

## Luther's Explanation

John the baptizer was offering the *people* of Israel a baptism of repentance. But [Mark Allen Powell](#) writes that John was calling *Israel* to repentance and, though individuals might have personal peccadillos to confess (3:6), the primary focus was probably on the sins of the nation. Jesus and others were baptized by John to symbolize a new birth for that nation, a cleansing for the people of God.



In our baptism, we are born again – made children of God and members of the church which is the body of Christ. Martin Luther uses the image of death and resurrection at the baptismal font – we are drowned in the waters of baptism, and when we emerge, we are actually a new person, washed clean, raised up to a new life in Christ Jesus.

Baptism is not a “holy insurance policy,” something that we need in order to be saved. We are beloved children of God from the moment of our creation. But baptism is important for us and for our community.

The fact that all four gospels report the baptism of Jesus points to its importance. Luther captured the primary meaning for Jesus’ baptism when he wrote: “Christ accepted it from John for the reason that he was entering into our stead, indeed , our person, that is, becoming a sinner for us, taking upon himself the sins which he has not committed, and wiping them out and drowning them in his holy baptism.” (*Luther’s Works* 51: 315)

## PROMISE

This week, cling to God’s promise for you:

“This day is My gift for you.

Today the ordinary ends and the spectacular begins.”

## The EXTRA Mile



Baptismal Fonts come in all shapes and sizes. What is the history of the baptismal font?

Visit Wikipedia and find out.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptismal\\_font](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptismal_font))



# THE STORY *continues...*

*Join us each week as God weaves His Story into the fabric of our daily lives.*

Chapter 23 Jesus Ministry Begins

## **L**isten to *The Story*

Read **Chapter 23** of *The Story*

As you read through chapter 23 ask yourself these questions:

- What is the significance of Jesus' baptism on the rest of his ministry?
- Why must Jesus undergo the temptation in the wilderness?
- The woman at the well says, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep." Without knowing it, her words poetically teach what important fact about her need for salvation from Jesus? Jesus teaches, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick." What is he trying to teach? Who are "the sick?" Who are/is the "healthy?"

## **L**earn *The Story*

*Look for ways in which God's story and your story connect this week.*

There are many stories in this chapter that tell us about the kind of people Jesus interacted with and with whom He made friendships. Jesus makes a statement about true friendship by those with whom He chooses to be friends.

For each of the characters below, answer the question: What have you learned from Jesus friendship with           (character)          ?

**Example – John the Baptist: Jesus loves religious outcasts.**

- Wedding Guests (p. 325):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Nicodemus (p. 326):  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The Disciples (p. 333)

## **L**ove *The Story*

*Intentionally take a step forward in faith.*

It sounds like Jesus is an evangelist. It seems that no matter what He did, He was concerned with telling people about His Father in heaven and the kingdom over which He rules and how it is better than anything earthly. Ask yourself this question:

*Who, in your life needs to hear about Jesus, the Son of God?*

*Who has God called you to in order for them to hear the Gospel?*

*Spend time in prayer as you ask God to show you those people and think strategically and lovingly about how you might find time and take time to tell those people about Jesus.*