

General Church Education



Family Lesson: Mark 1

The Lord's Baptism

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Family Lesson 31 - A

The Lord's Baptism
Mark 1

Family Talk
THE LORD'S BAPTISM AND THE DOVE

Rev. Donald L. Rose

We have just read the story of the Lord's coming to the Jordan River where people were flocking to be baptized. They came to John, the Baptist, who did the simple act of washing. This pictured the washing away of what is wrong. And Jesus also came to be baptized. John was surprised and did not feel that he had the right to be part of a ceremony involving the Lord. But Jesus said it should be done.

At the special moment of baptism there was seen a dove coming down from heaven and coming to rest upon Jesus. Of all the birds, the dove has a meaning of cleanness and purity. Like the lamb of the animal kingdom, it is white and gentle. And do you know that John called the Lord a lamb, when he saw Him coming to be baptized? He said,

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world". (John 1: 29).

You probably know that a lamb is the symbol of innocence and gentleness. Every little child has the quality of innocence. All who are willing to follow the Lord may be called the sheep or lambs of His pasture. But there is one who is Innocence itself. There is one who may be called "*the lamb.*" (See *Heaven and Hell* 282.)

The nature of the dove is also something we should all have. We are to be as wise and as careful as serpents, but as harmless as doves (*Matthew 10: 16.*). In your life you want to have a good effect on others and on the world. You want to be one who helps and upholds, and you do not want to be one that harms things, ruins things, hurts others. If you did ruin or break something that was good, you would be sorry for it, and you would wish not to be harmful in that way again. And so you can understand the disciples wanting to be harmless as doves, and you can understand why we look to Him who "*takes away the sin of the world.*"

When do you see birds? Sometimes you might go looking for them. You might go to a place just to watch them. Other times you just notice them when you are not expecting to see them. Someone points up and says, "Look at that flock of birds flying." You may notice a bird on a branch, or the bird may just catch your attention as it flies away.

Well, in the spiritual world birds very often appear, and there when they appear, angels know that they mean something. If ugly dark birds circled around with moaning cries, you would know it was some kind of trouble. If a noble bird appeared, you would sense that it meant something good.

The Writings tell us, “*Doves often appear in heaven; and whenever they appear, the angels know that they are correspondences*” (TCR 144). They tell something about the thoughts and feelings of those nearby.

Can you imagine different kinds of good thoughts and feelings? You feel good when thinking about what you really care about and love. Listen to a true story about something Swedenborg really cared about and was thinking deeply about.

Swedenborg had once heard a voice from the highest heaven saying that it was important for people to know the truth about the love that the Lord provides between one man and one woman. And a married couple from heaven was sent down for him to see, and he noticed that they had doves in their hands. (*Conjugal Love* 42.)

Well, later Swedenborg awakened one morning to hear beautiful music, and when he looked, he saw what was like a golden rain coming down on a house in which were some married couples. He went and talked with them. Swedenborg asked them to tell him the deepest thing they knew about love. At this they looked out of the window, and what do you think they saw sitting on a branch?

Yes, it was a dove, and they said they would tell these deep things. “*As long as this dove is seen, it is a sign to us that we may*” (CL 156e: 4).

But when they had told some things, they then told no more, for they said, “*the dove at our window has flown away.*”

Yet again at a later time, Swedenborg was thinking deeply about the love that comes from heaven, and again he went to the place where the married couples were. Do you know what he asked them first? He asked them whether the dove that had flown away had come back. They said, “*Yes, and it spread out its wings from which we guessed that you would be coming to learn some more*” (CL 208).

