

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

THE COMING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness in Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.

And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

And now also the axe is laid under the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

—*Matthew 3:1-12*

This passage is full of helpful symbology for the Christian aspirant.

Into the wilderness of every person's lower nature there must come at some time a "voice," a moral sense based upon truth (water) which prepares the way for the birth of the Christ within. It inspires

the individual to recognize his own responsibility and to repent for having acted contrary to cosmic law. Repentance, restitution, and reform, by cleansing the inner self, prepare the way for the Lord and "make his paths straight." Then the Love-Wisdom Aspect may begin to flower into its sublime beauty.

The raiment of camel's hair symbolizes the obedience of the mind to spiritual guidance; the leathern girdle — the sustaining presence of the Spirit; the locusts and wild honey — the pure food of the Spirit, uncontaminated by things of the world.

Jerusalem is the City of Peace, set upon seven hills. It symbolizes the right side of the brain of man through which the Ego can function more perfectly. When the spiritualizing process has reached the point where the selfish, lower nature (signified by the Lucifer-ruled left side of the brain) is under control or transmuted, then the aspirant is able to respond wholly to the call of the Higher Self. Then he is baptized in Jordan (water) — he receives the inflow of the eternal Divine Life.

There are always those (Pharisees and Sadducees) who are blinded to truth by the intellect, but their sophistries do not hold in the light of intuitive knowing. The concrete mind has become immured in desire and does not reach the fount of wisdom.

The axe of Truth, when applied to mental knowledge, immediately hews down that which "bringeth not forth good fruit." The fire of the Spirit always eventually burns up the chaff (untruth). ★