

Baptism: A Doorway to Eternal Life

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” John 3

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28: 19-20

The purpose of *Baptism* is to help join us with the Lord. There are three ways in which *Baptism* can help us reach this goal:

- Baptism creates an introductory link between a person and the Lord. Of course, in an absolute sense the Lord is always linked with us. Still, He provides that human beings have a role to play in becoming conscious of Him, turning toward Him, and loving Him—and in helping others to do so. This link with the Lord is established from *outside* a person (through reading the Word, and through people who believe in Him) and also from *inside* a person (through angels who recognize the sign of baptism on our spirits and so draw close to us).

If we compared how baptism works to the way a computer works, baptism is sort of like a “short cut” on our “desktop” or a “favorite places” link on our Web browser. Once the pathway formed at Baptism is in place, we can make quicker connection to heaven.

- When we use our inner pathways to the Lord, we come to know and recognize Him and follow Him. If our spiritual “links” are not used, it can be harder for us to find our heavenly ties. At any time we can repent and work to establish new ties with heaven.
- Finally, we are can be joined with the Lord as we avoid doing evil things and choose the life of heaven. Another name for this is regeneration.

People can be baptized by their parents or guardians when they are babies, or choose to do so themselves when they are adults. Later on, those who were baptized as babies can choose to have a *Confirmation of Baptism* or *Confession of Faith* service as adults. Choosing a life-time religious commitment is an adult decision.

You may want to read “The Purpose and Meaning of Baptism” by Rev. Grant Odhner for background information to help you think about the following discussion questions.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you go to heaven if you’re not baptized?
2. How does baptism change your life?
3. What happens physically during a baptism?
4. What happens spiritually during a baptism?
5. Why does the minister make the sign of the cross in water on the head and chest during baptism?
6. What is a Confirmation of Baptism service?
7. How does the promise of baptism become fulfilled?
8. When should you get baptized?