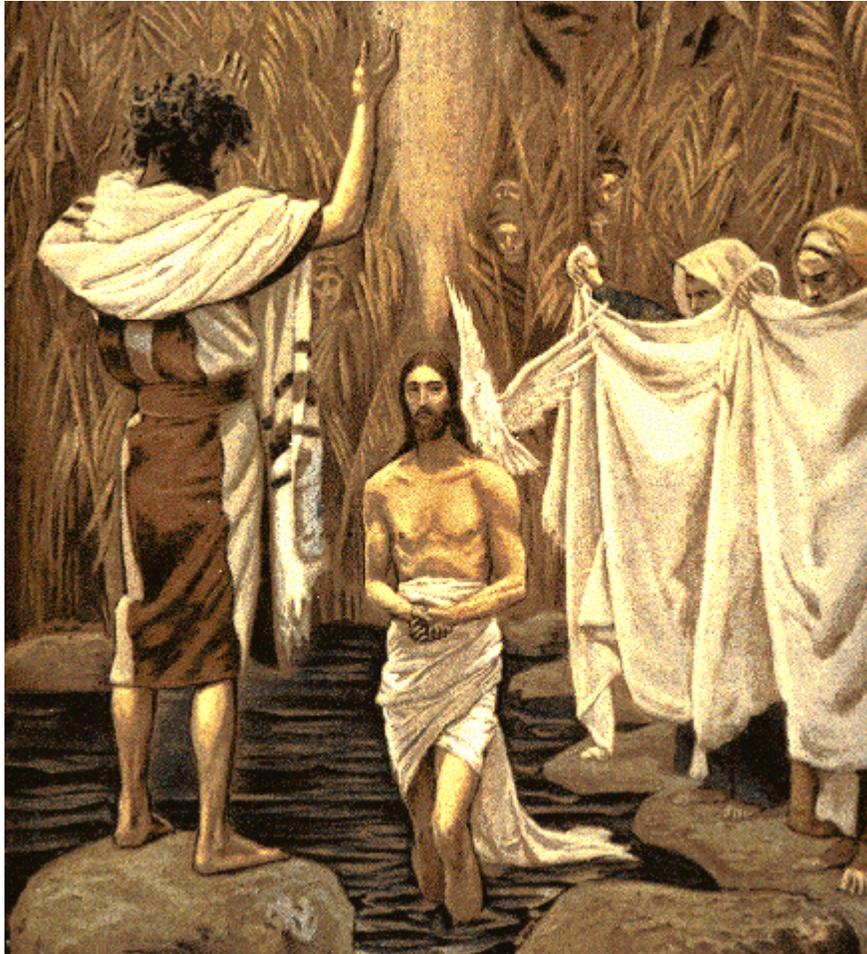
Something that is clean and pure and good can be pictured in the gentle, white dove. And we know that all that is clean and pure and good comes from the Lord Himself. And we will remember that when the Lord was baptized in the Jordan River, a dove was seen coming down and lighting upon Him.



The Lord's Baptism

Mark 1

LEVEL 1 – THE BAPTISM OF JESUS



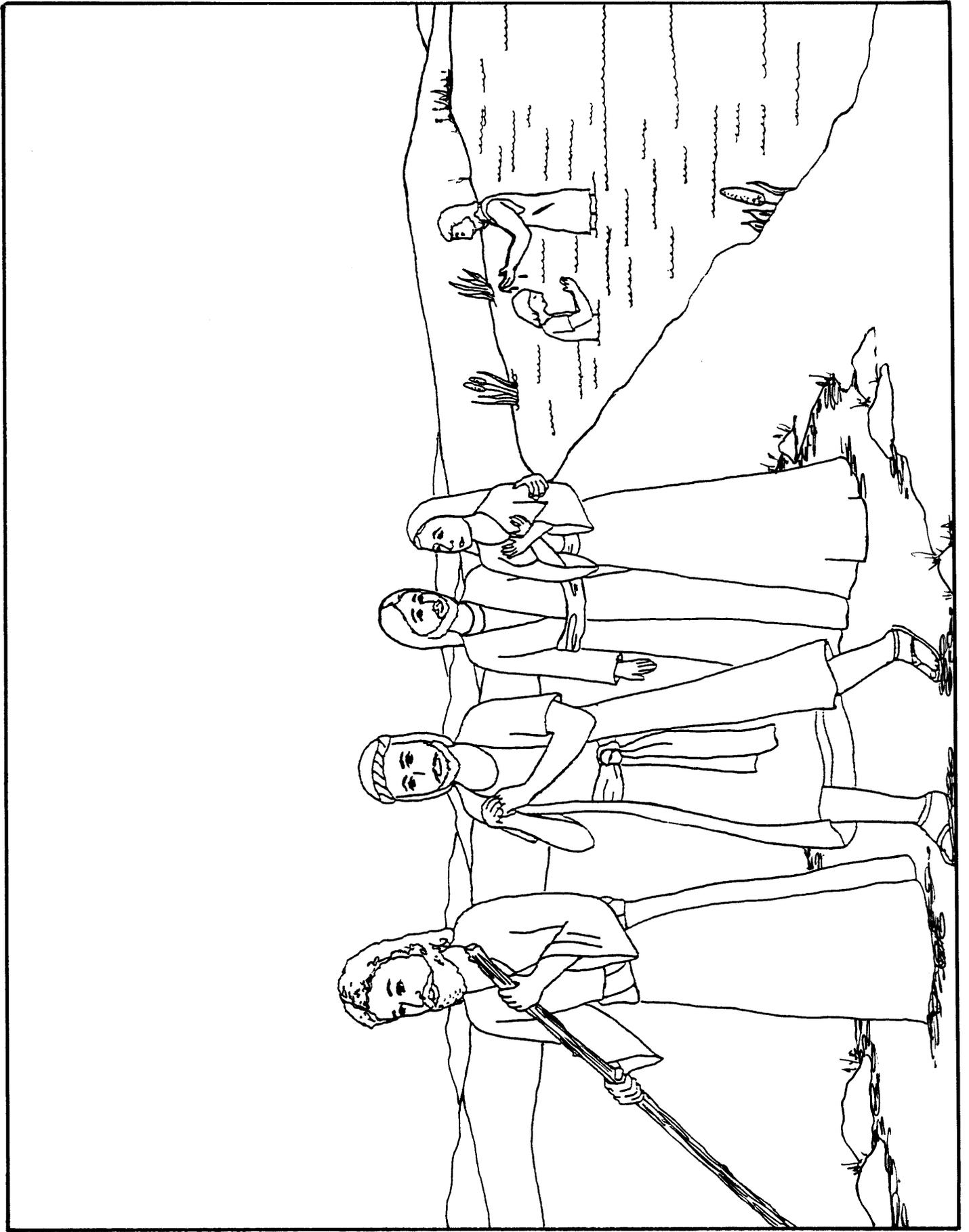
On the next two pages are pictures for you to color:

