

**HANS BERND ALTINGER**

# **JOHN THE BAPTIST**

**HIS TRUE LIFE AND WORK**

**HIS RETURN**

**POSS-VERLAG  
WASSERBURG**

The map  
"Palestine at the Time of John the Baptist and Jesus"  
was drawn by Hans Bernd Altinger.

For the protective cover the aquarelle  
“John the Baptist, the Voice in the Wilderness”  
by Gertraud Berger was used.

#### Translator's comment

The translation of the spiritual messages  
adheres to the syntax of John the Baptist,  
wherever he is using an order of words  
varying from common German sentence-structure.

The term man stands for human being.

The expression “man” refers to human nature  
and character, in all their material aspects of existence.

Source of Biblical quotations:  
Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Edition  
Anglicized Edition  
Oxford University Press, 1995

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*I walked the paths of light,  
my senses listened to words of salvation  
and, still I am student.*

*Yet, let me assure you,  
there is no greater grace,  
than being a disciple of the Lord.*

(Spiritual word of an Essene Master)

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PHOTOS: Ain Karem the place of birth of John the Baptist.

The area of Bethany.

Dead Sea Scroll:Part of the Habakkuk -Commentary.

One of the baptismal basins at Qumran.

Ruin at Qumran.

Qumran Caves (of the scrolls).

Palestine at the time of John the Baptist and Jesus.

## PREFACE

*“ I say tell you, among those born of women  
no one is greater prophet than John.” (Luke 7,28)*

Almost exactly 2000 years ago a man was born in Jerusalem whose name holds an extraordinary significance in Christianity as well as in the Islamic world: Jochanan Ben Zechariah, John the Baptist.

His birth, his life, and his death are surrounded by mystery. The New Testament and the Koran report about John the Baptist, but, nevertheless, leave him in a mysterious semi-darkness. The Gospels do mention the message of John the Baptist and his connection to Jesus, but they leave many questions unanswered.

Who was this ascetic, preacher, and popular hero really? How did he live? What was the mission he fulfilled? What were the reasons leading to his decapitation by Herod? Was he a member of the secret brotherhood of the Essenes or was he maybe the teacher of Jesus?

These were the questions I was confronted with when, some years ago, I came into contact with the figure John the Baptist in an astounding way. They were remarkable phenomena, signs, and experiences that led me to these questions. Shortly afterwards I encountered spiritual messages of John the Baptist and the Essenes. The poetry and the contents of these messages fascinated me. Nevertheless, it took considerable time of scrutiny and doubt, before I understood that the *spiritual world* is just as real as the *world of matter*. I learnt that the spirit of a Jesus or John is always present and working. Insights into the world of anthroposophy<sup>1</sup> as well as into the esoteric roots of the great religions helped me to further my understanding.

At that time I knew almost nothing of the Essenes. About the life and work of John the Baptist I knew as much as any average-Christian. Full of inquisitiveness, I began my search. I wanted to discover if there is a connection regarding the contents between the spiritual messages of John the Baptist of today, and his biblical and historic mission of before. I asked myself if the spiritual messages of the Essenes harmonized with the ideas of the former brotherhood from the Dead Sea.

In the course of my studies of the Essenes this concurrence was quickly found, since there are the finds of scrolls of Qumran that reveal much to us about the world of this religious grouping at the time of Christ.

During my research about the life and work of John the Baptist I soon had to recognize, however, that an overall view could only be attained by the collecting and sorting of many and small mosaic stones. I discovered more than I had hoped for. Only thus was it possible for me to throw light on the mysteries surrounding John the Baptist and to write his life anew.

Yet, I found even more: Prophecies heralding the return of John the Baptist in an impressive way. My surprise was great, when I found out that these prophecies were in line with the spiritual messages received by John the Baptist and the Essenes.

I became conscious that the existence of John the Baptist, his work of then, but also his future mission have to be seen in a far greater context than Christian mankind is anticipating.

Therefore this book is structured into two large circles of topics. While in parts I and II the historical and biblical life of John the Baptist and the Essenes are described, in parts III and IV the focus is on the prophetic assertion of the return of John the Baptist, and on the spiritual messages that also herald a renewed return of the Baptist in the near future.

**PART I**

**JOHN THE BAPTIST**

**HIS LIFE AND WORK WRITTEN ANEW**



## INTRODUCTION

John the Baptist is one of the most outstanding personalities in the history of mankind. His work had great influence on the Christian churches and on the Islamic world. Christians venerate him as the precursor of Jesus Christ, Muslims revere him as a great prophet. Despite of all adoration of John the Baptist, there is a veil of mystery surrounding his mission. So, even up to now, only fragments and clichés of his work are known. It is my intention to lift the veil in order to show the true course of his life, and to emphasize the complete impact of his mission, then and today.

It is astounding that so little knowledge is gathered on such a central figure of the Bible. When I started to seek and research I encountered voluminous material. Through the findings of the Dead Sea Scrolls in February 1947 knowledge on John the Baptist did not increase substantially. However, the background of his mission can be illuminated more clearly.

Aside from the biblical texts and the Dead Sea Scrolls, therefore, other sources had to be opened to write the life and work of John the Baptist anew.

Yet, I was always aware of the following: a man, a prophet did make history. His name and work remain unforgotten. His knowledge, his wisdom and teachings were significantly more encompassing than the Bible conveys to us. His charisma, his ability to move the men of his time, and the high esteem and veneration of his fellow-men were not only based on the few sentences cited in the New Testament. Alone, it must have been more that caused men in Palestine to cover long stretches afoot to hear his word.

What abilities characterized the preacher? Who were his teachers? What were his conditions of life? And not lastly: what was his mission?

## GENERAL PORTRAIT

With John the Baptist the Old Testament ends; and; at the same time; the New Testament begins. He does not separate them, he connects them. For this it was necessary, however, to tear down the walls of the laws, rules, and rituals of the Old Covenant; and to erect them anew through words and works in the essence of the coming Christian message of salvation.

John the Baptist is referred to as the last Prophet of the Old Covenant. Due to his effective renewals of existing structures and exegeses Thomas Aquinas says in his major work *Summa Theologica* (1266/73):

*“John the Baptist was not only a prophet, but more than a prophet.”*

According to biblical sources John the Baptist was born six months before Jesus of Nazareth. According to the Evangelist Luke, Elizabeth was in her sixth month of pregnancy when Mary learnt of her own. Thus the day of birth determined by the Church falls on July 24, that is six months before the birth of Jesus. On December 24, the day of the birth of Jesus fixed by the Church, the sun reaches its deepest position in the year, and from then on it rises. The determination of both days of birth, therefore, is symbolically related to the words of John the Baptist: *“He must increase, I, however, must decrease.”*

The birthplace of John the Baptist is Ain Karem (En Karim) at the southwest city limits of Jerusalem. His mother Elizabeth and Mary were cousins. (Esmira, the mother of Elizabeth, and Anna, the mother of Mary, were sisters). The indication of Luke 1:36-37 that the angel announcing Mary the birth also mentions to Mary the God-given pregnancy of her relative Elizabeth is interesting. This may have been the cause for Mary's visit to her cousin. The Christian churches commemorate this day with the feast of the *Visitation of Mary*. Luke 1:41 reports that the child in Elizabeth's womb *“leapt”* when Mary appeared with the fruit of her womb in the house of Zechariah.

Both births were announced by an angel (Gabriel), who at the same time determined the names of the children. Both conceptions are in the realm of the mysterious. Varying early-Christian texts tell of a correlation of the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus with the visit of the three Magi. Both children were to be killed by Herod the Great. Again an angel appears and orders the flight.

Aside from the parallels that both lived at the same time, worked for the same aim with the same means, and died a violent death due to mysterious sentences at the same age of approximately forty<sup>2</sup>, a further parallel appears in the passing: Herod Antipas did not wish for the beheading of the Baptist. From historical sources we

know that the latter even held the Baptist in high esteem, respected him, and often sought conversation with him (Mk. 6:20), especially during his captivity in the fortress Machaerus<sup>3</sup>. Reluctantly he, however, gave in to the urging of his wife Herodias and her daughter Salome. Also, with regards to Jesus, we know that Pilate was against his crucifixion. Yet, also he gave in to the pressing of the priesthood.

Records and descriptions of both figures of the light show surprising similarities. To see one apart from the other is difficult. One actually feels, that John the Baptist and Jesus are a unity, complementing and fusing each other at once. It almost seems as if providence had embodied one principle in two persons to ensure that this principle took root in the temporal world.

John the Baptist is one of the great Biblical figures. All four evangelists (Mark, Luke, Matthew, John) commence with John the Baptist. The most comprising and most impressive presentation of the work of John the Baptist is hereby given by the Evangelist John. Altogether, John the Baptist is mentioned in more than a hundred verses in the Bible. In the Koran (19:1-15), the annunciation of the birth and mission to Zechariah is described. Further, the wisdom is mentioned with which John the Baptist is bestowed already as a child. The Muslims revere John the Baptist with the name Yahya. He is considered the precursor to the Prophet Muhammad. In the Christian world he has the names:

Johannes der Täufer, Johann Baptist, John the Baptist, Giovanni Battista, Jean Baptiste, Ionnis Prodromos(=the precursor).

The Hebrew name is Jochanan Ben Zechariah: John the son of Zechariah.

John the Baptist is greatly venerated. In the hierarchy of the saints, he is holding first rank, together with Mary, the Mother of Christ. Especially during the Middle Ages, the portrayal of his person and his work was a popular theme in Christian art. Particularly in the "Deesis-pictures"<sup>4</sup>, the enthroned or uplifted, standing Christ is portrayed between Mary and John the Baptist. Nevertheless, John the Baptist is not a saint close to the people nor is he a popular saint. There also are very few legends about him, as is generally common with saints. Prayers to John the Baptist for intercession are rare in our time. To many believers, he also seems inaccessible, erroneously. In a certain way, a myth has been established around him.

I interviewed a large number of Christians from all kinds of denominations. The biblically-essential section of his work (appeal for penitence and conversion, baptism, pointing towards Jesus the Messiah) is known to all those questioned in one or several of all points. All of them describe John the Baptist with the characteristics courage, strength, discipline, wisdom, uncompromising firmness, eloquence, audaciousness, severity, and self-withdrawal. Strangely, the traits love and kindness are hardly mentioned at all. In the course of this book, I will point out,

however, that also these are essential aspects of the character of John the Baptist.

We read in the sermons of John the Baptist (Lk.3:10 -14) to the crowd: “*Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.*” or to the tax-collectors: “*collect no more than than the amount prescribed for you.*” or to the soldiers: “*do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.*” These, however, are attributed to Jesus by most Christians. This confusion is close at hand, since especially the aspects charity and grace were personified by Jesus.

The revolutionary message of John the Baptist is easily lost to modern ears. His appeal to share one’s possessions, one’s bread with the neighbour, also with those underprivileged cannot be found in the Old Testament. That John the Baptist addressed his words, his message to all social ranks, to every one, even to the impure ones and to heathens was also a breach in the existing order. In addition to this, there were his attacks on the complacency and hypocrisy of the Pharisees<sup>5</sup> and Sadducees<sup>6</sup>, as they are very clearly described in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt.3:7-10) and in the Gospel of Luke (Lk.3:7-9). With these words, he discards their spiritual and priestly leadership of the Jews. Even more so, the words were an assault on the spiritual-religious elite of the People of Israel, who saw themselves as the chosen ones of Israel.

John the Baptist initiated a movement with his sermons that one has to call *the start of a spiritual journey bound for new shores*. His charisma and power of expression, his words and deeds were epoch-making and guided the people in great crowds to him. Apparently everybody, even his adversaries, respected the integrity of his work, for nobody imputed personal or political motives to him. Even up to now, I know of no historian, no author, who would connect John the Baptist with political or egotistical motives.

People held John the Baptist in esteem on account of the following reasons: His courage regarding the spiritual-religious elite of Israel; the initiation of the baptism, especially the Baptism of Jesus, and, in connection with this his owning-up to the messianic movement; his uncompromising firmness towards Herod Antipas; his discipline in word and deed; his withdrawing himself at the height of his popularity. The Baptist remained humble despite of his success. He refers to someone greater, the Messiah.

In this lies his extraordinary grandeur: John the Baptist had indescribable influence over the people. But he did not accept veneration by the people, and he referred to someone still unknown: to Jesus, the Messiah, who was to come. At the zenith of his fame, he made way for somebody else. He was prepared to step back, and to even make ready the way for the latter.

When many Christians see in the Baptist the attribute of severity, or even regard him as unapproachable, this may be because his demands seem too high and that

his call for penitence is misinterpreted. The word penitence is estranged from its former sense in today's usage. The Greek "*metanoia*" comes quite close to that which the Old Testament and prophetic meaning of "penitence" signifies. *Penitence is change of mind*". Thus, it is neither self-punishment nor subsequent remorse, but rather conversion and new orientation. With "*repent*" the Baptist invited people: convert your haughtiness to humility! Do not make your body your idol! Do not seek salvation in external things! Do not strive for material gains! Return to God and align yourselves with God's laws!

The Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke name the desert (Mt.3:1, Mk.1:4, Lk.3:2) and the Jordan River (Mt.3:6, Mk.1:5, Lk.3:3) as the two settings of John the Baptist's ministry. "Desert" refers to the Judean Desert. Matthew calls it "*the wilderness of Judea*" in 3:1. The word "wilderness" here is the common translation of the Hebrew term *midbar* that does not describe an area of sand and scree without plants, but an area unsuited for agriculture. A limited use as pasture for camels, sheep, and goats is possible, however.

Luke describes in 3:3: "*he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*" The Evangelist John mentions as the site of the Baptism "*Bethany across the Jordan* (1:28) and "*Aenon near Salim*"(3:23). The Bethany spoken of here is not identical with the Beth any close to Jerusalem at the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, but refers to a baptism -site shortly before the Jordan empties into the Dead Sea. This site is called Beth -Abara in manuscripts of that time. The present small settlement of Bat Ha Arava , where the Wadi Nuseirat coming from the State of Jordan flows into the Jordan River , lies in the immediate vicinity of the historic site of baptism. Errors and flaws in translation slipped in into the early-Christian texts concerning the place of baptism. Where exactly and why John the Baptist baptized and preached especially *across the Jordan* is presented in the chapter *Mission and Work*.

Further sites where John the Baptist operated were Jerusalem, Jericho, Qumran, and the Judean Desert.

It can be dismissed, however, that he baptized or gave his great sermons in these places. Travelling nowadays through these areas with modern means of transport, and experiencing the barren, scarce density of places and population as well as the impassability of the country, it seems incredible that men like John the Baptist and Jesus caused the motion of crowds without having had any means of communication, except for the spoken word.

John the Baptist undoubtedly was a charismatic personality. Jesus calls him " the return of the Prophet Elijah"<sup>7</sup> (Mt.11:14; 17:10-13; Mk.9:13), and further says of him: "*what then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a*

prophet. *This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you". Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist."* (Mt.11:9-11).

From his innermost self John the Baptist was deeply permeated by the beginning of a new epoch, a turn of the age. He knew of the immediately impending ruin, if mankind did not change its way of thinking and acting, and did not align itself with the Spirit of God.

After the disciples had brought Jesus the message of the beheading of John, Jesus forcefully started to work and preach publicly. According to the Gospel of Matthew, he began his sermon with the words of John: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."* (Mt.4:17).

There were then, like today, many presumptuous wise ones who diligently contended to prove that the predictions of John the Baptist would not fulfil themselves and that his mission was a failure. Allow me to end this chapter with the following comment: If there was not initiated a new epoch, a turn in times, by John the Baptist and in subsequence by Jesus, when then, and by whom? John the Baptist was a fascinating figure, equipped with a vision, with courage, righteousness, unselfishness, and *"an eloquent tongue"*.

How much would our material and egotistical time, our time of a dogmatic church, our world of consumption and destruction need again a person like John the Baptist! Unfortunately, only an extremely small portion of his statements and sermons has been handed on to us and preserved. This may also be due to the evangelists who naturally saw their task more in the reproduction of the message of Jesus, and merely conceived John the Baptist to be the precursor and forerunner.

In the process of two-thousand years, this image has finally imprinted itself into Christianity. It is, however, merely a pale and one-sided reproduction of a courageous and forceful work. The texts of the New Testament do not do justice to John the Baptist, since they exclusively force him into the contours of the messenger and precursor. The evangelists subsequently pressed him to fit a certain role, and they measured his accomplishments from the point of view of christology. Accordingly, John the Baptist remains enigmatic. Even the essence of his mission, namely spiritual renewal, raising people's awareness to the high eternal values, his helping guidance to open their hearts to the Divine principle, is only vaguely reproduced. According to the gospels the work and word of John the Baptist fulfil themselves in the mission of Jesus. Thus, without Jesus, the Baptist would remain only a peripheral religious figure. Conversely, Jesus and his Gospel would be difficult to understand without John the Baptist.

The unity both figures of the light form is not expressed distinctly enough in the

texts of the New Testament. Thus, the work of John the Baptist naturally has to fade. His mission, however, becomes more significant when embedded in a network of his biography, the context of his time, as well as the historic process of Israel, and the Brotherhood of the Essenes.

## THE MYSTERY OF HIS BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

The birth of John the Baptist is surrounded by mysteries. All circumstances point to the appearance of an extraordinary human being, one whom God has sent. Thus the Prophet Isaiah<sup>8</sup> heralds the coming of John the Baptist with the words: *"A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (Is.40:3).* John the Baptist was referring to these words, when asked by the priests and Levites who he was: *"I am the voice of the one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord", as the Prophet Isaiah said." (John 1:23).*

The Prophet Malachi<sup>9</sup> also predicts the birth and mission of the precursor of Christ: *"See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight - indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts" (Mal.3:1).* At another place it says: *"Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes." (Mal.4:5).*

John the Baptist is finally questioned concerning this prophesy: *"Are you Elijah?" (John 1:21).*

The birth of John the Baptist, as well as the birth of Christ, is generally dated to the time 8-6 AD. According to the Pescher-method<sup>10</sup>, the date of birth of John the Baptist can be traced back to September 16, 8 BC, that of Jesus to March 1, 7 BC.

The name John is Jochanan in Hebrew, i.e., God is merciful. His mother Elizabeth (Hebrew Elisheba = my God is abundance) stems from the family of Aaron<sup>11</sup>, from the stock of Levi<sup>12</sup>. His father Zechariah (Hebrew: God reminded himself) was priest of the class of Abijah. His name contains the suffix the "Zadokian" and points to his descent from Zadok (=the just one). Zadok was High Priest under David and Salomon. His descendants retained the privilege of priesthood and their leading position also after the cultic reform (abolition of idolatry, cleansing of the Temple from syncretic cult-influences by Ezechijah and Josijah, two Judean Kings, after the finding of the Book of Law in 621 BC). With the removal from office and murder of the High Priest Onias III (around 170 BC), the Zadokians again turned against the re-established cult in Jerusalem, and, therefore, they had to emigrate to Egypt. It is interesting, that the Qumran Essenes called their priests *Sons of Zadok*.

The house of Zechariah and Elizabeth was in Ain Karem just outside the city-limits of Jerusalem. Ain Karem is considered the official birth-place of John the Baptist. By mistake, often the town of Hebron is considered the town of birth of the Baptist. In the context of their time the family was considered wealthy, and they owned stately



vineyards. The daily work at home and in the field was done by employees. Zechariah was vine-grower by regular occupation; his office as priest was rather an avocation. If not priest, John the Baptist would probably have had to become a vine-dresser to continue the family tradition. At the birth of John, her only child, Elizabeth was approximately forty years old.

The Gospel of Luke, especially the *“Mandaean Book of John”*<sup>13</sup>, as well as pre-Christian sources, tell us about the way in which way Zechariah was informed that John the Baptist would be born. The Evangelist Luke describes how an angel appears to the Priest Zechariah during a smoke-sacrifice in the Temple and announces the birth of a son to him (Lk.1:1 1-13). Elizabeth had been denied the blessing of a child up to then. She is already beyond the age of fertility, motherhood would almost be a miracle. The angel also tells Zechariah the name of his future son: His name shall be John. The angel demands Zechariah's voice as security for this. The latter loses his power of speech until the child is born. After the confinement, Zechariah is asked by his family to give a name to the new-born boy. Zechariah writes on a slate: “Jochanan”, and immediately he regains his voice. Out of joy and gratefulness, Zechariah intones a hymn. This benediction is recorded in Luke 1:68 - 79. There it says among other things: *“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins ...”* (Lk.1:76,77).

