everyone is introduced into the spiritual company of Christian angels. "*In the heavens, infants are introduced by baptism into the Christian heaven and angels are there assigned them by the Lord, to care for them*" (TCR 677).

The Meaning of Baptism

In considering the subject of baptism in the Writings, the chapter in *True Christian Religion* begins by stating that without a revelation of the spiritual sense of the Word, no one can truly understand baptism.

Thinking about the correspondence of the things pictured in the illustration of the Lord's baptism can help us understand the meaning of baptism. Remember that everything in the natural world pictures spiritual things on a natural plane. The natural things mentioned in the Word are brought together because of the story they tell us *spiritually*.

Reflect on the spiritual meaning of what is shown in the picture above:

- Water is a symbol of truth.
- The Jordan River (as a boundary) means first entrance into knowledges of good and truth.
- John the Baptist represents the Word.
- Those who came to be baptized by John were external people who were prepared by this baptism to receive the Messiah.
- At baptism angels are appointed by the Lord to take care of the infant or adult being baptized.
- Doves correspond to affections and thence to thoughts about regeneration and purification.
- Sky represents the heavens.

Now fill in the blanks in the following paragraph:

Just as we are introduced by baptism into the beginning of our regeneration, so the Lord at His baptism was first introduced to His great work of redemption of the world. Like Him, we can begin our work by coming to

(John's correspondence)

to be immersed in

(Jordan River's correspondence)

and afterwards look up to fill our minds with thoughts about regeneration and

(dove's correspondence).