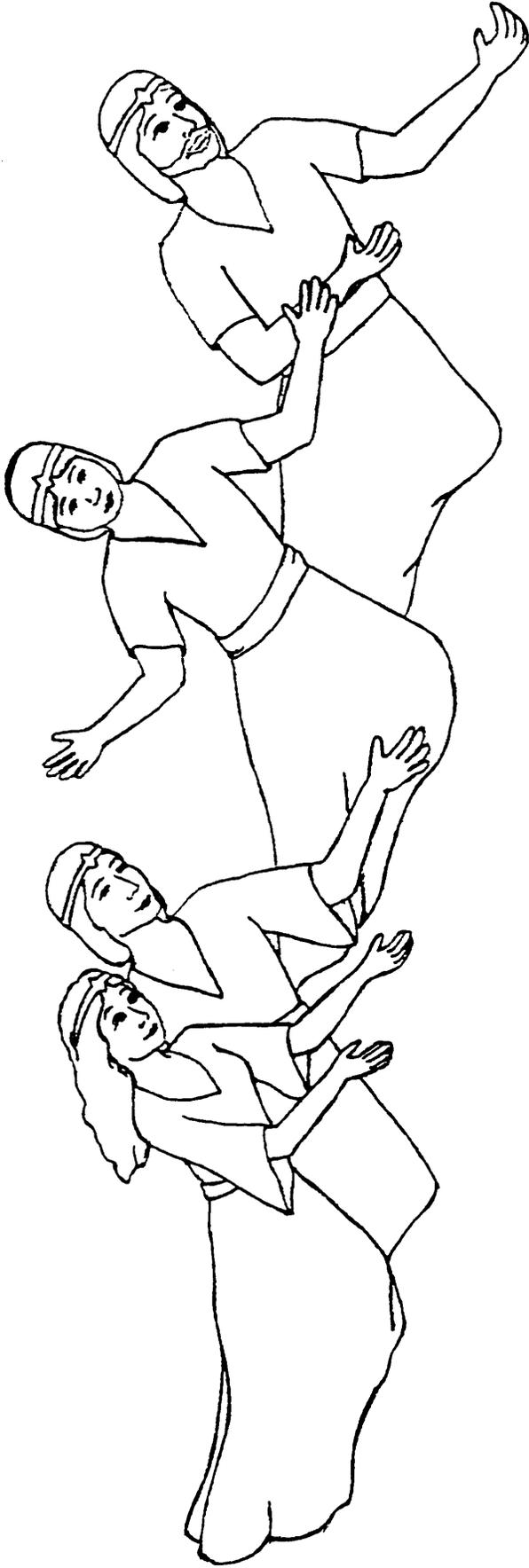
Color the picture of John baptizing Jesus in the River Jordan.

Color the picture of angels.

Glue the angel picture behind the first picture.

See the angels rejoicing in the Lord's baptism.