From early-Christian sources we additionally know that there was a considerable Jewish movement considering John the Baptist to be the expected Messiah. This honourable sect of the Mandaeans, which still exists, did have its roots in the Baptist-movement in the Jordan area, and now it continues in Southern Iraq. Due to this, the access to their records and to the *Mandaean Book of John* remains the same as it was in antiquity. The position of the Mandaeans, to consider John the Baptist the true Messiah was and is the same as then. The oldest Mandaean sources and traditions throw light on the New Testament world, on the Qumran Essenes as well as scriptures on and about John. From the *Mandaean Book of John*, we learn about the embodiment of the heavenly man in the figure of John the Baptist: In a vision a star appears above Enishbai (=Elizabeth), while the fire is burning within the old father Zakhria (=Zechariah). Lilyuk (=Elijah, Hebrew Elijah) is asked to interpret this vision. The latter explains: *“The star appearing, that stopped above Enishbai, signifies the birth of a child from above. It comes down, and is given to Enishbai. The fire burning in the old father Zakhria means: Yohana (=John) will be born in Jerusalem.”* When the news is brought to Zechariah, he doubts and says: *“Where is there a dead man coming alive? Alike Enishbai cannot be with child. For twenty-two years I have not seen a woman. No, neither from me nor from you will Enishbai carry a child.”* It is explained to Zakria, however, *“that the child will come down from the highest*

*heights, and will be bestowed to him as a present for his old days.”* The child is placed in the womb of Elizabeth, and John is born. After the birth of John, Magi (wise men) from the east appear to pay homage to the Messiah, whose star they saw. The angel warns Zechariah of the plan of Herod to kill the child. The new-born John the Baptist is handed over to the White Mountain (Parwan) in a mysterious fashion. He only returns on a splendid cloud to Jerusalem to commence his mission at the age of twenty-two. It also is described, that a reunion with his parents takes place. In this passage of the Mandaean writings, John is called a *youth sent by God*.

Even though some parts of this tradition show literary elements characteristic of legends (e.g., the handing-over of the new-born to Parwan, return on a cloud), the authentic version of the Mandaean story does preserve the messianic birth of John the Baptist.

We thus perceive a partial transfer of the birth-story of John the Baptist to Jesus in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Concerning this, Hugh J. Schonfield writes in his book *The Essene-Odysee*: *“The contact with the followers of John the Baptist, to which Acts (17:24-26; 19:1-5) refers, made the Christians acquainted with the birth-story of John, in which he is described as the newborn Messiah of the priest-traditions who was born in Bethlehem...”* - In another passage it further says: *“These references show that the authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke used the Baptist-material in another way in the interest of the messiah-function of Jesus. Therefore Matthew transfers the episode and the killing of those newborn in Bethlehem, while Luke encloses the story of the birth of John, and at the same time subjects the latter’s status to that of Jesus; and suppresses the incident with the Magi and its consequence. The legend of the birth of the Baptist thus helps to explain contradictory reports about the birth of Jesus.”*

Concerning this theme I wish to state my own point of view:

The Magi from the east mentioned were members of the Essenes, or at least they were very closely connected with this brotherhood. They drew reference from messianic philosophy, from astronomy and the cosmic laws, medical science, and from the understanding of magic wisdoms. The hint *from the east* refers to Qumran, situated east of Jerusalem, or to near-by sites in the area of Palestine. The designation “east” in speech at that time also applied to the wisdom of eastern thought, a well-founded and practised religious philosophy contrasting with the Roman west. On this background the Magi may also have been Essenes from Syria or Egypt (called “therapeutae” there). Their origin from Egypt even is quite probable, considering the reference to the flight of the family of Jesus to Egypt.

In the New Testament, those initiated and seeing are called the three wise men from the east. They disposed of detailed knowledge of the prophecies of the Old Testament and the interpretation thereof, partly through secretive oral tradition, partly

by documentary notes. Complemented by the knowledge of sciences and magic, an elite of the Essenes knew about the birth and the mission of John the Baptist and Jesus. Both newborn ones were visited by the Magi and respectively given homage. In the New Testament, this ovation is described through the handing -over of gold, myrrh, and incense (symbols for gentry, power, and wisdom) to Jesus, and has a subordinate aspect from the point of view of the Magi. The more significant task of the wise men was, however, the judgement and passing an opinion onto the newborn ones concerning the outer and the inner, i.e., the known and the secret prophesy. The circumstances of the respective parenthood, the social, spiritual, and political environment, were thoroughly scrutinized. The main task, however, undoubtedly was to direct the education and instruction of both newborn ones. The first emphasis was on the all-inclusive preparation for the future mission. This proceeding is also known to us from other religions. Even today at the birth of the future Dalai Lama, we see a similar procedure.

Without regarding the intellectual, religious, and spiritual background and development of Essenism, already now the following has to be anticipated here: The brotherhood of the Essenes held knowledge during the time from the 2nd century BC till the 1st century AD the like of which no other spiritual brotherhood had access to at that time. Their spiritual view of the world was not only built up on the background of the Old Testament, Judean history and culture, but many foreign influences and insights from highly developed cultures and religions united in the treasure of thinking of this brotherhood. They studied and applied the sciences of astrology, medicine, religion intensively. They knew of the interrelation between macro - and microcosm. Their approach of entirety let them discern that every man is tied into the eternal cycle of the divine cosmos and will return bodily (reincarnate) until he has understood the Divine Principle in the depth of his heart and is delivered from terrestrial existence. They were the true scriptural savants of Israel. From their studies, the analysis of the Old Testament and of the course of the fateful history of Israel, but also of that of alien peoples, they deduced correlations for the present and consequences for the future. Aside from this, they operated with the same engagement in the fields of society and agriculture. From their records, the Dead Sea Scrolls, we know that they spent much time with prayer and meditation, and they could connect themselves with the angels of the Creator and with the angels of the elements.

From all this knowledge, they inferred the point of time of the expected Messiah. The *Messiah of the Essenes* was a priestly figure who would have to experience affliction and humiliation. Other religious groups saw the king in the Messiah, coupled with liberation and political grandeur for the people of Israel. The Priestly Messiah, thereby, had to be the offspring of an old honoured family of priests

descending in direct line from Levi, while the Royal Messiah was expected from the House of David.

In the figure of John the Baptist, the descent was clearly apparent. His line could be traced back to Zadok, the High Priest under the glorious kings David and Salomon.

The records of the Mandaeans pass down the tradition of the Levites very clearly, since John the Baptist was a descendant of Moses, being of the Levi stock. Jesus' descent from the House of David is by no means merely a construction of the Evangelists Matthew and Luke to fulfil the word. The Essenes were very much obliged to the House of David. The House of David lost its power in the 5th century B.C. The grandfather of Jesus, from his father's side, had the name Eli, and is regarded as having been connected with the Palestinian Essenes who strove for a peaceful relationship with Herod the Great. Eli's descent from Nathan, a son of King David, was unquestioned. This is underlined by the episode, that Herod the Great was prepared to - in the course of a reconciliation with the Palestinian Essenes - grant the "David-son" Eli a position with a certain political power.

Many historians, religionists, and scholars who study the Qumran scrolls, therefore, assume that the main interest of the Essenes consisted in the reinstatement of the High Priest (spiritual leader) from the line of Zadok (John the Baptist) and a King (political leader) from the family of David (Jesus). It is strange that also mostly these same scholars consider both John the Baptist and Jesus as coming forth from the Essenes. They even contend that both figures are merely products of the Essenes.

Whoever holds these theses for which there certainly exists some evidence, must, however, answer this question: why did neither John the Baptist nor Jesus lay claim to this priestly or royal rank? In the work and in the mission of both there is no clue that the Essenes would have educated John the Baptist and Jesus concerning this. According to this, they would have failed in the eyes of their brotherhood or teachers, for they rejected the temporal in their speeches and actions, and they even attributed a negative value to worldly power. However, a failure in the eyes of the Essenes can definitely not be found.

We, therefore, then have to acquaint ourselves with the thought that The Brotherhood of the Essenes perceived that both had laid the corner-stone for the start of a new age for mankind, fulfilled with the birth and the mission of John the Baptist and Jesus. The Essenes were the only ones knowing about this. They foresaw the Messiah who was to connect and reconcile the divine universe with man. This God-sent one or Heavenly Man was at the same time the embodiment of an archetype: the incarnation of the Divine Principle. This becomes explicit in the Gospel of Luke (Lk.2:25-35) where Simeon is mentioned and quoted:

*"Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit*

*rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too."*

This Simeon is nobody else but the historically known Simon the Essene. Simon the Essene was the head of the priest-dynasty of Abijatar, second priest after the Zadokian head. From this alone a close connection between Simon the Essene and Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist can be deduced. Simon was renowned as prophet and seer, gifted with great wisdom and prudence. He is marked out by the Historian Josephus Flavius for these qualities. In connection with the regency of Archelaus, I will later on refer to this.

Could not Simon have been one of these Magi, these wise men? Probably, he was even more than that. He presumably was the primary figure in the recognition of the entire mystical process surrounding the birth and mission of the messengers John the Baptist and Jesus.

The Essenes knew of the affliction awaiting the Messiah (see Part IV, spiritual message of 05.28.1991).

With the birth of John the Baptist, and especially with the birth of Jesus their vision, their prophetic picture was completed. Both figures formed a unity with regard to Messianism. In John the Baptist they saw the Principle of Preparation and Setting Up, and the Return of Elijah as predicted by Isaiah and Malachi. In Jesus they discerned the Expanding, Suffering, and Redeeming Principle.

The Royal Messiah, who exclusively would serve the terrestrial glamour and glory of Israel, had lost his right of existing in the view of the Essenes. Their special merit is that they understood the missions of John the Baptist and Jesus to be exclusively a spiritual-mental task. Their knowledge of the birth of both was increased by mysterious circumstances and hints. Probably the recognition of the newborn ones at the correct point of time was essential, as the sum of all knowledge of details, like the knowledge of a certain constellation of the stars. Today we know that the Essenes were profound experts and interpreters of the heavens and their stars. With this background the Star of Bethlehem is more than a pleasant legend. According to the

Mandaeans, the Star of Bethlehem pointed to the birth of John the Baptist. Presumably another sign, then, indicated the birth of Jesus.

In a spiritual message, John the Baptist speaks of a covenant. As a sign of this bond, he mentions the *“Rose of the night that blossomed the day Jesus was born”* (see Part IV, spiritual message of 03.18.1993).

Through a later spiritual message it becomes apparent that this sign was also known to the brotherhood of the Essenes. Possibly this sign points towards a certain constellation of stars or, yet, to a flower that bloomed exactly on the day of Jesus' birth. I suppose that it was an outward sign.

Neither from the religious nor from the historical point of view it is decisive, whether the Star of Bethlehem was the celestial sign of birth for John the Baptist, for Jesus, or even for both. As an astronomic appearance, the Star of Bethlehem has a deep significance. By screening the voluminous expert literature, four serious interpretations crystallize: According to the generally accepted view, the *Star of the Wise Ones* was the three-fold meeting of the Planets Jupiter, and Saturn in the Constellation of Pisces in 7 BC. However, several scholars believe that the sign that caused the Magi to set out for Bethlehem was a threefold conjunction of Jupiter with the Star Regulus at the breast of Leo, in the years 3 and 2 BC. The third view is that the Star of Bethlehem could have been a comet, as already believed by the ecclesiastic teacher Origin (185-253 AD). The fourth possibility that the Star of Bethlehem was a new star, a supernova, is being earnestly discussed in latest research. A supernova is a star invisible to the human eye, which, due to an enormous emission of light, suddenly becomes visible in the sky. Ignatius of Antioch still was a contemporary of the apostles. In his letter to the inhabitants of Ephesus he mentions that *“high above all the stars of heaven a star shone up, the light of which cannot be described, and that was so new that it caused astonishment.”* This description clearly points to a supernova.

There is, however, no report of a suitable supernova reported from this time that could help solve the puzzle. The science-historiographer and religious scientist Werner Papke is a profound expert of Babylonian astronomy. He found out that the Babylonians detected the constellation of a virgin in the 3rd millennium B.C., that was situated behind Leo, below the Great Wagon, and had the name ERUA. The Babylonians wrote this mysterious name with the cuneiform characters (E4.RU6.U2.A.). The sign RU6 stands for the Sumerian word EDIN that is translated with the word *Eden* in I Moses, and is an ancient name for the paradise. The cuneiform character E4 means *seed*, and the signs U2.A together stand for *bring forth* or *give birth to* so that ERUA was the constellation of a virgin, *who should give birth to the seed of Eden*. The constellation of the virgin ERUA is also mentioned in the well-known Gilgamesh-epos that astronomically exact refers to the epoch of 2340 BC.

It, therefore, becomes clear that the virgin mother of the Messiah was “*enstarred*” already in the third millennium B.C on the firmament of Babylon in the constellation of ERUA, that is, long before Moses and the Bible. The Egyptians adopted from the Babylonians the constellation of a virgin that should - in a supernatural way - give birth to a male seed, a son. They identified it with the Deity Isis who sitting on a throne, is holding a boy in her left arm. Also, the Persians saw a woman breast-feeding a boy in this part of the sky.

About two-thousand years ago, the Star of Bethlehem appeared as a supernova exactly in the womb of the constellation Virgo ERUA. When the Magi, respectively the biblical holy three wise men, came to Bethlehem, the Star of Bethlehem was standing directly above the region of Jerusalem.

When a new star eclipsing everything was born in the womb of the constellation Virgo, then, in the understanding of the Magi, also the birth of an outshining figure of light on earth had to follow. For, due to the Law of the Macro - and Microcosm, nothing happens in the great sphere that does not find its analogy in the small. Especially of the Essenes we know that this law was deeply anchored in their way of thinking.

How could the Essenes acquire knowledge of Babylonian astrology? On the one hand it naturally was the Egyptian branch of the Essenes (Therapeutae) who knew of this constellation. On the other hand the Jews became familiar with the astronomy and astrology of Babylon during the time of their Babylonian exile (597 -538 BC). Into this time, also, fall the life and work of the Prophet Daniel who was one of the greatest scholars of his time. Zarathustra, the founder of the Persian religion, was a scholar of Daniel. In 538, the Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon and allowed the Jews the return to Jerusalem and Judea. A part of their spiritual elite remained in the area around the Euphrates River, however, and they cultivated the sciences and the magic wisdoms of the highly developed Babylonian culture. This educated elite remaining in Babylon is the source out of which later Essenism comes, according to many historians and scholars of religion. So we also know today of Essene branches in Mesopotamia in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. We, therefore, also have to take into consideration that the decisive impulse for the interpretation of the Star of Bethlehem came from Essenes of the area of Babylon. This reference is important, because the Greek original of the Gospel of Matthew speaks not of wise men, but Magi (magoi).

I am of the conviction that these wise men of the Essenes (Magi) immediately visited the newborn John and Jesus. All the signs and references of the birth of the boys are in correspondence with their vision, their outer and inner prophesies. They instructed the parents of the mission of their children and gave them respective rules of conduct.

I assume that this elite of the Essenes also decided on the names of the two

newborn ones. Jochanan was a rarely given name that was not within the family tradition. The name Jesus, however, was widely spread at that time. According to the demand of the Angel Gabriel the newborn Jesus also was to be given the name Immanuel (=God with us). Also the Prophet Isaiah announces the name Immanuel (Is.7.14). From both names, therefore, no conclusion could be drawn concerning the respective words of the Prophets Isaiah and Malachi. A premature recognition and persecution of the newborn ones, like that of Herod the Great or of a hostile priesthood, therefore, was prevented.

The information of the Essenes to Zechariah concerning the task and mission of his God-sent son could also have been the cause for his hymn, the *benediction*. These Essenes probably instructed the parents of the newborn boys with regard to their further way, the education and place of abode. In short, they withdrew parental authority from the parents. This, however, was not as harsh as it sounds. Zechariah, as a priest from the line of the Zadokians, was at least acquainted with the underlying structure of Essene thinking. Of Joseph, the father of Jesus, it is assumed that he felt akin to the Essene branch. Furthermore, it was considered an honour to be guided and educated by the Essenes.

The Evangelist Matthew (Mt.2) describes the flight of the Jesus family from Herod and the latter's intention to kill the child. Regarding John the Baptist, early -Christian sources and legends tell of the flight into the desert together with his mother Elizabeth. The hiding in a cave saved him from persecution and from being killed by Herod.

Decisive with these reports are the message and reference to the significance, the mission, and the future fate of both children. Already with the newborn ones this becomes discernible: Persecution by those in power, the evil of this world, and the preservation of the chosen ones by the guidance of God. The way of description follows the form of instructive preaching in the tradition of the Jewish haggada (Hebrew = assertion, description), but this form does not take away from the credibility of the story.

The Australian theologian and Qumran scholar Barbara Thiering in her book *Jesus of Qumran*<sup>14</sup> sets out from the premise that Egypt is actually a pseudonym for Qumran. She argues that the Egyptian Essenes, the Therapeutae sojourned in Qumran at the time of Christ, and they called the Essene settlement at the Dead Sea *Egypt*. Even though this is a daring conclusion, it refers to the connection of the Holy family to the Essenes. In this context it is not significant where the true place of flight of the two newborn ones really was. It is a fact that time of flight as well as route and place needed a deliberate organization, as the political power had become life-threatening.

The slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem by Herod the Great is not mentioned



in texts other than biblical ones. Thus, there exists no historical proof. Nevertheless, the traditions seem realistic. Herod the Great was uncompromising and rigorous. The child-killings of Bethlehem would correspond to his character. So he had his eldest son Antipater killed in the year 4 BC, five days before he died himself. Furthermore, we know from the historic annalist Josephus Flavius<sup>15</sup> that Herod the Great had his two sons murdered whom he had through the connection with his favourite wife Mariamne I, from the dynasty of the Maccabees, in the year 7 BC the year of Jesus' birth. Jealousy is said to have been the motive for this deed. It seems quite credible that the two newborn ones, John and Jesus, were threatened through Herod the Great. With regard to statesmanship he does not unjustly hold his designation *the Great*<sup>16</sup>. If he did learn of the births and their interpretation - directly or indirectly - he must have considered his life-work and his dynasty threatened. It was self-evident: if a Zadokian (John the Baptist) became High Priest, he would endeavour to procure power for a Davidian (Jesus) in Israel - and vice versa.

There may also have been other dangers for the newborn ones from the side of the priesthood. Simon Boethus (23-5 BC) was high priest at the time of birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. Concerning ritual and moral rules, he and his party (the Boethusians) assumed an extremely conservative, strict attitude. Maybe Boethus also took up the view of seeing the continuation of his dynasty of priests endangered by the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament.

The Essenes accordingly placed the newborn ones, the mother of John the Baptist and the parents of Jesus, in safety. Why were both parents with Jesus? Many historians and Essene-scholars work from the premise that Joseph had incurred the displeasure of Herod the Great. The reason for this was that he had joined in a protest of the Pharisees against the oath of allegiance of the Israeli people to the Roman Emperor and the Government of Herod the Great. According to Josephus Flavius (*Antiquitates* XVII.41-46) this Revolt of the Pharisees took place in the year 5 BC.

The wise men of the Essenes deceived Herod concerning the place and date of birth of both newborn ones. This is the reason why Herod expected the birth of both not until two years later, and exclusively had only two year-old boys sought out and killed.

The Magi did not necessarily have to lie concerning the dates of birth. There were various standpoints in chronology as caused, for example, by the so-called interim-year and the generation-year. According to this, the wise men named the year 3930 AM(=7BC) with reference to the so-called south-solar chronology. They knew, however, that Herod understood the same date to be the year 5 BC, because the Herodians had the so-called south-lunar chronology<sup>17</sup>. We can be certain that the two newborn ones and their mothers had been secured long before Herod the Great began to hunt.