The Lord's Baptism

Mark 1

LEVEL 2 – BAPTISM AND THE DOVE

**And immediately, coming up from the water,
He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a
dove.**

**Then a voice came from heaven,
“You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”**

Mark 1:10,11



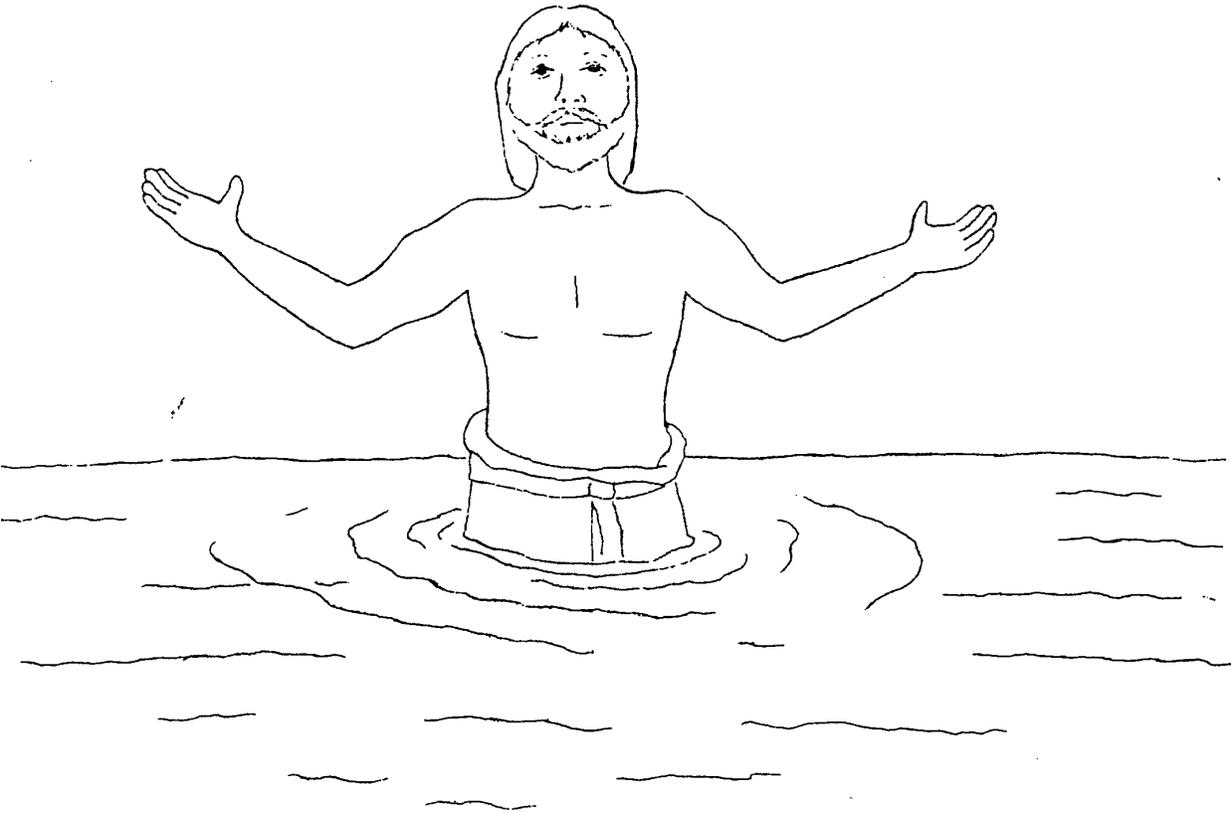
Project:

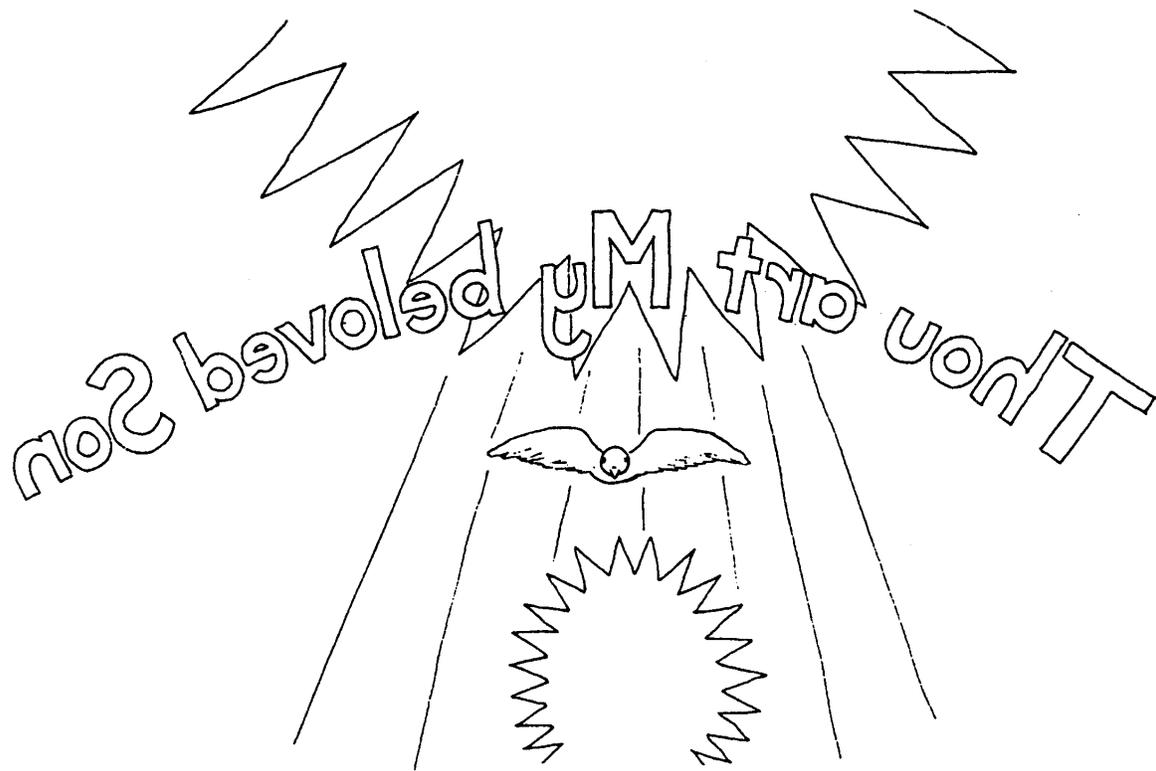
Color the picture of the Lord in the River Jordan on page 2.

Color the picture of a sun, a halo, and a dove on page 3.
Make the sun and the halo very bright.

Put page 3 behind page 2.

Now stand in front of a mirror and ask someone to help you to read the words reflected in the mirror. They are the words that were heard when Jesus was coming up out of the water after being baptized.





The Lord's Baptism

Mark 1

LEVEL 3 – PREPARING FOR THE LORD

Before the Lord could begin His work in the world, the people who would learn from Him had to be ready for Him.



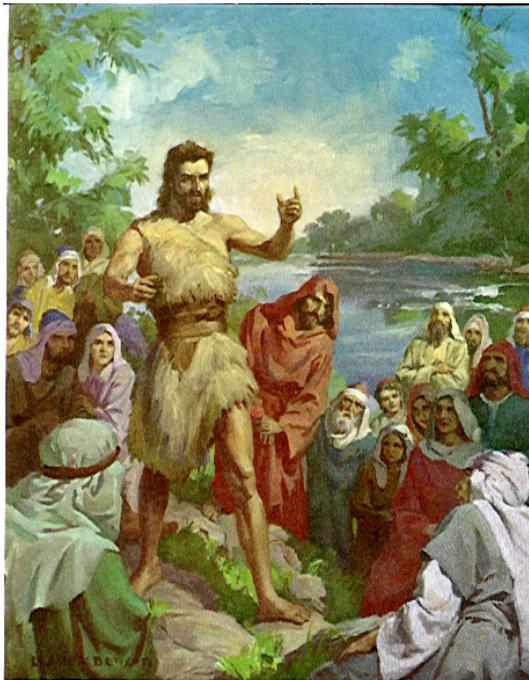
To prepare them, many prophets through the years had told the people to repent of their evil ways. The most famous of these prophets was Elijah.

When the last of the prophets, John the Baptist, came along, the people often called him Elias, or Elijah.

Elijah was followed by the prophet Elisha, just as John the Baptist was followed by the Lord. In many ways their lives were alike.

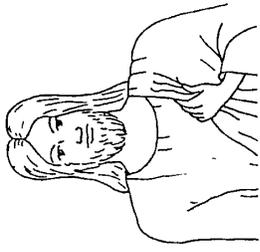


You will see similarities between John and Elijah.



They both told the people when they were doing wrong.