There are records about the martyrdom of Zechariah especially from Christian sources. Herod has Zechariah interrogated for the whereabouts of his son John. Zechariah's answer corresponds to the truth, without betraying the place of hiding. Thus the Syrian Ephraim (4th ct AD) writes in his commentaries to the gospel: *"Others say that Zechariah prevented his son's death at the slaying of the newborn ones by fleeing into the desert. For this, he himself was slain before the altar, like the Lord had said."*

The Egyptian Bishop Serapion (4th ct AD) describes this in much more detail: *"Let us now continue to commemorate the Holy Zechariah, the martyr, and to tell you of some of his innumerable merits. I wish I could praise your true life, but fear to be reproached by you for doing so, like you reproached the blessed Elizabeth. I am full of admiration for you, o faithful Zechariah! During the times when the soldiers came to you and questioned you: "Where is your newborn son, the child of your old age?" you did not hide the fact and say "I know nought of this child", but simply answered: "His mother took him with her to the desert". And after Zechariah had said these words to the soldiers they killed him in the Temple. Then they wrapped his corpse and placed him in the vicinity of his father Berechiah in a hidden graveyard for fright of the mean king, and his blood foamed for fifty years on top of the earth, until Titus, the son of Vespasian, the ruler of the Romans, came and destroyed Jerusalem and killed the Jewish priests on account of the blood of Zechariah, like the Lord had told him to."*

It cannot be confirmed if this description actually refers to the father of John the Baptist, or, rather, if the martyrdom of the priest and prophet Zechariah of Palestinian and Babylonian scripts is meant. Thus, there is spoken of a Zechariah (Sach.1:1, Neh.12:16), Son of Berechiah, who lived at the time of the return from Babylonian captivity. There is, however, no reference that he died a martyr's death. The relationship between martyrdom of the father of John the Baptist lies in the words of Jesus: *"so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar."* (Mt.23:35).

It can be assumed that Zechariah actually did not know the place of hiding of his family. The Essenes probably did not tell him about it exactly, not wanting to risk exposure of the newborn to danger. The New Testament says nothing of the further development of the child John. The Evangelist Luke reports merely: *"And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel."* (Lk.1:80).

In the prologue to the Gospel of Luke, there are, parallel to the childhood stories of Jesus, also such about John the Baptist. They are built up in the sequence of prophesy-fulfilment-outbidding of John by Jesus, and build a lead-off of altogether 7 tales leading to a testimony to Christ. More light is brought into the dark of the

childhood of John the Baptist and Jesus by *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*<sup>18</sup>, however.

While the essential contents of this gospel hardly vary from the descriptions of the evangelists of the New Testament, the Aquarian Gospel gives much room to the period between birth and public appearance. Also the often -cited connection with the Essenes is remarkable. In Part III, the Aquarian Gospel describes the schooling of Mary and Elizabeth in the town Zoan in Egypt. The education of both mothers is guided by a magi called Elihu. (Is he identical with Lilyukh, Hebrew: Elijahu, from the Book of John of the Mandaeans, who interpreted the birth of John the Baptist?) His briefings are assisted by a certain Salome. In chapter 7, verse 4 -8 it says:

*“Jesus, Joseph, and Mary are in Zoan in Egypt, but John is still staying with his mother in the hill-country of Judea. Elihu and Salome therefore send messengers to search for Elizabeth and John. The messengers find them and bring them to Zoan. Mary and Elizabeth are over and again full of praise for their wonderful rescue. Elihu however says: not very much astounding, since there is no haphazard and all that is, is caused by Divine law. Since old times it had been decided that you two should come to us to be taught at this place.”*

In the further course Elihu informs the mothers about their being chosen and their task concerning the children. He tells that their two sons had been expected long since and are destined to lay the foundation stone to turn mankind back to God again. In verses 14-16 and 21-24 it says:

*“These, your sons, are the first ones heralding this good news and preaching the gospel of the good will, so that there may be peace on earth. For them a great work is waiting. Man of the earth spurns the light. He loves the darkness, and when the light shines in the dark he cannot comprehend it. Love is the salvation of this world, and Jesus the son of Mary is chosen to live this love as an example to the sons of men. But this will only be sensible; when all the ways for this will have been prepared. And nothing can make even the ways, blast rocks, tear down hills, bridge abysses like purity can. But life’s purity cannot be understood by man; yet. Therefore purity has to come in form. May you be blessed, Elizabeth, for, see, John is purity in form, and it is purity that will make even all the ways for love.”*

The schooling of the two mothers is very intensive. In addition to the rules for the education of their children, they are introduced to the all -encompassing relations of the history and development of mankind, the unity of all great religions, and the principle of the creator. The aspects spirit, soul, and body are analysed. Alien cultures and religions, their origin, connection, and unity with the treasure of thought of the Fathers of Israel are shown. So the wisdoms of Buddha and Brahma, the teachings of Zarathustra are described, and they are linked up with the work and life of Abraham (A-Brahm – Abram – Abraham), the *original knowledge* is conveyed.

The difficult, thorny ways, and the visitations of their sons are not kept secret from

the mothers, as they are told: *“without reason they will be mocked, afflicted, and thrown into dungeon.”*

As with the Essenes, we find here that the narrative conveys a view of world and man together. The conclusion is at hand that the Holy Family had found shelter with the Therapeutae: the Egyptian branch of the Essenes. The minutely planned journey or flight to Egypt seems only consequential. The recognition of historians that exactly at that point in time the Therapeutae lived at Qumran, additionally, strengthens this thesis. It is both religiously as well as historically insignificant, if both parents of Jesus found shelter at the Essenes in Egypt or whether Joseph found refuge with the Essenes at Qumran.

Altogether the instructions took three years. The families returned across the Dead Sea (Qumran). John the Baptist and Elizabeth remain in the hillside of Engedi, while the family of Jesus returns to Nazareth. Alongside it is mentioned, that the families shun Jerusalem, since King Archelaus reigns there. Archelaus, son of Herod the Great and the Samaritan Malthabe, succeeded to the throne after the death of his father in 4.B.C.. He was neither popular among the elite of his state nor among the people. Actually his brother Antipas had been designated successor, but right before his death Herod changed his plan. Antipas, however, demanded the kingship and found strong movements in the country supporting his claim. Thus the reign of Archelaus who only received the title Ethnarch was imprinted by constant disputes, quarrels, and uproar. At the instigation of influential Jewish groups, Archelaus was removed by the Romans in the year 6 A.D. and exiled to Vienne in southern France. Josephus Flavius recorded the afore-mentioned essential dates concerning Archelaus (*Antiquitates XVII*). In *XVII:346-347* he interestingly mentions an Essene by the name of Simon who at that time was famous for his prophesies. Thus he interpreted a dream of Archelaus that the latter's rule over Jude would only last ten years – a prophesy that fulfilled itself. Simon, the Essene, was a leading figure in the brotherhood and owned pronounced spiritual knowledge. He is identical with the Simeon mentioned in the Gospel of Luke.

The *Aquarian Gospel* describes how the child John encounters a hermit in a cave (the former cave of David). This hermit has the name Matheno and is high priest of the Temple Sakara. After completion of his 7th year of age John the Baptist finally stays with the Hermit Matheno to learn from him. The young John loves the wild, barren land and the unpretentious life. He merely lives on fruit, nuts, wild honey, and carob-bean. The Hermit Matheno teaches him the holy books of Israel, the Avesta, and the Vedes as well as the book Tao-te-King. For the young John the terms injustice, sin, guilt, forgiving, and free will of man before God are thoroughly explained. The hermit further says, that man has moved away from God and his truth, and that the world may expect a new light, because creation will always send a

master-soul to earth, whenever mankind is in need of a new light. In chapter 14:21-27 it says:

*“ Years elapsed, and mankind of today again is in need of an increase in light. And now the day-star of the Lord begins to shine. Jesus is the embodied messenger of God, who is to bring this light to men. And you my pupil, you are chosen to make even the ways for him. Important for this will be that you will be able to preserve the purity of heart which you are still holding now. Thus, you yourself will have to illuminate your lamp at the fire of the altar of the holy spirits of creation. Your lamp will then be transformed to a boundless fire, and you yourself will become a torch, the light of which will shine around widely wherever men will live. In the days that are yet to come mankind will up-rise, lights will come that will shine even brighter. Then, then finally, the mightiest of the master-souls will come down to earth to point out the way leading to the throne of the perfect, awakened man.”*

The Aquarian Gospel reports of the death of Elizabeth when John the Baptist is twelve years old. While John the Baptist is mourning, Matheno admonishes him:

*“It is not well to bewail those dead, for death is not man’s foe. He is his friend, and when life’s work is done, he cuts the silver-band in two, so that man’s boat may be released from earth to then pleasantly sail in gentle seas. No language can quote a mother’s value. Your mother’s worth truly great it is. Not cast off was she before her work was done. The call to death happens to the best of all, for we can solve our problems here and yonder just the same. One knows oneself where best this will be. Wishing back to earth the soul gone home is pure selfishness. So then let your mother sail off peacefully, and her noble being may strength and intuition and courage be to you. The crisis of your life is approaching. All time’s wise men call you the forerunner. The prophets herald of you: It is Elijah who returns.” (15:3-9).*

With the death of his mother Elizabeth, the childhood of John the Baptist, at least outwardly, comes to its close. But one has to recognize that John the Baptist, due to the circumstances of his birth, his time, his mission, and extreme early spiritual maturity did not have a childhood in what the meaning of the word would encompass today. The same applies to Jesus.

## HIS YOUTH

There are neither Biblical nor historical references on John the Baptist's adolescence. The same applies to the youth of Jesus. Possibly the Essene writings contain coded information concerning this, which have not yet been discerned as such. Being true masters of secretive teachings, the Essenes used codes and pseudonyms to not unnecessarily expose certain persons and groups to calumnies and persecutions. Maybe records exist that are at least partially unpublished. Parts of the exterior Essene teaching in Aramaic are held in safe-keeping in the Vatican. Other texts again are in Slavic language and were in the possession of the Austrian Habsburg Family. They came to Europe from Asia via Nestorian priests to be guarded from the hoards of Dschingis Khan. Otto of Habsburg affirmed this to me in a personal conversation. In the course of the dethronement of the Habsburg Monarchy at the end of WW II, the valuable documents were confiscated by the Austrian state and partly sold.

The already-mentioned stories and legends about the childhood and early youth of Jesus and John the Baptist are, considered critically, rather naïve, and suggest the picture of an intact world. They, therefore, certainly do not do justice to reality. Concerning adolescence we have to presume that, similarly to the childhood, there was none considering what is implied by the term today. This, however, as a rule applies to all God-sent persons, masters, and men having attained a high degree of initiation.

Concerning John the Baptist and Jesus, the Essenes took over the education immediately after the birth. Relating to the age they had reached, the best teachers and masters were assigned to them. The aim was the attainment of mastery and the highest degree of initiation.

The guidance toward mastery certainly commenced already in early youth. Those readers, who by literature are only roughly acquainted with the education and the way of a master know what this means. Naturally extraordinary abilities of comprehension and apprehension of the apprentice are prerequisite. Furthermore, general knowledge and manifold detailed knowledge also have to be exceptional. The understanding of all interrelations, causes, and their consequences is striven for.

The way to mastery, however, unremittingly includes a complete and unlimited surmounting of the personal self, that is of the human ego, and often means an almost endless chain of human experiences of affliction, despair, disappointments, privations, and trials. The often quoted Divine help and guidance mostly is indiscernible on the way. From the few reports of masters there are, I learnt, that often the impression arises as if even God would turn against the chosen one. This is

the cause for disappointments. After the disappointment by world and men has been overcome and transformed into pure love, the process is continued on the level of Divine principles. Who of the chosen ones takes the way and attains the aim, then is a truly chosen one, a figure of the light, or rather a Divine principle in human shape. Mostly this divine principle expresses itself in love that certainly no longer has anything in common with human love, since it does not demand, want, and is completely free from the personal self. On this background the chosen one, the master works miracles, since he understands the supremacy of the spirit over the laws of matter. However, a Divine principle can also manifest itself increasingly in the comprehensive action of teaching and explaining of a master. Yet, it includes love that is not recognizable at first sight.

I tried to show up the way and background of mastery in a few words. I certainly succeeded only partially. My discourse has the sole purpose of disconnecting the reader from the association that the chosen ones, John the Baptist and Jesus were born, and that all the knowledge had already been placed into their womb by God, so that all that remained to do for them was to ask God for the right point in time for their appearance and work.

In Part IV of this book spiritual messages are reproduced. Sporadically they refer to the ways John the Baptist and Jesus had to go. We have to assume that both had to take an extremely difficult and painful way to mastery. Unfortunately the Christian Church conveys to us that John the Baptist and Jesus were more or less seized by God from the outside and then permeated. In truth both had to strive for God from within, like all masters. Both attained a high degree of initiation. With Jesus, at least, we have to assume the highest possible degree of initiation.

When John the Baptist was arrested by Herod Antipas and - after long imprisonment - finally beheaded; he had long since overcome the world, his human existence. He fearlessly met bodily death. On the way to mastery, to the execution; and the fulfilment of his mission, he literally had already died a thousand deaths. The same applies to Jesus; and his death on the cross.

But, back to the youth of John the Baptist.

There exist only few hypotheses on this theme. I will reproduce them in compression:

Some historians and scholars of religion maintain that John the Baptist was almost exclusively educated by the Essenes of Qumran and that he was a member of the brotherhood. According to the rules of the brotherhood membership could only be acquired after a one-year noviciate, a three-year period of preparation; and a further seven years of instruction. Only after the successful completion of these eleven years did instruction in the complete esoteric doctrine begin. The age of entry for the

school of the Essenes was laid down with 18. Further; certain standards of knowledge and understanding, as well as of personal, spiritual aims in life had to have been met preliminary to acceptance.

Gerald Messaldie, in his novel *A Man with the Name of Jesus*, describes how the 18 year-old John the Baptist visits the parents of Jesus to say farewell to them since from then on he would enter the brotherhood at Qumran. After the death of his parents he had stayed with relatives in Ptolemais. During his visit, he informs Jesus on the Essenes and their philosophy. For Jesus, John the Baptist is completely unknown at first. Only Joseph explains to Jesus the congenial relation.

After the death of Joseph, Jesus remembers the visit of John the Baptist and goes to Qumran, too, to encounter him again. Astonishingly, the Essenes entrust the young John with the education of Jesus. According to the book, neither the Essenes nor Jesus know of his descent from the stock of David. Apparently at Qumran, John the Baptist is the only one who knows. He is now intent on sensitively preparing the Essenes for the Messiah-prophecies and the mission of Jesus. Since Jesus apparently had difficulties in complying with the overly strict rules of the Essenes, John the Baptist had many a problem to prevent his protégé's being summoned and questioned by the leaders. Especially in connection with an interrogation of Jesus by the council of the Essenes due to non-compliance with certain rules, John the Baptist is said to have been given proof of Jesus' messianic mission.

In his novel, the author describes John the Baptist as a convinced Essene, fulfilled with the expectation of the Messiah and the immediately impending judgement of God. Jesus is described as if through John the Baptist, he heard for the first time who and what the Essenes are and that a Messiah was expected.

Although the work is based on research in the Apocrypha, the Qumran Scrolls, and the Gospel of Thomas it enters into scurrilous models of thought and old clichés, especially concerning the description of the relationship of John the Baptist and Jesus. Here, John the Baptist is described as an initiated one who futilely conveys the divine truth and mission to a non-initiated and naïve Jesus. Even though this book became very popular, it has, at least in this respect, little value of affirmation, and suppresses historic insights in favour of more popular clichés.

There exist, however, even if only marginally, records on the theme of adolescence and education of John the Baptist from a time when – concerning publication – popular acceptance certainly played no role.

In the year 1894, eleven scientists started out from America on an expedition to large parts of India, Tibet, China, and Persia. The journey of exploration took three and a half years, the research-assignment was in the field of metaphysics. One of the scientists, Baird Spalding writes:

*"We arrived there being complete sceptics, and returned completely informed and convinced, and this to such degree that three of us returned there with the irrevocable*



*intention to stay there as long as it would take them to do these works the masters do themselves and to lead the very same life.”*

In his records Baird Spalding tells about encounters with people owning extraordinary abilities and spiritual powers. Concerning John the Baptist he literally records:

*“We found a shady place on the banks of a river , had lunch, and rested for an hour. Then we returned to the village. This village proved especially interesting, since there existed certain well-preserved documents providing us with the final proof, after they had been translated, that John the Baptist must have lived in this village for at least five years. Later we were to come across records the translation of which proved for certain an approximately twelve-year stay. Subsequently we were shown documents which proved just as clearly the fact that John the Baptist had travelled with these persons through India, Tibet, China, and Persia for at least twenty years. We actually saw that we could take almost the same way he must have taken according to these well-preserved documents. They were so interesting that we returned to several villages for extended research, and we found out that we could draw an exact map of all his travels with these, we merely had to collect all the data in these records. For times we could imagine all that had happened so clearly that it almost seemed to us as if we were walking the same ways and taking the identical routes, like John had done such a long time ago. We left the village the following morning accompanied by two inhabitants of the village who apparently had grasped the work. On the evening of the third day we reached a village approximately 12 miles away, where I had stayed to look for the records concerning John the Baptist. I was very much concerned that my pals should see the records; therefore we decided to make a stop there, and Jast accompanied us there. After they had taken a look at the papers, my two comrades were deeply impressed, and we made a plan to follow the travels the records hinted at, and to draw a map of these. That evening the master who was with our fourth group came, and spent the night with us. He conveyed messages to us from the first and the third group. He was born and raised in this village, and his forefathers had taken down the records, and ever since they had been safely stored by his family. It was maintained, that he belonged to the fifth generation after the writer, and that not one of his whole family had gone through death since. They all had taken their bodies with them, and could return at any time. We asked, if it would mean too much trouble for the writer of the documents to come and speak to us. He answered that this would be no problem, and so we arranged the meeting for the same evening. Then we all sat down and the one who had so suddenly appeared at where we were began to speak: “You asked for this conversation to learn to better understand the documents that were read and interpreted to you. I wish to tell you that I took these records down and safeguarded them, and those referring to the great soul John the Baptist and surprising you so much, actually deal with incidents of*

*the time, he stayed here with us. As these records show he was a man of comprehensive knowledge and highest intelligence."*

*We spent the day with Emil, Jast, and the writer of the records and wandered through the village and the bordering country with them, and our new friend told us many a detail that had happened during the twelve-year stay of John the Baptist in the village. All these incidents were portrayed to us that lively, that it seemed as if we had been transferred back into the earliest past and had the ability to walk conversing alongside the great soul who before had almost appeared to us to be a legendary character, conjured up by those wishing to mystify him. Ever since that day John the Baptist has been a living, real character for me, so real that it seems to me I can see him walk the streets and receiving instructions from the great souls around him, just like we were informed now, taking the same roads. Very unfortunately we were unable to understand completely the fundamental truth of this all. We were told that John the Baptist had lived in this village and received instructions in the temple, and that the temple had remained exactly the same as then when this had happened. We were shown the site, where the house in which he lived had stood; the house itself had been torn down. When we returned to the temple in the afternoon the weather had brightened up that much, that we had a wide view of the country and that the way could be shown to us which John the Baptist had taken on his walks to and back from the temple, and to the various villages in which he had sojourned. Presumably the temple and the village had already been built six-thousand years before the visit of John the Baptist. The way we ourselves could use on leaving was shown to us, and we were told that it had been in use since the temple had been built. At five o'clock that evening the writer of the records, who had become a dear friend to us, told us that he would now leave us for some time, shook hands with everybody, said he would soon meet us again, and disappeared."*

Let me comment at this place that the expedition-members came into contact with high master-souls who apparently had the ability of materializing and dematerialising. The persons Emil and Jast quoted in these short statements are pseudonyms for these masters. The records of Baird Spalding were published with the title *Life and Work of Masters in the Far East*.

Interesting with the scientists' records is the congruence with the statements of the Aquarian Gospel. In it, the wise Elihu says to the mothers of John and Jesus at the end of their education in the Egyptian Zoan: *"Many teachers will they see, and at the feet of many a master will they sit. They will have to learn, like all men do."*(12.20) Additionally of the life and work of only Jesus in India, Tibet, Persia, Assyria, Greece, and Egypt is spoken of. Here it is interesting that Jesus also meets with Matheno, the teacher of John the Baptist in Egypt.

About John the Baptist's youth the Aquarian Gospel merely reports that Matheno

leaves the hills of Engedi together with the adolescent John, and leads him to the temple of Sakara in the Nile Valley. In this temple, Matheno was the master of the brotherhood. The brotherhood readily accepts John the Baptist, they know of his mission. John the Baptist is given the name *Brother Nazir*. It is said that John the Baptist had taken a vow in his childhood that made him a *nazir*. This vow included that he neither was allowed to cut his hair nor his beard, and that *“neither wine nor fiery beverages would wet his lips.”*

In 15:31, it is reported, that John the Baptist lived and worked in Egypt for 18 years, won over his *terrestrial self* and attained mastery. The reference and descriptions of the sojourns of John the Baptist at Indian masters and the work of Jesus in India are interesting. The often-presented thesis that Jesus survived crucifixion and lived and worked in India after having been healed<sup>19</sup>, could be corrected to this that both Jesus and John the Baptist had already lived and worked in India before they publicly appeared in Israel. Nevertheless, we have to realize that despite all the reports and indices that appear logical, we until now still hold no historic or new-testament basis authentically throwing light on childhood and youth and the length of abode up to the public appearance of both figures of the light. Even when one interprets the few references of canonical and apocryphal tradition, it still remains a questionable patchwork. The question, if John the Baptist and Jesus were educated by the Qumran Essenes also remains open. Although a very close relation to the Essenes is apparent, I would exclude for both the normal cycle of education that was prerequisite to an acceptance into the brotherhood. A temporary stay for studies and conversations at Qumran is probable, however. The detailed knowledge of the Old Testament and the words of the prophets point to purposeful studies at Qumran, the settlement being the safe-keeping of all essential writings and texts of Jewish religion and traditions.

Even if the negative critic lays all this aside as legend or speculation, the following remains certain:

John the Baptist and Jesus were charismatic personalities with comprehensive knowledge, great power of speech, and determination. These qualities are not acquired in well-sheltered keeping and surrounding. Even a comprehensive, merely theoretical instruction does not qualify for great works. A long way full of deprivations to manifold wise men and teachers, the overcoming of their own selves, and the recognition of the Divine principles finally led them to mastery. Also for highest Divine messengers the saying goes that “no master falls from heaven”.

## TASK AND MISSION

>From his birth to his death, John the Baptist remains a mysterious and fascinating manifestation. His appearance and work were more important and more comprehensive than can be discerned in the Gospels.

A distinct reference to the charisma of the preacher is given to us by the historian Josephus Flavius. In his records, the *Jewish Antiquities* (Antiquitates) he in XVIII 5:2 reports in detail on John the Baptist. Josephus was born in Jerusalem still during the reign of Herod Antipas. Being a contemporary witness he verbally reports the following:

*“He (John the Baptist) was an excellent man and admonished the Jews to apply themselves to the virtues, and to exercise justice to one another and faithfulness towards God, and to come to baptism. The baptism would then be pleasing God, if they not used it to do away with certain offences, but for the healing of the body, since the soul would already be purified by a righteous life. Because they flocked from all sides to him, since everybody felt elevated by such speeches, Herod began to fear that the influence of such a man by whose advice everybody was guided, could lead to an uproar and therefore he considered it more advisable to render him innocuous before such a danger would erupt, than to have to regret his hesitancy after a turn of events. Upon this suspicion John was enchained, sent to the Fortress Machaerus, and killed there. His death, however, was, as I already said, in the conviction of the Jews the cause for the destruction of the army of Herod<sup>20</sup>, since God in his wrath had ordained this penalty over the tetrarch.”*

Present-day experts of Jewish history expect that Josephus expresses more in his coded diplomat-language than the unprepared reader assumes. The re-newer and preacher John with an tremendous effect on the public and a religious -social charisma appears in the records merely as an *excellent man*. Cultic-sacral discussions in connection with the baptism are not mentioned. The messianic reference that was connected with John the Baptist in public opinion is also withheld. The politically critical fact, the great public movement initiated by the Baptist is reported encoded by Josephus. That the people *flocked to him from all sides* most certainly also disturbed the Roman occupation force that reacted overly nervous to such events. Therefore we have to assume that Josephus glossed the image of John for political reasons.

Relating to this Josef Ernst writes in his book *John the Baptist – the Teacher of Jesus?*:

*“This short notice in “Antiquitates” clearly portrays how displeasing to the former resistance fighter memories of such questionable movements in the Jewish country must have been, even after decades. To prevent any new scandal, he without*

*hesitation, down-plays the affair concerning the public hero John.”*

In the Gospel of Matthew, we find a further clue to the importance of John the Baptist (14:1-2):

*“At that time Herod the ruler heard reports about Jesus; and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead, and for this reason these powers are at work in him.”*

And in 16:13-14 is furthermore says:

*“Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”*

Taking as sources for the description of John the Baptist the *logos-sources*<sup>21</sup> and the gospels, a contradiction becomes apparent. On the one hand John the Baptist is upraised to an all-outstanding person, on the other had he is immediately dropped, reduced, and belittled. This often occurs from one sentence to the next, and becomes most apparent in Mt.11:11 and Lk.7:28, where the high esteem of John the Baptist is expressed in a way not to be matched: John is the greatest man ever born by a woman, i.e., the greatest man ever. Here neither his word nor his work nor eschatological raking, rather the value of his person is referred to. In the synoptic tradition, there is no comparable statement of Jesus. The continuation of the speech is surprising, since it devalues again: the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Further, it is astonishing that the great speeches and sermons of John the Baptist are being referred to, however, without more detailed mentioning of their subject matters and themes. Merely a few sentences and verses were recorded by the evangelists. This trifle, however, cannot have been the cause that the people flocked to him in crowds, that his message moved the masses all over the country, especially since he was somebody, *“by whose advice everybody let himself be guided”* as Josephus reports. The same applies to his being called a prophet. The Baptist is named a prophet, although it is not discernible anywhere what his prophesy actually consisted of. Taking the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, one at first observes a series of narrative motives. The actual purport can be decoded by adding the statements of the Prophets Malachi (3:1; 4:5-6) and Isaiah (40:3) that are placed at the beginning of the report on John. So to say the statements of the evangelists on the Baptist and the preacher in the desert are re-functioned to a backwards-directed prophesy. With his work, the Baptist fulfils the expectations and prophesies of the Old Testament. This upraises him above the prophets of Israel. John the Baptist is being characterized as someone standing right on the crossroads of prophesy and fulfilment (Mt.11:12-15; Lk.16:16). From the point of view of the evangelists, he

becomes reduced to the function of the precursor and to the reference to another one. In this role as precursor he is given - in the pure sense of the word - merely a tentativeness. Possibly the recognition of the Messiah - in the understanding of the evangelists - is the prophesy of John the Baptist. Lastly, however, it does not become clear from the reduced report of the evangelists what the theme of the prophesy is. In the further course of the gospels, it finally becomes discernible between the lines: John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth are standing side by side in their way of thinking and mission, even in their martyrdom. John the Baptist is the first victim. This covered statement, finally, has a high preaching -value.

Why are word and work of John the Baptist reported abridged and evaluated in the gospels and the Apocrypha<sup>22</sup>? Exegetics widely agree: the origin of the gospels falls into the 1st and 2nd ct AD, and is already imprinted and brought into line with the understanding of the early church. The oldest of the four gospels is the Gospel of Mark. Its earliest draft was around 70 AD. During this time there still existed significant branches and followers of the Baptist movement. This movement included Jewish, later also Jewish-Christian parishes and groups, especially in the East-Jordan area. Some of these groups were described by early -Christian authors with varying names (Baptists, Sabeans). Main rite was the immersion in the Jordan River. In John the Baptist, they saw the promised Messiah. They were, so to speak, the ancestors of the Mandaeans and had many points of contact with the Christians. Also the Jews considered them Christians.

The early Christians and the Baptist groups had spiritualised the messianic message of redemption. There were differences, however, concerning the interpretation of the assessment and significance of the two sons of God, Jesus and John. Additionally many contemporaries held the opinion - like also today some interpreters of early Christian texts do - that Jesus was a direct scholar and apostle of John the Baptist.

By placing the report on John at the beginning of the gospels, with the essential statement that eventually the Baptist had *upraised* Jesus to Messiah *by baptism*, a more or less conciliatory compromise for the followers of the Baptist was found. It is assumed that with the gradual reduction of the Baptist movement, also the presentation of John the Baptist from the point of view of the early Christians was substantially reduced. Possibly these attempts have their origin already with James<sup>23</sup>, the actual founder of the early church, or Paul. The endeavours of the early Christians cannot be valued as manipulations, however, since the intent was to spread the message of salvation of the Messiah. A diversification of this message onto two persons, and the continuous discussion about their eschatological ranking was an almost insurmountable obstacle.

The writers of the gospel reported in their way that John the Baptist found his

complement and fulfilment in Jesus, that Jesus, however, could only develop his power of mission on the rostrum of the precursor. Lastly, they thus acted, deliberately or unconsciously, in the sense of the message of redemption.

How did John the Baptist understand his task and where did he work? Did John baptise according to the adoption and continuation of Essene rites? The significance of the ritual immersions has become clear through the findings at Qumran. Already Josephus Flavius describes this distinctly (Bellum 2:129; 137 -138; 149-150; 161). Did the baptism of John have a relation with the doctrine of Hillel<sup>24</sup>?

This moderate Pharisee taught the personal and ethical renewal that found its expression in a baptism with water. Whoever subjected himself to this ceremony of rectification became a pure Jew. Hillel executed these ritual ablutions for the purging from sins in Jerusalem. His statement was, among others, that Jewish birth in itself was not sufficient to be part of the people of God, but, that also an act of conversion was necessary for this. Hillel was the first to teach the golden rule (comp. Mt.7:12). In addition, he was very close to the Essene way of thinking.

Highly interesting in this context is the reference to Hillel in the already frequently cited Aquarian Gospel.

Part V, chapter 18, at length describes how the ten year -old Jesus speaks up against the sacrifice of animals in Jerusalem and is harshly rebuked by the priests for this. In Hillel, the eldest of the Sanhedrin, he finds support. Jesus eventually stays with Hillel for a year to apprehend the rules of the law and the temple -service of the priests. In part VI we find a parallel: as a nine year -old, John the Baptist has the same feeling of disgust in connection with the sacrifice of animals in Jerusalem. In Matheno he had a teacher confirming him in this.

I mention this because I am convinced that the doctrines of Hillel exercised a strong influence on John the Baptist and Jesus. After all, baptism had already been familiar to priests and religious-initiated Jews as a ritual act before the appearance of John the Baptist. The question, if the Baptism of John can be linked with the rites of baptism mentioned before has been concerning serious research for centuries. We only received a reliable answer through the findings of Qumran on the one hand, and through the determination of the historic site of baptism on the other. The gospels report only inaccurately. Mark merely tells that John the Baptist was in the desert and preached the baptism of repentance and the remission of sins. Further he says that all the land of Judea and all people from Jerusalem had themselves baptized by John in the River of Jordan (Mk.1:3-4).

Matthew changes the order of sentences, yet, adheres to Mark in the condensed account of the appearance of John the Baptist. The desert is geographically fixed with the reference to the *Judean desert* (Mt.3:1-5).

The same applies to Luke who indeed does not specify the desert, but interestingly

describes that John the Baptist came to all the country around the Jordan River and baptized and preached – that is, he went to the people (Lk.3:2-5).

Contrary to the synoptics<sup>25</sup>, the Evangelist John locates the site of baptism more exactly. In 1:28, he names Bethany (Beth -Abara) and gives the decisive reference *across the Jordan*. In 10:40 it is described how Jesus “*went away across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing earlier, and he remained there.*” He thus escaped seizure by the Jews.

As we will see in the course of this chapter, especially the description of the site *across the Jordan* has a decisive significance. The Evangelist John, in 3:23, additionally names *Aenon near to Salim* as a further place of baptism. The *Bethany across the Jordan* is definitely not identical with the Bethany close to Jerusalem at the Eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (raising of Lazarus) that is described by all evangelists, but refers to the baptism-site of John the Baptist shortly before the Jordan empties into the Dead Sea.

In Bethany there existed a ferry service across the Jordan River. To exclude confusion with the village at the Mount of Olives, the site of baptism is called Betabara or Beth-Abara in timely manuscripts. This place, however, is situated seven kilometres south of the actual location of baptism. Later witnesses to the text again changed the name of Bethany into Beth-Abara, a Judean border town, five kilometres west of the site of baptism and close to Jericho. Both locations are wrong, however.

The reason, why Beth-Abara was readily described as the baptism site of John the Baptist may have its origin in the fact that Beth-Araba (Beth-ar'a-bah) is already described in the Book Joshua (15:6; 61), as part of the northern border of the Tribe of Jude to the Tribe of Benjamin.

Yet, the mix-up concerning the historic site of baptism has even increased. At the end of the 4th century AD, large streams of pilgrims to the site of baptism commenced. Since the pilgrimages beyond Jordan, that is east of the Jordan River, were very dangerous on account of hold-ups by Bedouins, soon cultic places for the veneration of John the Baptist developed on the oppositely lying west bank. A floor-mosaic of a church in the East-Jordanian Madaba created in 565 AD is said to be the oldest map of Palestine, and by mistake shows the site of baptism on the western side.

What does the second place cited “*Aenon near to Salim*” signify? Without considering the context, one at first meets a place in the western Jordanian part of the Decapolis, in the former Province of Samaria. This Aenon does lie close to the upper third of the course of Jordan River, between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. It is excluded as an additional place of baptism by science, since the Baptist actually never baptized on the west bank of the Jordan River.

There are, however, two interpretations throwing light on the puzzle. The first: the



historic site of baptism also was called Aenon (region of springs) due to its richness of wells. Because later witnesses of the text, unfamiliar with the location, could not correlate Aenon with Bethany, it erroneously was brought into connection with the place of the same name near Salim. The second: retraces to the previously mentioned Hillel. In Hebrew this name means as much as benediction. The Greek equivalent to this is aion. According to John 3:23, John baptized at Aenon (aino) near (engys) Salim. With this the Essene Gate south of Jerusalem could be meant, where lately Essene basins for purification have been excavated. There therefore exists the possibility that the evangelist presumed a connection of John the Baptist with Hillel. Maybe it also seemed possible, from the point of view of the Evangelist John, that the Baptist had operated in Jerusalem, or the complete set-up was the result of flaws in tradition, based on ignorance of the true site of baptism.

The lack of detailed knowledge is explicable, since the gospels were not written before many decades after the death of Jesus. Furthermore, the recordings took place in Syria, Asia Minor, and Rome, so that the check-back with contemporaries frequently was excluded. The site of baptism of John the Baptist was situated on the eastern side of the Jordan River, close to its mouth into the Dead Sea. The Jordan was the border river between the region ruled by the Roman occupation force and Perea, which was within the realm of Herod Antipas. Only due to this John could be seized and killed without consultation of the Romans. And merely because of this Jesus could withdraw to the location, where John had baptized, without being apprehended by the Jews of Jerusalem (John 10:39-40). This geographic fact is historically proved, and, at the same time, the most important starting point for the understanding of the mission of John the Baptist and his work.

The choice of John the Baptist to designate Bethany as location for baptism certainly was not primarily based on the fact of the high frequency of traffic at this place then. Where John baptized, there was an old trade road from Jerusalem via Jericho to the east. On ferries, respectively at low water through fords, a steady traffic of persons and trade crossed the Jordan. Also today this region is still very busy. The place of the ferries and fords has been taken by the Allenby-Bridge, situated directly north of it, the only connection between the State Jordan and the West Bank.

At this border station at the lower course of the Jordan River, there were customs officers and soldiers doing their machinations, whores and beggars, but also Jews doing commerce on Sabbath. This was thus the place where the throbbing every-day life of the Jews took place, where business with the otherwise disrespected heathen people flourished, where soldiers and customs officers enriched themselves unwarranted, where whores were welcome and the needy disrespected. One was decent, lawful, and coy under the eyes of the priests and the Romans in Jerusalem. But in the far-away Bethany, people behaved greedy and unashamed, just like they

were in their interior. Only here, John the Baptist could reach men in their reality.

The deliberate choice in site certainly was not primarily guided by the high frequency of traffic. Like I mentioned already. He would also have found much traffic on the west bank of the Jordan River. Furthermore, he there could have removed himself from the reach of Herod Antipas. Enough equivalent water for his baptisms would have been in Israel, like at the Sea of Galilee, for example, at the Mediterranean, at the Dead Sea, or in the spas and water basins of the cities. What then was the cause why out of all places he baptized at the east bank of the Jordan, in an area where there is desert?

To find the true rudiment, we have to go far back in Jewish history to its leaders and prophets. We find this reason in the biblical tradition and the thereof - in the understanding of a knowing and recognizing John the Baptist - resulting mandate. The site Bethany, beyond Jordan, is exactly that place - opposite of Jericho - where once Joshua led the people of Israel through the Jordan into the Holy Land. In the Book Joshua it says:

*“ Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim with all the Israelites, and they came to the Jordan. They camped there before crossing over. (3:1).”*

*“ When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan ..., the water flowing from above stood still, rising in a single heap far off ..., while those flowing towards the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho (3:14; 16).”*

*“ The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on eastern border of Jericho (4:19).”*

Gilgal is situated on the west bank of the Jordan River, opposite of Bethany, and is esteemed a holy place in Jewish tradition. This location was the centre of sacred amphiktyonies (covenant of tribes), and, at the time of Joshua and the Kings, also assembly point of the army. While the Prophet Elijah praises Gilgal as sacred place, the Prophets Hosea and Amos condemn it as a site of idolism. Bethany, John the Baptist's place of baptism and sermon was, from his point of view, exactly identical with the former situation of Israel before the river was crossed. With his appearance at exactly this location, the Baptist correlated the existence of the people of Israel with the situation after the exodus from Egypt, the remaining in the desert before entering the Promised Land. In this Promised Land, however, only in the near future that would happen which the Lord had promised his chosen people.

John the Baptist hereby placed the Israelites of his time at exactly that moral and geographical location, where the people of Israel once had been, when it crossed the Jordan River coming from Egypt. Allegorically, he led the people back to the point before the entry of the Promised Land, before the beginning of the time of salvation. This inhibited an immense symbolism. It equalled the Jews of the early 1st century AD with those who had heard the message of redemption through Moses, but who

had to first undergo the process of moral renewal, the dying of the greedy, selfish ego in order to attain salvation. The descent from Abraham and membership with the people of Israel alone, according to the words of the Baptist, did not yet guarantee the achievement of redemption. Under this aspect, we have to understand the sermon of John the Baptist in Luke 3:8:

*"Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor', for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham."*

John the Baptist demanded immediate "in-version", and resulting from this conversion from the people of Israel. He asked for the alignment of thinking and doing to will of the Lord as once revealed on Mount Sinai. Therefore he pilloried the way of life, the lacking morale of his time, and the hypocrisy with which commandments and laws were being kept, while God and fellow-men were disrespected at the same time. Thus the gist of his sermons was an up-shaking and waking-up, but also a constant allusion to the love for God, for the neighbour, and for the duty of caring for those helpless and needy. (Mk.2:18; Mt.9:14; Lk3:11; 5:33; 11:1). Here we already find an early parallel to the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus.

Did John the Baptist feel the spirit of Elijah within himself? Was he permeated by the certainty to be God's messenger of whom Malachi reports in 4:5-6?

*"Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the hearts of the children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the earth with a curse."*

The choice of the site for baptism would account for this. Elijah, the great prophet, and guardian of those needy, had crossed through exactly that place, at which once the People of Israel had entered the promised land under Joshua. Only at the eastern side, that is beyond the Jordan "a chariot of fire and horses of fire, ..., and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven." (II Kings 2:11)

Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind, and will return, according to the word of Malachi (Mal.4:4-5). In the understanding of the Jews, his return was to be expected at the site of his ascension, that is at the east bank of the Jordan River.

The appearance of John the Baptist in the desert, especially at Bethany, was generally interpreted as the return of Elijah. On this background, it becomes understandable why the priests and Levites asked him: "are you Elijah?" Even when John the Baptist answers "no". He immediately refers to his mission, his task by saying:

*"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord', as the prophet Isaiah said". (John 1:23).*

With this he made clear, that he was not merely a preacher and adviser, as the like often appeared during that time in Israel, but, that he was sent to fulfil the word of the

prophets.

The Gospel of John at first conveys the impression as if John had appeared out of the blue and was somebody unknown to the priests and Levites. But, already his name Jochanan Ben Zechariah refers to his father, the priest Zechariah. The descent of John the Baptist was well-known, and a majority of the priests and scholars of the scriptures did recognize that there existed a relation between his work and the prophecies. Therefore they had him asked, to hear from him, who he really was.