**They are like the Lord's Word,
showing us when we are doing wrong.**

	How did he dress?	What did he do at the Jordan River?	How did he die?
<p>Elijah</p> 	<p>2 Kings 1: 18</p>	<p>2 Kings 2: 8</p>	<p>2 Kings 2: 11</p>
<p>Elisha</p> 	<p>Matt. 11: 8 From this verse we can conclude that he wore soft clothing.</p>	<p>2 Kings 2: 14</p>	<p>2 Kings 13: 14-21</p>
<p>John the Baptist</p> 	<p>Mark 1: 6</p>	<p>Mark 1: 5</p>	<p>Mark 6: 20-29</p>
<p>Jesus Christ</p> 	<p>John 19: 23</p>	<p>Mark 1: 9</p>	<p>John 10: 17-18, 12: 32</p>

The Baptism of Jesus

Mark 1

LEVEL 4 – WILD BEASTS AND THE RAGING OCEAN

Although the story of the Lord's baptism presents to us the image of a harmless dove, and although when the Lord came to be baptized, He was called by John “the Lamb of God,” your project as seniors has to do with fierce animals.

Think of the kind of wild animal you would not want to meet in the dark—an animal whose growl or roar you would not want to hear.

Did you know that when the Lord went to be baptized, He was getting Himself ready to be attacked by forces of terrible fierceness? Notice in the 12th verse of Mark 1, that after the baptism the Lord was “with the wild beasts.” Make no mistake about it. This was a horrible attack from the forces of hell. You are asked to draw a few pictures, even if they are the simplest outline sketches, to portray the titanic battle of history. *(You could use cut-out pictures if you can find them, or even computer clip-art)*

Application

Read the passages below from the *True Christian Religion*.

Make at least two sketches. If you love to draw you could make some really dramatic pictures.

“The Lord's combat against hell may be compared... to a conflict with all the wild beasts of the earth... until not one of them dares to come forth and attack any man who is in the Lord... Evil spirits are compared in the Word to wild beasts: and such are meant by the wild beasts with which the Lord was for forty days (Mark 1: 13) (TCR 123).

Make your animals look horrible. We are not really talking just about animals, but about something fierce that can be pictured in animals. If you, like David, were protecting sheep, and a lion or a bear attacked, the fierceness of the animal would instantly make it clear that a drastic danger must be met.

“Hell is like one monstrous man, or like a huge lion, with which indeed it is compared in the Word: therefore, unless the Lord kept that lion or monster chained up, we would keep falling into evil.”

Another comparison is that of a tremendous wave from the ocean threatening to smash us:

“It may be compared to resistance against the whole ocean, breaking in with its waves over demolished

barriers upon countries and towns; and the Lord's putting down of hell is meant by His calming the sea by saying, 'PEACE BE STILL.'"

Hell may be pictured like a great ocean pressing against a dike (*Arcana Coelestia* 1661), and the hells that attacked the Lord

"are like the sea which presses upon every part of a dike: and if the dike should be broken through by a cleft or a crack, the sea would never cease to burst through and overflow, until nothing was left standing. So would it be with man unless the Lord alone sustained in him the combats of temptations" (AC 1692).

This brings us to some comparisons that may very easily be sketched on paper, and which portray a tremendous truth. It is really true that without the Lord's help we are as powerless against hell as the following comparisons from *True Christian Religion*.

No more power than

"a fish has against the ocean, than a flea against a whale, or than a grain of dust against a falling mountain; and much less than a locust has against an elephant, or a fly against a camel" (TCR 68).

In a few seconds you could draw a picture of a flea and a whale. A collage of all these comparisons would be interesting. Do sketch at least some of these comparisons and the other pictures listed above. Bringing a high truth right down to the ultimate of a picture is an excellent way to get something fixed in your mind.

This is more than an idle thing to do, for in doing it you are illustrating the tremendous thing that the Lord came into the world to do for us. He fought against all of hell for our protection.

And this was like

"a shepherd, who like Samson and David rescues his sheep from the jaws of a lion or bear; or who drives back those beasts when they break forth from the woods into the fields. . .and then returns to his sheep, pastures them in safety, and waters them in limpid fountains" (TCR 122).

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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.

Application

Your project involves the correspondences of the things pictured in the scene on the first page. 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*. In doing this project, you will study, and hopefully learn, the correspondence in the story of the Lord's baptism.

1. Cut out all the pieces from the next page.
2. By studying what is written on them, fit them over the parts of the pictures of the Lord's baptism of which they tell the correspondence.
3. When the whole puzzle is pieced together, you will no longer see the natural picture, but will read its spiritual meaning.
4. 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).