All the prophetic references and signs, the mighty symbolism hiding behind his appearance, and the true significance of his sermons certainly could not be comprehended by all. In his completeness John the Baptist maybe was recognized only by Jesus. Alone from this the latter's statement becomes explicable Luke 1:15 - 17; Mt.11:9):

*“what then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet.”*

To understand the mission and work of the Baptist, also the analogy of his signs and doings has to be comprehended in detail. With his exact designation of the site of baptism, he compared the present time of Israel with the generation of Joshua that was allowed to enter the land, yet, due to its sinfulness could not achieve the expected salvation. Allegorically, John the Baptist pointed to where the people of Israel stood spiritually and morally, as it were, namely on the east bank of the Jordan River, before the entry to the promised land and redemption.

By his outward appearance and his way of life the Baptist set an additional sign: Like the inhabitants of the desert he dressed with a coat of camel hair and leather belt, and exclusively lived on what there was at hand where he lived. According to Mk 1:6; Mt.3:4 this were mainly locusts and wild honey. Referring to this, the Qumran scholar Hartmut Stegemann<sup>26</sup> cites in his book *“The Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist and Jesus”*: *“this life-style certainly had nothing to do with an ascetic “habitus” that would distinguish him from the comparatively almost sensuous reveller and wine -boozer Jesus (Mt. 1.: 18-19; Lk.7:33-34). Locusts fried in olive oil taste similar to French fries, just like the honey of wild bees they are a delicacy. While inhabitants of the cultivated land usually wore clothes made of linen or woollen materials, John symbolized the situation of desert-wandering of Israel by a not in the least less refined coat from camel hair, the leather belt of which was as precious as the woven sashes of others.”*

With this extraordinary appearance the Baptist neither intended to give a clue concerning an alternative way of life nor to criticize it. He exemplified to the Judaism of his time, where it stood morally and concerning salvation, namely directly before the entry into a new epoch of the divine historiography for the People of Israel.

Concerning his diet and clothes, as handed down to us, it has to be added, for the purpose of explanation, that locusts always were an occasional meal of the nomads. Wild honey, if found at all, had always been considered a delicacy. It protected from infections and increased the resistance of the body. The main dish of the Baptist probably was the large-shelled fruit of the *ceratonia siliqua*, the carob-bean. In some Mediterranean countries this was the most important nourishment. For centuries the fruit was that popular, that the dried carob-bean kernels were used as set of weights (0.2 g the troy weight). Aside from the biblical context, the consciousness that the Baptist had lived on this fruit apparently was always present, for tree and fruit (In German: *Johannisbrotbaum*, *Johannisbrot*) are named after him.

The fell-coat, only seldom made from camel hair, was significant for nomads and hermits. With the latter it was the expression of holding onto the Old Covenant with the Sinai-God of the roaming tribes of the people of Israel. With the choice of his clothes furthermore John the Baptist gave a clear reference to the great Prophet Elijah, concerning his outward appearance as described in II Kings 1:7 -8:

*“He said to them, “What sort of man was he that came to mee t you and told you these things? They answered him, “A hairy man, with a leather belt around his waist”. He said. It is Elijah the Tishbite.”*

In Jewish society the expectation of the return of Elijah was widespread. For it was hoped that he would ward off the impending disaster of the near judgement by God, and that he would reconcile Israel with God. Even Jesus refers to this. Right before his transfiguration on the mount (Mk.9:2-8), he answers to his companions Peter, James, and John:

*“Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things ...”* (Mk.9:12).

The whole Jewish people saw in John the Baptist the reincarnation of the Prophet Elijah. Through his sermons, he laid the possibilities for salvation into their hands. He asked them to work for divine salvation from within by penitence and conversion. This was in contrast to the popular belief, according to which God himself would lead his people to salvation by outward actions and occurrences.

This especially excelled the point of view of John the Baptist. He preached to the sinful, guilt-loaded, politically and economically to poverty reduced people of Israel about the possibility of redemption, and at the same time he showed them the way. Thus, John the Baptist was no preacher of the apocalypse, although the Old Testament and the Jewish apocalypse presented the respective material of visions. In Jewish tradition, the anger and the damnation of the world always referred to the enemies of Israel. However, the decisive reference for the understanding of the sermons of the Baptist is the conversion. He spoke about the impending judgement by God on Israel and not on its foes. This statement also has to be seen from the contemporary point of view, since Israel was subjected and humiliated by Rome, undermined by the Hellenistic way of thinking through the suppression by the

Seleucids. That meant at a time at which the judgement of God on the enemies was expected.

A decisive reference and a tremendous sacrilege in the eyes of the Pharisees and scholars of the scripture was that the son of the esteemed priest Zechariah preached and taught that only those would achieve salvation who experienced God through their own co-operation, like self-communion, conversion, and alignment to His true laws. One therefore does not become a chosen one of the Lord as the consequence of one's birth or membership of the people of Israel, but solely through right action. Expressed in other words this means: To non-Jews and pagans the access to the Promised Land and to redemption is given just as well as to the Jews. Thus, everyone could receive the baptism and the word by John the Baptist, and so lay the foundation-stone for his own salvation himself.

Wherein now lay the extraordinariness of the baptism by John? There had always been movements and bonds in the religious field, especially in the Near East, practicing cultic acts, like ablutions and partial and complete immersions. Furthermore, the River Jordan has a mythological significance in Jewish tradition, even if this finds no direct expression like, for example, with the Ganges River in Hindu tradition. All of these cultic actions and rituals of the most varying backgrounds and colouring, up to the Essene immersions for purification certainly had a model character for John the Baptist. The symbolism of the outward and inward purification is also clearly discernible with John. Nevertheless, his baptism in the Jordan River is a unique innovation. Already the superficial glance and comparison suffices to clearly recognize that the baptism of John shows more differences than mutuality with the ritual ablutions and immersions. This is even also true with proselyte baptism, as introduced by Hillel as the ritual of entry into the Jewish parish, as well as with the rites of immersion and cleansing effected by the Essenes. On the basis of some examples, these contentions can be exemplified:

John receives the epithet "Baptist", respectively the baptizing one, not from the evangelist or other early-Christian authors, but already from contemporaries like Josephus Flavius.

The Evangelists Mark(1:4) and Luke (3:3) report of a preaching of baptism that is directly connected with the sermon of the Baptist. Both shows, that the act of baptism as well as the words and the teachings were something new and unique.

The immersions of the Essenes exclusively served the purpose of cultic cleanness. The immersions for purification were executed repeatedly, sometimes several times a day. From the finds at Qumran, we can prove that there were a number of basins for cleansings and immersions that were used according to the respective situation and the hierarchic position of the person bathed. Not every bathing or immersion basin was equally accessible to all. Thus, Gentiles and impure persons were excluded

from many immersion basins. A majority of the Qumran scholars are even convinced that only members of the brotherhood and chosen ones were allowed to the immersion basins. A waiting-period of a year was required for admission to the immersion basins. Certain rules and rituals had to be most strictly observed. From today's point of view, a cult, in the negative meaning of the word, was exercised. Every Essene executed the rites by himself, that is without cooperation of someone baptizing actively or passively. The baptism or purification rite impressed by Hillel exclusively referred to Jews, pre-requiring suitable knowledge of scripture and tradition. The rite served as admission into the Jewish congregation under the condition, however, that the person baptized would strive for a higher morale and ethic. Every member effected the baptism himself, that is individually, without active or passive assistance of a baptist. In its point, however, this ritual of baptism already comes quite close to the baptism by John.

It often is taken for granted that the healing of the Aramaic General Na'a-man by immersion in the Jordan held a certain model-function for John the Baptist. As described in II Kings 5:1-19, Elisha (pupil and successor to the Prophet Elijah) suggest to the Aramaic man a seven-fold immersion into the Jordan River to rid himself from leprosy. Na'a-man at first became angry, since he received Elisha's recommendation only indirectly via a messenger. Further, he was hurt in his national pride, since he considered the water of his country to be more curative than that of the Jordan River. Eventually, he did as Elisha had told him, and *"his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean."* But there exists definitely no analogy to the baptism by John here, like there is none with the often-cited daily ablutions of the Anachoret Banus, as described by Philo in Vita 2.

Study and analysis of all known baths for immersion and cleansing in Judaism and the Jewish surroundings show that the characteristic of the baptism of John is unique, and manifold surpasses all ceremonies of purification practiced up to then in form and meaning. Regarded formalistically and outwardly, John the Baptist is the first one to actively exercise the baptism as a unique sacrament. This baptism and its intimately connected chance of redemption is accessible to everyone. There are no exterior conditions for admission like education, social rank, being Jewish, sinfulness, or righteousness. The Baptist fulfils the rite of baptism with everyone willing to convert and find anew the true, God-given values of life. His baptism is a unique act, that is it is not repeatable like other rites of cleansing. It additionally is the preliminary step and prerequisite to escape the impending judgement by God at the same time. This becomes clear with the words of John the Baptist:

*"The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me... I baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."* (Mk.1:7-8).

At this point, admittedly, the forerunning of John the Baptist is expressed again, but

John at the same time refers beyond it, taking up a position of a direct intercessor between God and men. It is confirmed that with the reception of his baptism the forgiving of the sins is also connected. This, naturally, was a challenge of the priests and scholars of the scripture. According to the understanding and testimony of the Old Testament, no man could grant the forgiving of sins, neither priest nor prophet. Even the expected Messiah could not grant it, only God himself. (see Mk.2:6 -7).

However, John the Baptist did not forgive sins by virtue of himself, but through the authority of his God-given mission. He considered himself the God-sent guardian (Aramaic: *nazir* ) of all those, repenting and converting, and thus acquiring remission of sins. In his sermons, it became apparent that conversion and a life pleasing God were not sufficient yet to attain redemption by God. Additionally, the sins of the past had to be redeemed by ruefulness. The baptism he administered as the mediator installed by God was a symbolic act for the remission of the acquired load of sins. Thus, from the point of view of John, the baptism was a symbol for penitence and conversion. This becomes clear in Mk.1:4:

*“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”*

In the understanding of the Baptist, the baptism was at once the renewal of the covenant, the newly-chosen chance to enter the Promised Land, the time of salvation. The complete immersion into the Jordan River symbolized the death of the - up to then - sinful and lost man. The pulling him up symbolized the birth of the new, chosen man, safeguarded from God's judgement. That is, John the Baptist himself did not grant any remission of sins. This he himself made clear, as Josephus Flavius deemed worthy of emphasis in *Antiquitates* 18:117.

The complete symbolism, his action in signs, and the significance of the work of John the Baptist is well-understood summarized by Hartmut Stegemann in his book *The Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus*:

*“From these premises it becomes clear what a far-reaching symbolism the baptism (of all rivers) into the Jordan River (Mk.1:5.9; Mt.3:6.16) had. John did not lead the people through the Jordan River into the Holy Land (Jos.3 -4), like Joshua once had done, but exactly up to the border of this transition. The future realm of heaven lay, symbolically speaking, yonder, on the other bank. For John the Jordan River symbolized the barrier of the impending final judgement that otherwise was insurmountable, and could only be overcome in the future (comp. the so-called eschatological reservation in the understanding of baptism of Paul: Romans 6:4). But the baptism “into the Jordan” was at the same time, in symbolic anticipation of the situation of the final judgement, also its surmounting for those baptized, the Baptist himself was the warrant of the future transition. The concrete priestly-sacramental intermediation for transition, of an otherwise inescapable fate of death for Israel, into the realm of future salvation was the centre of the Baptist's efficiency, his prophetic*



*interpretations of the present and his heralding of the future their meaning. Like Jesus himself said, John intended more than prophesy, namely essentially effective access to redemption. Its only guarantor for all of Israel then was John the Baptist.”*

The baptism by John the Baptist is something unique and extraordinary. Connected with his sermons it is of highest importance for the whole world in eschatology. His teaching and baptism deals with the relation to God, to his creation, and to men. His work is an eschatological act of mercy. His work is our hope in the hour of final unison with Divine salvation. His message shows us the way to bear fruit and to be redeemed. Yet, we have to understand the signs of his working and acting:

Conversion and renewal – then and today.

## FURTHER SITES OF ACTION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

The historical and biblical baptism site of *Bethany beyond Jordan* certainly was the final and decisive place of action of the Baptist. He had already won his reputation as a preacher, an excellent speaker, and prophet. Thus we also have to understand Mk.1:3 (*The voice of one crying in the wilderness ...*) and 1:4 (*John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*) Here, in the reduced narrative form of two sentences, a time span of several years, a manifold number of subject-matters is expressed. This desert, in Mt.3:1 more precisely named Judean Desert, refers to what today is called Chirbet Mird or Hyrkania, at the Wadi Sechacha, situated 9 km west of Qumran, in the direction towards Jerusalem. This place is right in the heart of the Judean desert. Even today, the platform and remains of buildings are very well discernible on a hill-top. To the east, a magnificent view of the Dead Sea opens. Below the platform of Chirbet Mird there are several subterranean cells. In the immediate vicinity, at the northern slope of the Wadi Sechacha caves were found and laid open. Possibly these subterranean cells and caves served as abodes for the hermits. These hermits (eremos = desert, wilderness) lived very ascetic and mainly dedicated themselves to prayers, studies, and meditations. By Philo of Alexandria<sup>27</sup> we moreover learn that they neither strove for personal nor common possessions. Additionally their clothes were very modest; an animal skin protected them against the cold in winter, during summer they merely wore a linen shirt (Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa*).

However, Chirbet Mird was not lonesome and deserted. It was situated on the travelling-route from Jerusalem to Qumran and Ein Feshka, three kilometres south of Qumran, and directly on the shore of the Dead Sea. Because of its sweet water basin, Ein Feshka served as fruit and vegetable garden to the Essenes. Today the oasis is a popular spa. The travel-route that was predominantly taken by priests, persons living celibacy, and pilgrims encompassed approximately 25 kilometres, or one and a half days. It led from Jerusalem via the Mount of Olives to Bethany, over the Dschebel el Muntar, and then along the Wadi Sechacha via Chirbet Mird to Qumran. At Chirbet Mird exactly two thirds of the way were taken. It served as place of rest and nutriment. An alternative route was the Wadi Kidron. The mostly dry channel formed a viable path. The walk from Jerusalem to Mar Saba<sup>28</sup> could be done in approximately twelve hours. To reach Chirbet Mird from Mar Saba took about four kilometres of laborious path, for which one needed four hours. From Chirbet Mird onwards, the route was identical with the first one.

This suggests that Chirbet Mird and its immediate surrounding, including Mar Saba, correspond to the geographic description of desert or Judean desert of the

Evangelists Mark and Matthew. Here John the Baptist operated as a preacher and teacher. As yet at this geographic site he not only gathered travellers on their way to Qumran, but already then crowds from Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Jericho, and the Judean Hills gathered at Chirbet Mird to listen to his sermons and teachings. John the Baptist thereby referred to the traditions of the Old Testament and the prophets. He handed his knowledge and interpretation on to the people. He taught to recognize that which had been said and written in the “here and today” and to translate it into action. This was, of course, connected with clear rebukes of the Pharisees and scholars of the scriptures who more or less administered and decreed the word of God like civil servants.

He did not exclude the Essenes of the nearby Qumran and of Jerusalem from his criticism, for their largely frozen rites and rigid opinions were no longer up to the standard of John the Baptist. Some religious scholars presume that John the Baptist in parts of his sermons referred to the Enoch-prophesies<sup>29</sup> that already showed strong basic apocalyptic features and visionary speeches.

The appearance and operation of John the Baptist at Chirbet Mird with a high probability, fell on the year 26 AD, and thus also on the year in which Pontius Pilate<sup>30</sup> was installed Roman governor of the Province of Judea. At the same time Herod Agrippa appears who as Agrippa I<sup>31</sup> received the title “King of the Jews” by Emperor Gaius Caligula. In Acts, Agrippa I is called Herod, and he had James killed according to Acts 12:1-23, and Peter imprisoned. Of Agrippa I, who led a very colourful life, it is very much assumed that he became an adorer and admirer of John the Baptist after an attempted suicide. After the death of John the Baptist, he turned to the wealth of ideas of Jesus.

However, more important for the work was that at that site a group of disciples crystallized and that the decisive reunion with Jesus took place. Reunion therefore, because I am convinced that both had known of each other from early childhood onwards and were connected with one another until their respective deaths. The points of intersection and touch simply were a consequence of the homogeneous guidance of their education and the teachers and masters common to both, to whom they were guided. If one disregards Divine guidance and designation, they at least were connected by a common view of world and God.

Many historians take it for granted that Jesus came into the sphere of influence of John the Baptist in the desert, that is at Chirbet Mird. At this time he joined up to the group of disciples of John. Even if this seems quite probable when looked at reasonably and logically, this, nevertheless, does not meet the kernel of the true facts. However, another reference is important at this place: According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is being tempted in the desert (1:12-13). This temptation probably also took place in the vicinity of Chirbet Mird. Concerning this, the evangelist places

the desert into the focus. John the Baptist comes from there, and Jesus is driven to there by the Holy Spirit. Satan attempts to subject the Divine spirit that had overcome Jesus to serve worldly power. Concerning Chirbet Mird it is striking that many Jews thought the southern bank of the Wadi Sechacha to symbolically be that site, at which the people of Israel had stayed in the desert, that is between the Mount Sinai and the transgression of the Jordan River.

It, therefore, is no coincidence that John the Baptist preached at this place, since it was the preliminary step and preparation of men for his decisive appearance and work at the Jordan River. By looking at things more closely and asking for possible backgrounds, correlations and meaningfulness become discernible. It shows that the sequence of his appearances was based on a clear taxonomy. This systematic representation, however, is not discernible to us from its beginning to its end, since we simply have too little material on the complete spectre of his words, sermons, and teachings, as well as on the places of his appearance.

In the Judean desert, more exactly, at Chirbet Mird John the Baptist already held a part of his sermons. His whole appearance must have been impressive. Next to his strong and pleasant voice, certainly, the wisdom of his speech was weighty. In the directness of his speech his deep love for his fellow-men was not lost. In his sermons, he unmasked the listeners, showed them their weaknesses and misdoings, and, nonetheless, dismissed them full of hope and strength. He gave them the courage to discern the ways of God and to take them. Through his teachings and statements, men learnt clarifications, correlations, interpretations as well as sensibleness of the Divine word. He gave them new self-esteem and new recognition connected with confidence and hope. In this phase of his work, John the Baptist was more of a mediator between God and man than a forerunner. In all of Israel, a downright Baptist movement developed. He was “the” warrant of hope, from the religious point of view a bearer of light. From this aspect we have to understand the verses John 1:6-8:

*“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.”*

For the guardians of the Jewish religion, with their rigid interpretations of the scripture, this preacher and renewer of course was a problem on principle. Furthermore the rigorous High Priest Cajaphas (Kaiaphas)<sup>32</sup>, a decided fundamentalist, was in office. Naturally the priesthood knew who this preacher John the Baptist was, the son of the Zadokian Priest Zechariah. Also did they know that the Zadokians had a traditional right to the highest priestly office in Israel. Yet, who was this preacher really? How was he to be put in his proper place? How and where did he live? The special way of his ascetic life-style, the messianic message, the charismatic appearance, and finally his prophetic pathos made the men listen attentively

and startled them. He was more than a thorn in the eyes of the priests, because, what would happen, if he suddenly claimed the office of the High Priest for himself? Not only the broad party of the Essenes would back him, but also the masses of the people. How could they make him dead in law before they themselves and their position would be endangered?

Certainly John the Baptist was observed and shadowed for a long time. It was hoped to find faults with him, or that he politically would take sides against Rome. The most simple way would have been, if they had been able to transfer the preacher as an agitator or even as a resistance fighter to the Roman occupation force, so that they could have washed their hands in innocence. But, John the Baptist was completely no-political in his sermons. Concerning the problem of the occupation force he only took a position in so far that he said the solution of the problem was something to be left to heaven<sup>33</sup>. Now the custodians of order attempted to compromise him as being ignorant of the scriptures and traditions. But John the Baptist was not only intensively schooled in the scriptures, but he also had a special intuition for the discovery of the deeper truths in the Scriptures and the Torah<sup>34</sup>. He was by far superior to them. He accused priests, scholars of the scriptures, and magistrates of equally betraying friend and foe, of only merely honouring God with their lips, of living pleasantly and selfishly, of being a charge on the people whom they led astray. He offended them by reproaching them with the mere knowledge of the letters of the scriptures and the prophets.

Finally, the scholars of the scriptures attempted to unmask the prophet on account of insolence. This becomes apparent by the kind of questions asked by the priests and Levites who had been sent by the Jews of Jerusalem to learn the true identity of the Baptist (John 1:19-28). Their question: "*Who are you?*" in the Gospel of John is answered by: "*I am not the Messiah.*"

Presented like this, question and answer do not correspond. Either the question was: Are you Christ? Or the answer was I am not the Christ (the Messiah) for whom I am taken.

The next question of those sent was, "*What then? Are you Elijah?*" John said, "*No*". The question followed, "*Are you the prophet?*" John answered, "*No*".

Taken exactly, there is a decisive reference to the background of those asking whether the question really was, "*Are you the prophet*" or "*are you a prophet*". In the first case one can positively surmise that those asking had decidedly expected a prophet and saw the premises for this fulfilled by John the Baptist. This would for one mean an extraordinarily good knowledge and interpretation of the scriptures, otherwise it might refer to the fact that John the Baptist points in his sermons to the one announced by Isaiah (see Is.40:3) and Malachi (see Mal.3:1,4:4 -5), and that those asking merely wish to learn, whether he considers himself to be that one.

In the second case the question would not be asked purposefully. The spectre of

interpretation therefore ranges from a “question -trap” up to the initial question, which then would have had to be followed by even more precise questions. John also answers this question in the negative.

Concerning the final question: “*Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?*” John refers to Isaiah, however, by answering: “*I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of the Lord”, as the prophet Isaiah said.*” With this answer, John the Baptist offers no platform for attack whatsoever, although he clearly speaks of himself and his mission.

The model of the way in which questions were asked and answered thereby reminds of the questioning of Jesus by Pilate. The presumptuousness or even blasphemy with which it was intended to bring John the Baptist to a fall, later, during his operation at the ford of the Jordan becomes apparent once more. That time they were the envoys of the Pharisees. They questioned and at the same time rebuked him: “*Why then are you baptizing, if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?*” (John 1:24;25). The answer of the Baptist as reported in John 1:26 “*baptize with water...*” is a sensitive and incomplete presentation in the Gospel of John, since another kind of baptism was unknown, and even this one had only been installed by John the Baptist. In the act of baptism the Pharisees could hardly have seen a blasphemy, certainly however, once it was connected with the remission of sins. From this reproach John the Baptist withdraws himself by the reference that he does not presume to act out of his own, but in preparation and at the order of someone higher (John 1:26 f.) who would fulfil the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the fire (Luke 3:16).

With the varying valence of the elements water and spirit/fire, the Baptist put his mission and action in its proper place: he is sent to lead the People of Israel back again towards the Divine Will, the Light, and the Logos. His baptism was a symbol of repentance, conversion, and renewal, and, at the same time, a signal of the irrevocable inward decision to attain harmony with the creator through the baptism with the Spirit(fire) of God. In the understanding of John the Baptist, the baptism with water already was sacramental in character.

Priesthood and scholars up to Caiaphas certainly recognized the extraordinariness of his exterior “habitus” as well as of his sermons and teachings. That John the Baptist was a chosen one, and also considered himself to be one, could be deduced by everyone from his many symbolic acts. Thus also his abode in the desert is of symbolic character. In Jewish tradition, the wilderness as a place of life and work had a strong correlation to the passion and salvation of Israel.

John the Baptist could neither be associated with political nor with religious groups, not even with the Qumran Essenes (those *converting ones in the desert* ). Although he had lived for an extended period of time ascetically and secluded, he was no lone -

wolf, but John did break with the cult-business in Jerusalem and public life, and saw space for closeness to God and the finding of truth in the wilderness. Selfishness could not be imputed to John the Baptist, neither from his followers nor from his adversaries. Aside from mistrust and suspicion priesthood and the magistrate at the same time felt high esteem for the preacher in the desert.

According to the description of the Evangelist Luke, John was reached by the call of God in the wilderness (Lk.3:2). We must not surmise, however, that this call occurred suddenly. Aside from the education by many masters and teachers, his public work was preceded by a long period of self-communion, reflection, and preparation in the seclusion of the Judean desert. The solitude of this scarce mountain region, without order and limits, without conventions and diversions was the area chosen by John to have a dialogue with himself and God. Furthermore, solitude and calm are prerequisite to a revelation. In this desert of stone, John was mercilessly exposed to the firmament, the earth, to the day, and to the night.

In the understanding of Jewish tradition, the desert is the place of the uppermost exposure of man. Courage and confidence are asked of him. In this way also the faith in God must prove itself. There is neither security nor guarantee, only the promise of God. The desert so is the symbol for life: The faithful one is sent off onto his way. He wanders through darkness, fear, despair, distance from God, lives through times of thirst. All that remains is the hope to be guided by God.

Thus the desert on the one hand is the *"great and terrible wilderness"* (Dt.1:19), *"a land that no man passes through"* (Jer.2:6), *"the peril of our lives"* (La.5:9), *"of trouble and distress"* (Is.30:6), and *"there goat-demons will dance"* (Is.13:21). On the other hand the prophets Hosea<sup>35</sup> and Jeremiah<sup>36</sup> consider the time in the desert to be the time of the greatest harmony between God and His people. These descriptions refer to the time of the desert-wandering, from the exodus from Egypt to the entry into Canaan approximately 1250 to 1200 BC, however.

In the course of time the solitude of the desert was increasingly looked upon as a place of proximity to God. In Jewish imagination, the redeeming character of the desert was intensified to such degree that it becomes *"the"* place of salvation, from which also the Messiah has to come (Mt.24:26). Similarly, the Qumran-parish expected the eschatological salvation in the Judean desert. Also Rev.12:6;14 describes how the *"woman"*, that is the church is carried off into the desert to, protected from Satan, wait for the return of Christ. However, also manifold colourful figures, like self-raised masters, saviours, and liberators withdrew to the desert, as we learn by Josephus Flavius (Antiquitates XX 8:6). Also by Judas Maccabeus we are told (II Macc.5:27) what the role of the desert was in the Jewish revolt from 166 to 160 BC.

In the New Testament the desert is chiefly mentioned in connection with John the

Baptist and Jesus. They withdraw to the desert to prepare themselves for their mission and to be alone with God. Here, by both, the Judean desert is referred to, while Paul, after his conversion, withdraws to the desert Arabia.

When John the Baptist went into the desert he was approximately 31 -33 years old. Before he was given the designation *the Baptist*, people called him the *Hermit of Engedi*. This is a reference to his extended sojourn in the desert in the immediate vicinity of Ein Gedi. This site is a biblical oasis, and once was the homeland of the tribe of Jude. In the year 1001 BC David fled to here and hid in a cave. Thus he put himself out of the reach from the anger of Saul. According to tradition John the Baptist withdrew to the cave of David. The Aquarian Gospel holds (IV,13;5) that already as a seven year-old boy he was in this cave to listen to the instructions of his master Matheno.

Engedi today is called Ein Gedi and is situated at medium height on the west bank of the Dead Sea, approximately 40 kilometres east of Jerusalem. Today Ein Gedi is a centre of recreation and studies that has become famous for its springs and waterfalls that enhance a strip of lush tropical vegetation. Ein Gedi is 25 kilometres south of Chirbet Mird, the later site of sermons of John the Baptist.

Form and expression of the Jewish cult as well as the hue and cry of the religious parties and scholars of the scriptures about truth have become worthless for John the Baptist. He does not look for truth in the noisy temple, but in the solitude. Misguided by the priesthood, the People of Israel had lost its awareness of being the chosen people. How could he guide it back? In the understanding of John the Baptist, his people had lost its salvation, it was, so to speak, in an exodus through the self-chosen yoke of greed, hypocrisy, and selfishness. But just like with the actual exodus from slavery in Egypt where God showed the way to His people by miracles and exterior signs (cloud, pillar of fire), now *the voice in the wilderness* and the *returning Elijah* should show the way. This was the word of the Prophets Isaiah and Malachi: "A voice cries out: *"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."* (Is.40:3), "See, I am sending my messenger, to prepare the way before me." (Mal.3:1)

John the Baptist carried a heavy burden. Did the prophetic word refer to him? The call, yes, the urge to reunite his people with God were already clearly within him. Certainly, the complete course of his life up to then, and the reference of his teachers pointed to a being chosen – yet, was the calling really that great? He could only find the answer by laying aside human wishes and aims, by freeing himself from all bonds, and by renouncing any temptation.

This phase is the most difficult one in the life of every master or mystic, since it upshakes the foundations of human existence. The aim is to overcome all matter, even that of one's body, and to achieve the so-called spiritual vision. Any conception, classification, or evaluation of all things, even of God must be put aside. Some



mystics described this process allegorically: man is a spiritual receptacle, soiled and tarnished by constant evaluation, judgement, comparisons as well as by limited and fixed ways of imagination. Only after successful emptying and cleaning of this vessel, it can be filled with newer and greater recognition. The word of Jesus “*lay all that is old aside and become new in my spirit*” refers to this process.

In long periods of fasting and meditation John the Baptist took this way, plagued by questions and doubts. In asceticism he neither saw a merit in itself nor a way of expression, rather it was the consequence of his discipline as well as of the fundamental alignment to the finding of truth. Thus, John the Baptist was waiting for the knowledge of all things at the end of which stood the Divine revelation. Way and mission now lay clearly and distinctly before him. Now he recognized with which words, actions, and signs, yes, even at which places he could reach the people and move them to convert. The Spirit of God himself guided him, bestowed him with an eloquent tongue, and revealed to him the baptism and its importance for the passion and salvation of the People of Israel. Now John the Baptist recognized that the words of the Prophets Isaiah and Malachi were a personal call of mission for him. Now he began to preach forcefully.

The Evangelist Luke expresses it as follows:

*“In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah.”* (Lk.3:1-4)

The question arises, if John the Baptist, being mercilessly exposed to the loneliness of the desert, to the firmament, to the days, and to the nights experienced fears up to the fear of death. This also applies to Jesus and his forty-day stay in the desert. During this phase of their lives, a human fear of pain and bodily affliction up to the fear of death no longer was experienced. The overcoming of their own selves certainly occurred much earlier. Also do we have to infer that they took no solid nutrition at all during the periods of fasting.

Thus we know from the medicine of fasting that zero-nutrition causes the feeling of hunger to die off on the third day already, whereas low-scale nutrition always creates feelings of hunger. With the exception of few days of crisis, the bodily and spiritual well-being increases continually until the 40th day. The otherwise common values of life visibly lose their significance. Approximately after the 20th day the person fasting can actually experience micro-material, ethereal occurrences. The spirit becomes more free, since it no longer is tied that intensively to the body and its needs.

With John the Baptist and Jesus, there certainly were fears and doubts (demons,

Satan) trying to tempt them not to follow their designations, suggesting them that they were not capable of fulfilling their tasks, and that they instead should lead a saturated and peasant corporal life. The temptation of Jesus, described by the Evangelists Matthew (4:1-11), Mark (1:12-13), and Luke (4:1-13) has a by far greater content of realism than even faithful Christians would surmise. To this temptation John the Baptist was exposed too, even if this is not stated explicitly. The background: Jesus and John the Baptist were absolute master souls. Through most intensive schooling and self-discipline they attained indescribable powers of the spirit over matter. These forces, however, can also be put to the use of egotistic motives and terrestrial power. This analogously holds - in a more or less reduced form - for all men having reached a high degree of mastery. A misuse of these powers, however, is extremely rare, since a high degree of initiation usually no longer attaches any significance to an earthly, material power.

There are many open and hidden hints that Jesus and John the Baptist could dissolve their bodies. Thus the Aquarian Gospel reports of John: *"To flee the crowd following him, John magically camouflages his body and becomes invisible to men's eyes."* (XIII 61; 18).

Doubting and unbelieving people always hold against this that the crucifixion of Jesus and the beheading of John the Baptist are a proof contradicting this thesis. In truth, those arguing thus have not understood the principle, for they argue from the normal, everyday point of view which attributes the highest priority exactly to the corporeal form of existence. For John the Baptist and Jesus, however, spirit and mission were of importance only. The body exclusively served as a medium and lost its importance with the achievement of the spiritual aim.

As already mentioned in detail, the New Testament aside from Aeaon near Salim only names the desert and the Jordan River as places, where John the Baptist operated. The great sermons on social ranking, penitence, and renewal certainly only began in the Judean desert and found their decisive climax at the ford of the Jordan River at Bethany. However, before John the Baptist withdrew to the desert and prepared himself for his great mission, he had already appeared with critical speeches and symbolic actions in Jerusalem. Already here the exchanges with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the scholars of the scripture, but also with the city magistrate took place. Also the public and loudly voiced criticism of the cult management of the Temple, the sanctum of the Jews, falls into this period.

The Aquarian Gospel at length describes his appearance in Jerusalem in XIII,61;62. It commences with the return of John the Baptist to his mother-country, after a long time of studies and teachings. For a short time he stays at Hebron. This town, being one of the oldest and holiest cities of the country, had great significance for the Baptist. David once reigned here before he made Jerusalem the capital. Moreover

the Patriarch Abraham once bought the Cave from Ephron the Hittite and buried his wife Sarah at this site. When he died, also he was buried close to it. Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah also were interred here.

The Cave of Machpelah is considered the second -ranking holy site of Judaism. Did John the Baptist implore the spirit of Abraham and the Fathers of Israel here?

John the Baptist withdraws to this cave, where once already David had found shelter. People call him the Hermit of Engedi<sup>37</sup>. At the age of 30, he goes to Jerusalem, and sits saying nothing and fasting on the market place for seven days. The priesthood, the scholars, and the people gather around the mute hermit waiting for his message. After the wordless period of fasting is over, he refers those standing around him to the word of the prophets and wise men and announces the Messiah: *“Prepare yourself, o Israel, prepare yourself to welcome the King.”*

He disappears and nobody knows where he turned to. The town now is full of rumours of the hermit and the arriving king. The priesthood and the magistrate send out messengers to get to know the hermit and his message better. However, John the Baptist cannot be found. After some time, he appears again. The whole town comes to listen to him. Of the coming king he now heralds: *“Prince of Freedom, King of Righteousness and Love is He. In the realm of the soul is His kingdom. Yet, invisible it is to man’s eye. Only he, whose heart is pure may enter.”*

When John the Baptist leaves, a large crowd of people follows him. He dissolves his body, however, to thus escape the masses. A few days later Israel is celebrating a feast, and Jerusalem is full of Jews and people of heterodox faiths. Suddenly John the Baptist is standing right among them and shouts:

*“Merely with your lips do you still honour God, no longer with the heart. Only money and property is your intent. Your priests have loaded far too heavy burdens on the people. They themselves live comfortably and easily at the cost of the nation suppressed by them. Your scholars of the law and medical practitioners grow luxuriantly with the land, like cancerous growth on the body of the state. They do not spin, they do not weave, yet, still they siphon off excess profits for themselves with every deal. Your magistrates are blackmailers, adulterers, thieves disrespecting the right of the others. Robbers are they, doing their business in holy halls. To thieves you have rendered over your Temple, and the exchange-offices disturb him who wishes to pray. Listen you men, change your way of thinking, leave off from your evil ways, otherwise God will turn away from you. Alien peoples could come and within a short hour you would be robbed of glory and honours.”*

After the sermon is ended, he again disappears at an instance from the sight of those surrounding him. The priesthood and the magistrate are furious on account of the rebukes, and bear in mind to trip John the Baptist up. They have him searched intensively, but nobody finds him. When the people learns of the plan, it defends the preacher, and threatens the officials of the city, so that they fear for their lives and

have to hide. A few days later John the Baptist appears again and speaks in the courtyard of the Temple. Now he is asked about the meaning of his message, and at whose command he speaks. He refers to the words of the Prophe ts Isaiah and Malachi, and to the coming Prince of Peace. In chapter 62:6 -9 it further says:  
*“The Prophet Malachi heralds the word of God, in which he writes: I will send Elijah to you before the days of revenge will come, to again turn the hearts of Isra el to Jehovah. If the people does not listen, it will feel My curse. You men of Israel, you know of the load of your sins. When I passed through your streets, I observed a bird with bent wings flapping timidly. Men of all ranks battered it. I looked a t it again. And only then did I see that his name was righteousness. I looked once more – and saw that its companion lay dead in the dust of the street. It was honesty, and its pure white wings were covered with smut.”*

We have to assume that John the Baptist held manifold sermons of this kind and style. His words were full of poetry, yet, very curtly and brusquely referred to the deeper meaning and the criticism. He certainly spoke no word for the purpose of speaking. Early-Christian sources, therefore, refer to the symmetry of his noble words. Without detours and explanations he immediately comes to the point. The choice of words and his precise metaphorical speech show a high art of speech. Rhetoric and its contents are completely tuned to one an other, “homed”, and therefore extremely effective. Then, like today, there was no possibility to manifold interpret his speeches. In legends we are told how groups and multitudes followed him to hear his sermons. The Baptist, however, is said oftentimes to have kept expressive silence. This of course caused an increased expectation and closer attention. In his speeches, he rarely speaks in parables, as did Jesus later, but unheralded and directly names the procedures, faults, and results. He presuppos es that his audience understands, or at least seriously tries to do so. In the few preserved sentences and verses conveying his message to us, there also is no discussion of his words. Apparently his speeches also have the motto: he, who has ears may hear!

His criticism is not merely directed against the priesthood, the scholars, the magistrate, or wealthy ones. He does not exclude those poor and simple from his rebukes. In his understanding, the offence of Israel is not only with those ruling and reigning, for poverty and simple-mindedness are no guarantee for purity and kind-heartedness. In this context John the Baptist hints at those *“restless vagabonds of this world who mostly are poor and beg for their bread.”* (Aquarian Gospel XIII 62:19).

John the Baptist was not at all intent on personal esteem and on being in vogue. His criticism was also directed at those following him and cheering him or even upraising him to be the Messiah. This becomes clear in the verses 62:20 -22 of the

Aquarian Gospel:

*"I heard the crowd rejoice, when I reprov'd the priests for their injustices, and was witness to the same crowd throwing stones until justice lay wounded in the drain. I saw it trample righteousness under foot. Also you who are following me hard on the heels are not by a hair's breadth better than the priests and scholars of the scriptures."*

His sermons at Jerusalem, his criticism and turning away from the cult of the Temple were nothing short of an affront to the people of all ranks and Jerusalem itself. Since Jerusalem was the religious centre, and at the same time the holy city in which once YHWH would reside and gather all peoples of the world. Taking a view at the history and the eschatological significance of this town makes this clear<sup>38</sup>.

According to the Aquarian Gospel John the Baptist leaves Jerusalem and takes the route to Jericho. This town held a special significance for the Baptist, since it is the oldest town of the world known, and shows a history full of changes with times of flourishing and times of decay. When the desert-generation crossed the Jordan River in 1200 BC, Jericho was the first human settlement they found after fifty years of wandering. At the time of taking over the country, the walls of Jericho had already been destroyed for several centuries. If the town was of importance for the Baptist due to the Book Joshua and its therein (in chapter 6) described seizure, or merely from the context of his time as a spiritual centre, can only be speculated upon today. There are references that John the Baptist found as well friends (an Alpheus is named) and promoters as a strong enmity within the religious parties and groupings in Jericho. This opposition, however, is only too understandable. At this time the movement of John reached its climax. The Baptist had denied the conservative and letter-adhering as well as the modern, Greece-oriented priests the acknowledgement of legitimacy. His sermons were one single call for renewal and conversion. In principle, all the dignitaries of the religious and the Temple services as well as of the state administration had become his enemies.

In the Gospel of Luke Jesus says to a scholar of the scriptures:

*"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, he passed by on the other side." (10:30-32).*

I see in this a direct reference to an occurrence in the life of John the Baptist. The preacher consciously pulled his weight to argue convincingly with his adversaries for his philosophy of re-orientation and conversion. For this purpose, he chose Jericho and ordered messengers of Jerusalem's priesthood to the town at the Jordan rift. In Jerusalem he would have been mercilessly exposed to his foes. In Jericho, however, he could be assured of the retinue and support of the nearby Qumran Essenes at this

stage of his work.

Neither in Jericho nor elsewhere did the representatives of the religious and the terrestrial power of Israel give an ear to the teachings of John the Baptist. On the contrary, the priesthood and the scholars accused him of religious revolt and adulteration of God. They tried to silence or to *half-kill* him. Possibly this was the outer cause for the Baptist to continue his work with greater strength and intensity. From Jericho he withdrew for self-communion and contemplation to the nearby Judean Desert.

The question, if John the Baptist had a combatant in Jesus when attempting to win the representatives of Israel for his thesis, must – from the historical point of view – unfortunately remain open. There is, however, much that would point to this. Brushing aside religious background and pathos, especially these actions and words of John the Baptist were preparing the way for the thinking of Jesus. The vigorous, intrepid demeanour of the preacher effected a wake for Jesus. By his up-shaking of Israel, connected with his unselfishness, John the Baptist, so to say, worked like a plough making the path viable. Already in this phase John the Baptist had a model-function for Jesus. Forcefully and fearlessly somebody preceded having the same understanding of salvation and God. Maybe Jesus recognized before John the Baptist that the latter fulfilled the predictions of the Prophets Isaiah and Malachi. At least his early words of respect point to this. On the other hand, it was again John the Baptist who recognized the Messiah in Jesus, and who had to strengthen him in his understanding and consciousness. From this point of view it is only natural that Jesus was an advocate and supporter of the ideas and teachings of John the Baptist. Therefore it need not surprise us, when, from the point of view of contemporaries, and looked at it in a matter-of-fact way, Jesus was, and is ranked to the body of disciples of John the Baptist.

The Aquarian Gospel describes one further interesting matter of minor importance. *“On his way from Jerusalem to Jericho he (John the Baptist) looked up his kin Lazarus in Bethany.”* (XIII.62:14). The Bethany at the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, situated three kilometres from Jerusalem, is referred to. This Bethany, the El-Azarije of today, also is the site where Lazarus rose from the dead. The site and the person of (the later raised) Lazarus are identical with the host of John the Baptist. The hint at *his kin* is interesting, and points to a consanguinity between the Baptist and Lazarus. Since John the Baptist and Jesus were relatives from their mothers' side, however, this means that there also was a more or less close kinship between Jesus and Lazarus.

It is further reported that John stays with Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha for a short time. Upon his arrival already many people are crowding around the house of Lazarus, and only leave after he has spoken to them. Now a feast is given to the honour of the Baptist. According to old tradition, the mayor fills the goblet with

wine and hands it to the guest of honour. According to XIII.62.27 -30 John the Baptist lifts up the beaker and says:

*“ Wine delights man’s heart, yet, his soul is saddened. It urges man’s spirit into bitterness and gall. Being a boy I took the Nazirite vow. No drop of wine since has touched my lips. He loving the King should avoid any drop of wine as if it were poison.”*

After these words, he empties the full goblet onto the street. In the further course of the Aquarian Gospel John the Baptist goes to the ford of the Jordan River via Jericho, where he stays an undefined time to baptise and to preach. After many months he returns to Bethany to also teach there. After having spent some time at that place,, he returns to the ford of the Jordan River, and continues his baptisms. It is only during these second baptisms that Jesus comes to receive the baptism of John.

The mentioned return to Bethany, however, is chronologically falsely quoted and concerning its meaning, since Bethany at the Jordan River, and the ford of the Jordan are geographically identical; a return to the Bethany near Jerusalem, however, can be excluded historically. Yet, that John the Baptist interrupted his baptisms at the Jordan to preach and teach at Jericho, Chirbet Mird, or Qumran is possible, and corresponds with his whole strategy. Something similar is also reported to us about Jesus who often changed his place of work, yet held the number of sites limited.

Asking for the geographic sites of work of John the Baptist, one has to make a distinction between places where he baptized and preached, places where he instructed, and places where he stayed for other reasons.

The baptism, connected with sermons on baptism and penitence, however, exclusively took place at Bethany beyond Jordan. The sermons in which John the Baptist admonishes renewal and conversion as well as those to the social ranks were chiefly held in Jerusalem and in the Judean Desert. Single sermons were, of course, possible at all stations en route. Mostly people followed him, or streamed together as soon as they learnt of his arrival. Occurrences like in the house of Lazarus at Bethany (close to Jerusalem) certainly happened frequently. At Jericho, Qumran, and Chirbet Mazin, not far from where the Wadi Kidron enters the Dead Sea, the Baptist worked as an instructor. Here, six kilometres south of Qumran, were the buildings that were frequented by people of low social rank and external Essenes. For self-communion and meditation John the Baptist withdrew solely to the Judean Desert (Ein Gedi) shortly before his great mission. Aside from Hebron, he probably stayed occasionally at all worldly, spiritual, and religious centres of the country.

If the chronological order of his essential sites of work: Hebron – Jerusalem – Jericho – Ein Gedi – Judean Desert – Jordan River – Jericho – Qumran – Chirbet Mazin – Jordan River (Baptism of Jesus) is completely correct is interesting from the historical point of view, but not decisive.





## THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

The evangelists consider the baptism of Jesus and the recognition of the Messiah the outstanding task of John the Baptist. This probably also applies to all of Christianity. That Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist before beginning his public work is a richly attested and historically undoubted fact in early-Christian and early-church tradition.

From the point of view of religious science, it has to be differentiated, however, what and how the evangelists report and what the underlying, true meaning of the Baptism of Jesus was. The often recognizable anti-Baptist polemics of the gospels make us assume that the baptism of Jesus served the disciples of John, who honoured the Baptist as a messianic figure, as an argument against the disciples of Jesus for the higher ranking of John. The early-Church mission therefore was highly intent to display the supremacy of Jesus over the Baptist in manifold ways. Thus, for example, the reference of the Baptist to the one "*more powerful*" (Mk.1:7 f.) as well as the degrading evaluation of the baptism with water with regard to the baptism with the spirit (Acts 19:1-7) seem to stem from an anti-Baptist veneration of Jesus. To such an origin also the pericope on the baptism Mk.1:9-11 corresponds which specifically underlines that Jesus is not bestowed with the water-baptism of John, but with the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

We, therefore, have to assume that the essential topic of the baptism of Jesus as well as the momentum causing it, is reported short-sighted and ill-balanced by the evangelists due to disputes with the disciples of John. So we unfortunately learn nothing about the points of contact, the relations of the two men of God with each other and the religious dependencies of one another. Let us look at it differently: John attracted whole crowds of people. From Jerusalem, Judea, and from all over the area of the Jordan River they came to Bethany to be baptized. In the scriptures and in historic memory, however, there is only one name recorded: Jesus of Nazareth. Without this baptism, John the Baptist would possibly have been forgotten. There would merely exist a reference to his life and work in the frame of historic recording, like with Josephus. According to Mk.1:7, the Baptist calls Jesus the mightier one, the latchet of whose shoes he is not worthy to stoop down and unloose. For Jesus, however, John is among them, that are born from women the greatest that means the greatest human being (Mt.11:11).

For the early-church these reciprocal marks of esteem already were a great problem concerning description, reproduction, and classification. This problem was intensified by the baptism of Jesus and the John's being the baptist, to a provoking and decisive

question. Apparently, the early church saw a contradiction in it. In addition to this, it was feared to hand this conflict on to succeeding believers. Without transition, in short, and piece by piece, both messengers are designed their respective evaluation, like a fact that cannot be proved. In contrast to this stands that, verse by verse is dedicated to otherwise quite unimportant themes. At bottom this confrontation was caused by the bungling way of contrasting one with the other. It neither has its reason in the persons nor in their words, deeds, thoughts, and aims – but solely in the bumpiness and clumsiness of the evangelists. A tragic mistake that, thank God, remained without greater and more seriously weighing consequences, since it could have caused a division in the developing Church.

While the Gospel of Mark still reports objectively of the appearance of Jesus at the Jordan River and of the baptism (Mk.1:9), the gospels taken down later reduce the action step by step. The baptism now is christologically adapted, the Baptist assigned a lower rank (Mt.3:13-17; Lk. 3:21-22). In John 1:32, the Baptist becomes a witness to Christ, the baptism remains unmentioned. Solely the anointment by the Spirit is mentioned. A reconstruction of the true context and import of the baptism of Jesus is even impossible for the faithful and questioning Christian, especially since the baptism with fire and water also is explained awkwardly. It is striking that together with his baptism, Jesus received the authority to execute the rite of baptism elsewhere. The basis for this thesis is John 3:22-29. Here it is described, how John receives the message that Jesus now baptizes in the land Judea. The disciples of the Baptist and a Jew quarrel about the rightfulness of the baptism by Jesus and expect a clarifying answer from John. The latter, however, expresses his joy with the baptizing-activity of Jesus.

The congruence of both in their preaching of the message of redemption, of course, seduces to the thesis to see in Jesus the most successful student of the Baptist. The dark tunnel of thirty years before his public appearance as well as the historically proved “John-fever” which the Baptist caused by his sermons and symbolic actions further add to this. Additionally, the figure of speech used in Mt.3:11 and John 1:15, “*he who comes after me*”, is interpreted as the expression of the rabbinic relation between teacher and scholar. The question of the true background of the baptism of Jesus by John has always concerned the early-Christian authors, the Fathers of the Church, theologians, yes, even mystics. But neither the evangelists nor Origin, Augustinus, Cyrill of Jerusalem, Hilarius, and certainly not today’s representatives of the Christian churches found a satisfying explanation. All statements concerning this have to be evaluated as attempts at a high Christology from above. At the same time all statements concerning this suffer from the side-issue, whether the baptism of John the Baptist was connected with a redemption from sins or if it merely symbolized the act of sealing of the sinners from the coming judge and saviour. From the point of view of the evangelists, the baptism of Jesus probably is described

for the purpose of giving testimony. With this, either the baptism itself is the summoning, in which Jesus himself perceives above himself the Spirit of God in the form of a dove or John becomes the witness of the election: *“And John testified, say ‘I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”(John 1:32-33).*

All these testimonies of calling stand under the coercion of the tradition of the Old Testament. Thus, the calling of the prophets was mostly proved by the reference *“the voice of God reached him.”* Significantly, the evangelists do not hand on any such report of calling for John the Baptist, if we disregard the Benediction (Lk.1:68 - 79), which, however, probably stems from the pen of admirers of John the Baptist.

Wishing to find out the background of the baptism of Jesus through John today, we have to free ourselves from the traditional historic and christologic clichés. Also we must not exclude the one from the other, like many theologians do. My conviction is that the charismatic preacher John the Baptist conformed like nobody else to the standard of thinking and ideals of Jesus. He certainly was among the followers of John the Baptist. Like I already mentioned before, Jesus very probably was the only one who could completely understand him in all his messages, instructions, and acts. This understanding, however, lead to a close intimacy and to a mutual support. In a certain way, therefore, Jesus was also considered by outsiders a disciple of the Baptist. We have to assume that John exercised a certain teacher -function for Jesus in many respects. All followers and disciples underwent the baptism by John. This, however, was an exemplary act for others and less an act for the redemption of sins.

The baptism of Jesus as such has no special significance with respect to the recognition of the extraordinary spiritual and intellectual grandeur of Jesus. The Baptist had certainly already recognized this calling before. The Baptist did, however, connect the baptism of Jesus with the special reference to the latter's power. Before the eyes of everyone he raised Jesus to independent work on his own accord. He officially dismissed him from his circle and made it known before the people that from then on Jesus would, like him, fulfil the mission of God. At the same time, he transferred to him the authority to baptize for the remission of sins. It is a fact that Jesus began his own mission after having received the baptism by John and then executed the rite of baptism in Judea.

The Baptist did not transfer this authority of action to his disciples, at least, there is no biblical or historic reference. The delegation of this authority is merely proved concerning Jesus. Alone from this, it becomes clear that Jesus cannot be called a disciple of John in the usual sense. The reason urging the Baptist to this action may have been many-layered. Maybe he knew that his time would soon be up and that only Jesus could guarantee the continuation of his work. Maybe he wanted to lay the

burden of the mission on several shoulders. It lies at hand, however, that both had been prepared for their mission by masters and teachers. At least John the Baptist was conscious of the mission and the being chosen of Jesus, his public testimony is a clear reference to this. With all these ways of observation we must not neglect, however, that John and Jesus were mystics and attained knowledge through meditation and dialogue with God which withdraws itself from the proud, logical man.

The Baptist undoubtedly was an active and purposeful man of action. His appearing and withdrawing, his speeches and silence, his signs and actions were planned and prepared in detail. He guided and defined himself and his work, and did not allow himself to be directed or impelled from outside. The conviction that all his doing was guided by Divine inspiration, is not prejudicial to this. On the contrary, the guidance by God, and a maximum of self-discipline and personal initiative are an irrevocable bond, like the study of the prophets, mystics, and saints of the church shows.

Thus the tradition that John the Baptist downright pressed Jesus to his mission may be more than a legend. The point in time and the public testimony for the mission of Jesus possibly were set by the Baptist, without consulting and asking him. With the act of baptism and the public call he, de facto, forced him into action. Immediately after the baptism Jesus withdrew to the desert, and fasted for forty days (Mt.4:1 -2; Mk.1:12-13; Lk.4:1-2).

With desert again the Judean desert is meant. An exact geographic site cannot be deduced. Quite possible is a stay in the cave of David, near Ein Gedi, where already John the Baptist had sojourned. The topography as described in the *temptation of Jesus* can also point to Chirbet Mird, however. In this temptation by Satan we rather have to see a purely spiritual and intellectual process, however, so that the indications of place derived thereof often are merely hypothetical. The retreat to the desert had the purpose of absolute concentration and preparation for the impending mission, like it had also been with John. The respectively named forty days conform with the Essene knowledge that the spiritual power of perception reaches its climax on the fortieth day.

The baptism of Jesus took place in 29 AD. According to the Pescher-Method, we locate the equinox of the month of March (08. March, 12 o'clock). According to this, Jesus was exactly 36 years old (birth: 01. March, 7 BC). Yet, the Evangelist Luke tells of an age of approximately 30 years (3:23). Historically proved, however, is 29 AD, thus an age of 36. If the baptism actually took place at the equinox of March, the date certainly was not haphazard, but expressed a deep symbolism. Very decidedly we have to refrain from considering the baptism of Jesus a rite of initiation for incorporation into his group of disciples. Even though this is maintained so frequently and earnestly, there is not the slightest reference to this assumption. Rather the baptism gave Jesus the impetus for independent action and work.

The baptism of Jesus is interwoven with many legends. One such legend holds, that Adam came to terms with Satan about handing over the earth to the latter. The seal of this pact, an impression of Adam's hand in a clay panel that then was fired (the guilt of the hand), was thrown into the Jordan River by Adam. While being baptized by John, Jesus stood on this panel of clay, and thereby annulled this treaty.

According to tradition during the early time of the Diaspora Jews met for private meetings and only were allowed to enter, when they had a white stone from the Jordan River as a distinguishing sign with them. They received the Jordan-stone from missionaries at their baptism.

Also in Revelation 2:17 it says: *"Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the stone is written a new name, that no one knows except the one who receives it."*

A legend describes how the Jordan River stopped flowing during the baptism, and walled up, and enclosed Jesus like a wave. In the art from the 1st ct AD to the Middle Ages the baptism of Jesus was one of the favourite motives. Especially in Medieval book-drawings fantastic pictures are to be found. Many paintings portray Jesus with a scroll, illustrating the promissory note of Adam (chirography). This, and all other debentures of Adam lose their validity with the baptism of Jesus by John. The symbolic portrayal of the baptism of Jesus therefore points to the beginning of new life bestowed by Jesus.

The oldest depiction of baptism known is in the Callist-Catacomb in Rome, dated to 220 AD. Stone-reliefs from Roman sarcophagus of the Via Lungera as well as of S. Maria Antigua in Rome portray acts of baptism from the 3rd ct AD.

The theme *Baptism of Jesus* in connection with the question of full powers, cannot be concluded here without entering into the 21st chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Verses 12 and 13 at first describe how Jesus dispels the merchants and pigeon-dealers from the Temple. He thereby refers to the word of Isaiah (56:7), according to which the Temple shall be a House of Prayer. This scene points to a decided, even aggressive action. Manifest it is thereby assumed that Jesus only set this sign after several requests from the Baptist. Directly before this Jesus was, to wit, at Jericho like Mt.20:29 confirms. It is quite probable that John the Baptist and Jesus had a decisive talk concerning future proceeding here. The verses 21:23-27 may ascertain this, but grant a decisive interpretation and clarification concerning the question of authority. It is described, that Jesus teaches in the Temple. The High Priests supervene and ask of Jesus by what authority he is acting, and who installed him in these full powers. The latter answers with a counter-question: *"I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?"*

The high priests and eldest consulted each other, because they recognized the noose. If they answered “*from heaven*”, why then would they turn against the teaching of the Baptist? If they answered “*from human origin*” so they would turn against general view, and they feared the anger, “*for all regard John as a prophet.*” So they said: “*We do not know.*” On this Jesus replied to them: “*Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.*”

Diligently interpreting the typical phrases and figures of speech of the gospels, one must discern an immediate connection between the full powers of Jesus and the latter's being baptized by John. The reference in question and answer to the baptism of Jesus, thus, is in no ways chosen only haphazardly. In the hint to this baptism that seemingly is introduced merely as a simile, we therefore have to see the proof that Jesus valued his baptism as an outer, visible sign designating his full authority. The recognition of the external sign, of course, presupposes the deep interior knowledge concerning full powers and mission. The latter is thereby depicted by the evangelists through the recognition of the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove. The perception of the voice: “*You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased*” (Mk.1:11, comp. Mt.3:17, Lk.3:22, John1:32) is to underline this.

At another place Jesus himself speaks a clear word concerning the question of authority, however: “*If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true.* (that is: without value before the eyes of others) *There is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that his testimony to me is true. You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth.*” (John 5:31-33).

Regarding this the last sentence is extraordinarily interesting, since it states that people were in need of positive approval of John the Baptist to believe in Jesus.

In the ensuing verses Jesus clarifies, however, that for himself the inner knowledge of the authority is the decisive impulse for his action. The outer testimony to this by John he calls. “*that you may be saved.*” Here he expressed that probably nobody would believe in his mission, if it hadn't been testified to by the authority of the Baptist.

## THE SERMONS

We can only approach the work and essential manifestation of John the Baptist by attempting to work for the understanding of the subject matter and the testimony of his sermons. This is quite difficult with his words being thus scarcely reproduced by the evangelists. The reduction to sermons on penitence and those on apocalyptic judgement provide a further obstacle to this. Even the topic of conversion that is decisive for John is only mentioned as a caption, and *“anticipates the imperative call for metanoia in the summary of the sermons of Jesus”*, (Josef Ernst).

With all sympathy for the evangelists and in recognition of their difficult task, the impression remains that with the limited assessment of the work of John the picture presented of him is distorted. This becomes especially apparent, when we confront the so much-cited messiah-expectations and identifications with the few sermons handed on to us. Was the Messiah in the Jewish tradition and imagination an envoy heralding damnation and affliction in an apocalyptic scenery? Certainly not. An identification with the Messiah with the person of John the Baptist could well develop only because his teachings and his sermons placed the message of salvation as the essential element into the foreground. Exactly this element remains disregarded in the reproduction of the words of the Baptist by the evangelists. Thus, even their quoted word of Jesus *“he who comes after me”* actually only seems threatening, since the latter has already laid the axe unto the root, holds the fan in his hand, and will burn up the chaff with fire. (Mt.3:10-12; Lk.3:9; 17).

The evangelists merely draw a half, and therefore one-sided picture of John the Baptist. They intercept his heralding of salvation to keep it exclusively for Jesus. Most certainly the Baptist did use hard and direct words, addressed to a part of the chosen people of Israel. Yet, in summary, his words always showed up the way to redemption. Undoubtedly with the person of John the Baptist, the herald of the messianic tidings, and not the bearer of calamity was in the forefront. According to Jewish understanding, the arrival of the Messiah was preceded by the so-called messianic labour-pains, which meant wars among the peoples, dissension in the families, and natural catastrophes. From the point of view of contemporaries of John the Baptist this, however, was already experienced and suffered-through history and present in one.

Which requirements did the Messiah have to fulfil in the Jewish way of thinking? Beginning with Saul, the first king (1012-1004 BC) Messiah (anointed one, in a closer sense: the one anointed by the Lord) had been the name of honour of all kings of Israel who did not hold the Semite title *melek* (=king). At the time of the Kings, thus,

Messiah was more of a political term. In contrast to this, the prophets called the God-sent one and herald of salvation the *Prince of Freedom* or *Son of Man* to exclude any political reference. Only in the 2nd ct BC, under the influence of the dynasty of the Hasmonaeans, and the view of the Qumran Essenes, the term Messiah is conferred to the spiritual and priestly level (priest-king). Therefore the spiritual well-being and that of soul, a terrestrial life in unison with God stood in the foreground. By the way, the political Messiah-idea has only remained alive in Judaism sporadically and unsuccessfully. In the Jewish expectations of the end, the Messiah never was understood to be an independently redeeming person, but always a mere representative of the eschatological work of God with His people.

In his teachings and in his sermons thus John the Baptist did correspond to the imaginations of a spiritual and priestly Messiah. This shows clearly that the evangelists overly stressed the sermons regarding judgement and apocalypse to the disadvantage of the theme of redemption of the Baptist. The view of the world and the understanding of God of John the Baptist cannot be filed into the apocalyptic scheme of thinking. His prophetic speech is, so to speak, separated by worlds from the apocalyptic threat of catastrophes. Especially his open, immediate, and convincing address as well as his authority show the distinct difference from the characteristic "apocalypsis". The Baptist does not speak of a world-devastating fire or of the comprehensive cosmic destruction of the earth, rather he admonishes men to decide for God. The definition "annunciation of a religious truth of redemption on the virtue of a personal revelation" (Max Weber) accurately characterizes the work and the mission of John the Baptist. To understand the "fever of John" that the Baptist had roused with his symbolic acts and sermons, we have to understand that prophesy had ceased in Israel for some time. The words of a visionary and exhorter, like Malachi, Zechariah, or Haggai<sup>39</sup> already dated back for more than 500 years, and were merely written tradition.

After a long period of waiting for the revelation of God the long-time longed for, charismatic prophet appears with a loud voice and a clear word. John the Baptist is the sign: God is speaking with his chosen people again. All expectations seem to be met with his appearance. In the eyes of Israel he is the herald of God. Through him God gives his final warning and his last condition for redemption. At a neuralgic point in the political, cultural, and moral history of time the People of Israel receives its final briefing. If this last chance is squandered, YHWH will not pass judgement on the foes of Israel, but on His own chosen people. His anger will meet the self-righteous and self-elected leaders of Israel to whom the legitimacy of salvation as consequence of birth and office seems an inherited privilege. Only on the background of this can the sermon of the Baptist in Mt.3.7-12 be understood:

*"But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear*



*fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor", for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."* (comp. Lk.3.7-9; 16-17).

Slight influences from the threatening of judgement from the Old Testament must not be excluded. However, we have to consider that John the Baptist consciously chose a reference to Jewish tradition in his sermons. Thus words could be understood quickly and unmistakably. The metaphors of the axe at the root of the tree, the thresher on the threshing-floor as well as the motive of the fire have to be understood as dramatic actualisations, since the aim was to avert a complete turning away from God of the people of Israel and to convert it into a return.

When we compare the Gospel of Luke with reference to this, we find a striking congruency of text – except for one essential difference. According to Luke 3:7 John speaks to the masses of the people and not to the Pharisees and Sadducees, like in Mt. 3:7. This, of course, led to long disputes among the scholars, since it is of import, if judgement is threatening only the leading representatives of the people, or all sinful members of Israel. This question is of utmost importance, but, may be merely a hint to the anti-Judaism of the early church within the inner Judean area (Juergen Ernst), or simply a fault in transcription.

In the understanding of justice of John the Baptist, such harsh words to the simple sinners of the people scarcely were adequate. Furthermore, his word found great applause with them. This becomes apparent later on in Mt.21:32, when Jesus addresses the high priests and those eldest:

*"For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."*

In this statement I discern still another and essential reference, however: Jesus refers to the high priests and eldest of Jericho. Here John the Baptist had accepted to discuss with them to argue for his teaching (see *Further Sites of Work of the Baptist*). In the speech of Jesus it becomes clear that the Baptist goes to the high priests and eldest, whereas, at all other meetings they come to the Baptist. It can further be concluded from the words of Jesus that he had been a witness to these arguments, and very possibly co-arguing with the Baptist. Furthermore, we have to assume that this teaching rested upon a broad fundament, and was not reduced to

the mere sayings to “do repent” and to “breed of vipers” . Independent from this, if the hard sermon-words of the Baptist were addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees, or the whole people of Israel, the key of his statement is that Israel is bereft of all its special rights and prerogatives of salvation. Neither membership with the people, nor race, nor membership in the Jewish church have any value before God, if there is a shortage of fruits of reversion. Of what use are titles to salvation and the certainty that Abraham had guaranteed his children? The inheritors of Abraham, members of people assigned with highest promises, out of the blue are equalled to the heathen peoples and crowds, and rebuked like breed of vermin into the state of doom.

Concerning Judaism, these words, of course, were the great friction with their YHWH-tradition, and their understanding of being chosen. From now on it was necessary to attain redemption by virtue of free decision and personal ethics. In the sentence “God is able to of these stones raise up children to Abraham” John the Baptist does clearly refer to the eschatological significance of the progenitor, at the same time, however, he opens access to salvation to all human beings. In the understanding of John the Baptist all those living according to the Divine laws, and thus standing in the tradition of promise, belief, and redemption are stock of Abraham

Ernst Lohmeyer (*Das Urchristentum*, Goettingen 1932,) after a very broad analysis, re-arrives at the theory of the redeemer, and sees the free and independent spirit of John the Baptist in the rejection of everything institutionalised in Judaism, in the repudiation of the Temple and of the cultic and ceremonial laws with the priestly civil servant-institution. The author writes:

*“Now one understands, why the Baptist holds fast to the figure of Abraham, and yet rejects the natural birth out of Abraham. This no and that yes add to one another, and regarded together reveal what John is moved by. Before the approaching light of the eschatological day everything historically fixed dwindles and becomes light tissue; the only solid thing, however, is God’s doing, like it once happened exemplarily with Abraham, and like it will soon happen again.”*

John the Baptist places completely new accents. While, up to then, the thought of reversion had mostly been withdrawn from the decision of the sinful people, and had been subjected to the free choice of grace by YHWH (see Lamentations 5:21), the Baptist grants to every single one the actual possibility to attain salvation by conversion and re-orientation to God. Despite all graveness and burden of the misdoings, he points to the possibility of salvation and redemption. In his sermons and doctrine the Baptist liberates men from their terrestrial and spiritual chains. He frees them from the underbrush of religious and ritual entanglement and senselessness. He breaks with an integral component of Jewish tradition. He uplifts with one word, with one action the distinction, valuation, and assessment between Jews and heathens, pure ones and those impure, men and women.

His word, his teaching, and his baptism assail the fundamentals of Jewish tradition. Thus, the baptism of John expresses much more than biblical tradition conveys to us. It was a downright address and invitation to those – from the Jewish point of view – underprivileged, discriminated-against, and impure. His love, his word, and his actions were with those desperate, uprooted, and seeking. Only when we are conscious of that which was considered impure in Jewish thinking, we can actually discern and have a proper appreciation of the work of John the Baptist in its fullness.

In III Moses, chapters 11-12 all that is impure is listed explicitly, bible-page upon page. While chapter 11 in its distinction of what is edible from animals is realistic and understandable, chapter 12 exclusively is concerned with the impurity of the woman when conceiving and giving birth. In 12:4-5 it says: *"Her time of blood purification shall be thirty-three days, she shall not touch any holy thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are completed. If she bears a female child, she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation; her time of blood purification shall be sixty-six days."*

The ensuing verses 6-8 in detail describe the rituals of the burnt offering and propitiatory sacrifice, a woman had to discharge after delivery to be atoned and declared pure by a priest. Especially concerning menses of the woman and the uncleanness connected with it, 15:19-30 deals in almost penetrating detail. Whoever touched a woman during menstruation was impure. Moreover, everything upon which a woman had sat or lain during her menses was considered unclean. Who only touched her hair was impure, and had to wash his body and clothes the very same day. Additionally, there were rules of conduct when a woman had the period for a time, at an unusual time, or longer than normal. When the bleeding was ended, a woman had to count seven days before she was pure again. In 15:29-30 it says: *"On the eighth day she shall take two turtle-doves or two pigeons, and bring them to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting. The priest shall offer once for a sin-offering and the other for a burnt-offering; and the priest shall make atonement on her behalf before the Lord for her unclean discharge."* There are similar rituals and rules concerning discharge, and for a man, *"who has an emission of semen while asleep"*.

The chapters 13 and 14 deal with lepers, and those showing similar signs of illness. A priest had to diagnose the respective illness, and to declare the impurity. Purification was connected with the respective burnt offering or propitiatory sacrifice. In 15:31 it is finally summarized that all that is impure shall be separated from that which is pure: *"so that they do not die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst."*

For the most part these mosaic laws of cleanness are credited with cultural and historical causes. In my opinion, however, quite practical reasons were decisive for the strict rules of cleanliness. For decades Moses had been in the process of a

migration through the desert. Rigid discipline and austere leadership were necessary to lead this great number of people to the Promised Land. An outbreak of epidemics was permanently possible due to the extreme heat and the shortage of water. Therefore it was necessary to take heed of utmost hygiene and cleanliness. Additionally, there was the possible danger of individuals or even groups becoming hysterical or even depressed. In this great situation of exception and of need of the people of Israel severe rules and rites were absolutely necessary. Only a person with exceptional and charismatic qualities of leadership could lead a complete people through this hardship. After the end of the migration through the desert many of the mosaic rules in principle were no longer necessary, nevertheless, they were a further integral part of Jewish tradition – even still at the time of John the Baptist.

In Jewish understanding women, if at all, only were of second order within the plan of God. Women were considered wavering, selfish, peevish, and unsteady, additionally they often were unclean. It appears that John the Baptist was the first to not interpret the mosaic laws strictly adhering to the letter, to reject the burnt offerings and the propitiatory sacrifices, and to additionally take the seemingly insurmountable hurdle of the depreciation of women. Without hesitation he invited them to baptism, and did not ask, if they were pure or impure according to the mosaic laws, or if they had done their atonement-sacrifices. With one single instruction he did away with all these bounds and rules. This was an achievement meriting highest respect, since it met enormous opposition from the rows of the priests and scholars of the scripture. So it is not astonishing that John caused the historically proved “fever of John” with his sermons and actions, for, all of a sudden, all people were free and equal before God. It is a curiosity that precisely John the Baptist of whom – as a cliché – it is presumed that he had no binding to women whatsoever, brought about the liberation of women. Even though there are no biblical references, it is considered proved that Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus as well as Salome, the sister of Mary were among the first women baptized. These three were in the wider circle of disciples of the Baptist at the outset of his mission. The equalization of all men before God was deepest intrinsic insight for John the Baptist. The basis that women are just as well part of God’s plan as men may have been given by Joel<sup>40</sup>. In the book of this prophet it reads in 2:28-29:

*“Then afterwards I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on th emale and female slaves, in those days, will I pour out my s pirit.”*

John the Baptist had a profound knowledge of all the words of the prophets and their interpretation, thus also of Joel. The latter had already equalled *daughters* and *handmaids* to the *sons* and *servants* of Israel in the 5th ct BC.

John the Baptist here even went a step farther. He did not make a difference

between men with incurable leprosy or simple infections of the skin. He preached to them and baptized them just like they had come to him. His baptism was, aside from the spiritual-mental act, at the same time a symbol of bodily purifying from sickness. Unfortunately the evangelists do not inform whether healing from corporeal ailments occurred in connection with the baptism of John. Since the Baptist was considered a prophet, the return of Elijah and a God-sent man, even to be the Messiah already while he lived, spontaneous healings of ill candidates for baptism are probable. In the understanding of task and mission this probably was ranking second for the Baptist, and based on Essene teaching and tradition to some degree.

Aside from the rules of cleanliness and uncleanness, there existed a large number of laws and rules at least partially incapacitating the Israeli people, and forcing it into sinfulness. As an example of this we take the cult of the Sabbath. So, according to Jewish rules one was merely allowed to cover 2000 ells (=880 metres) (Ex.16:29, Acts1:12). Even relieving nature on Sabbath was subject to complicated regulations or was completely interdicted in special religious parties. Of highest import is the question whether John the Baptist preached and baptized on Sabbath. We have to assume that he rejected the rules concerning the Sabbath to a greater part. In this way of acting he was already an example for Jesus who also healed on Sabbath.

Moreover, there were the laws and regulations of the worldly administration and of the Roman occupational power that had to be met. The latter were comparatively liberal and humane for the Israeli population.

Adherence to the religious laws and *being pure* was not only burdensome, but also expensive. The declaration of vindication through a priest not only presupposed the purchase of victims, but the priest also demanded a respective fee for his action. On this background it becomes clear that the merchants of victims (doves, goats, lambs etc.) had their business right inside the Temple. Due to religious law the clientele of those impure and sinning was automatically very large, since it was involved with the natural laws of human life (menses, births). Aside from the remuneration the priesthood asked from those unclean and sinning, it also received regular stall-rents and provisions on returns. God, sin, and money thus ideally were united in the Temple. Whereas every single religious and worldly law was justified in itself and seemed sensible, the sum of all was no longer liveable. To find oneself or even God as the Truth seemed impossible.

John the Baptist must have painfully recognized and perceived this subjugation of body, spirit, and soul of his fellow-men. Decided, uncompromising, and certainly not without anger, he pilloried the beneficiaries and administrators of this inhuman and wicked system. He discerned that immense affliction, stringing, and subjection of the Jewish people had its cause in the priesthood and the magistrate. Therefore the Baptist dealt in his public sermons especially with the Pharisees and scholars of the

scripture, and taught and demanded a change and renewal of structures. John the Baptist had recognized that yoke and constraint did not originate with the Roman occupational power, but that they rather were the laws, rituals, and makings of their own priests and magistrates that pressed and throttled the people. In this context also the sermon of John the Baptist concerning the respective caste to the crowd, the customs officers and the soldiers (Lk. 3:10.14) has to be seen. The greatness of his action lies in this that he did not content himself with sermons and teachings. John the Baptist showed the alternative by inviting everyone to himself, Jews and Non - Jews, those circumcised and those not, sinners and righteous ones, men and women, clean and unclean to attain purity through baptism. Whoever had been baptized by him, from then on no longer needed the rituals and strings of the priesthood. Everyone who had been baptized could now forever stand pure and free before God.

Thus John the Baptist did not come to fulfil the laws of the priests, but to do away with them. He came to lead men to Truth and to God. He came to counteract the spirit of the age; in word and deed. He disrespected and fought norms and forms, and in their stead placed the essence as sole ideal, way, and aim. He understood and taught that an overweight of norms and rules suppresses the true and high values of man. Thus the following recognition could be a theorem of John the Baptist: *"Where forms predominate, substance is lacking. Essence is in spirit and soul only, and needs no form."*

The charismatic character of his person, the religious power, and renewal blasted all comparison. With regards to the society, he differed from general norms, even more, he stood in complete contrast to them. That he moved the masses and caused a great renewal is a psychologically only too logical consequence.

How much would our time with its great pains of the soul, its lack of spiritual goals and orientation, with its many laws, norms, rules, taxations, and its lack of love need a figure like John the Baptist again.

A section of the teaching of John the Baptist was imprinted by "fasting and praying", like is expressively documented in Mk.2:18 and Lk.5:33 (comp. Mt.9:14). This teaching, however, was only for the circle of disciples and pupils of the Baptist, and can merely be regarded as form of religious practise typical of John the Baptist, even when the similar is reported of the Pharisees and the Essenes. It is striking that the baptism of John is not connected anywhere with the demand of fasting and praying as a religious exercise, yet, well with the requirement of social justice. The spiritual value and background of fasting was already dealt with in a preceding chapter. We also have to consider the terms fasting and praying as a paraphrase for long and deep meditations of the Baptist and his disciples, serving self -communion and the finding of God. The greatest strength of the Baptist lay in fulfilling his task by inner

calling, without an outer signal or occurrence pointing to the necessity of his appearance. There neither were famines, worldly catastrophes, wars nor epidemics, so that his sermons did not seem immediately necessary. Therefore the danger was great that he would be exposed to ridicule and derision of the scholars, priests, and the whole public.

I am asking you to enter deeply into your own thinking and imagination concerning this! Do indulge in the imagination that John the Baptist returns in some human figure and is teaching and preaching at some place in the western world of today. Even, if you yourself were convinced of his return and of his work, would you be able to stand up against the worldly arguments from science, politics, and the church speaking against him? You can be assured that everyone having rank and name in this world, would accuse him of error and would completely expose him to ridicule. Further, you can assume that the Vatican, like the Pharisees, would silence him. Entering even more deeply into this scenario, you will further have to assume that all terrestrial strives against him could, in addition, win support through defection or even betrayal by the closest combatants.

With all the respect we have for the figures from the light Jesus and John the Baptist, with all (pretended) faithfulness, there are many reasons in the world of matter and in the aspiration of the single individual ego, speaking against a higher truth of spirit and soul. The few arguments, however, speaking for it are easily destroyed, because human thinking and feeling remain limited to the moment, and hope to the short-term terrestrial future.

I, on purpose, lost myself in this side-theme to explain what great power a man by the name of John the Baptist needed to suddenly, at a certain time, appear and preach, at a certain place, without great intrinsic affliction and without discernible exterior needs and signs.

John the Baptist gave us something additionally, of which we are hardly conscious today: The prayer; the immediate and individual dialogue with God. This becomes clear in Lk.11:1-13: Jesus is praying (meditating?) at some undefined place. After the end of the prayer or the meditation his disciples ask him:

*“Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”* Upon this he teaches them the *Lord’s Prayer*.

If this passage is correctly cited by Luke, then it points to the contents of the Baptist’s prayer. According to this, Jesus taught his disciples to pray in the sense of the pattern of prayer of the Baptist. How may this prayer have been centred and structured? It certainly must have differed decisively from the Jewish form of praying and the Essene rites. The short reproduction by Luke of course causes problems. Why do the disciples of Jesus ask for a prayer in accordance with a scheme of a not further described prayer of the Baptist? At least they must have known the prayer of

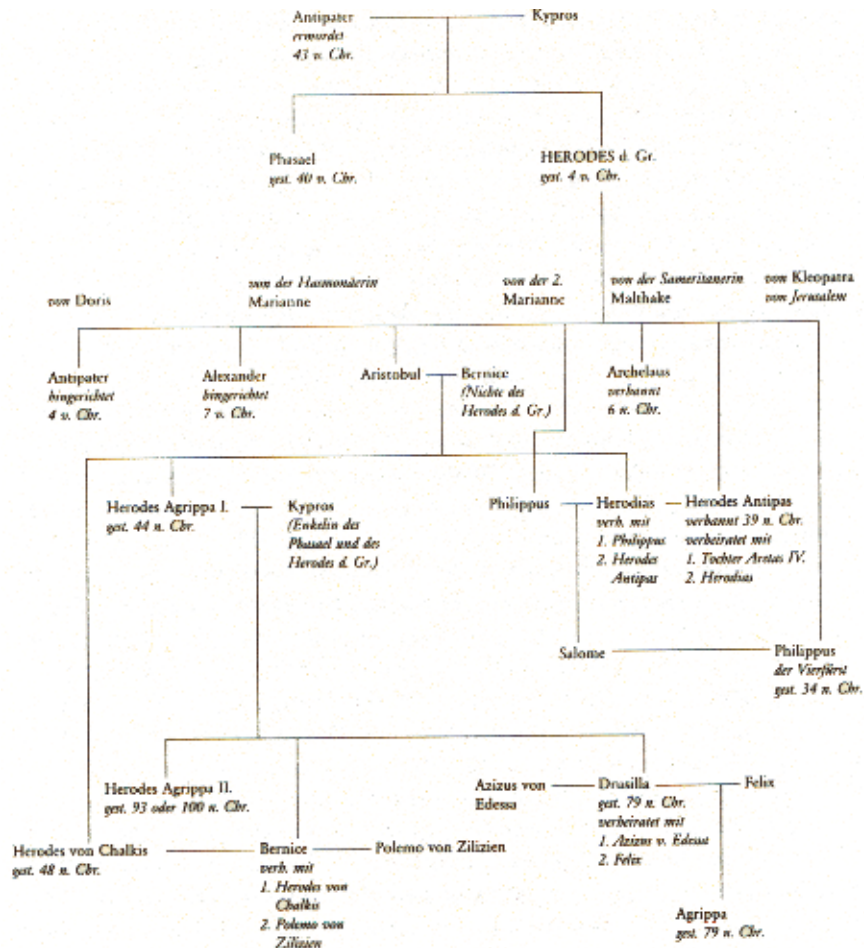
the Baptist. Even more so, the prayer of John the Baptist was certainly generally known in the early and original church up to the end of the 2nd ct. AD. Officially it found no mention by the early-Christian authors. The surmise therefore is at hand that the *Lord's Prayer* maybe only is the slightly altered prayer of John the Baptist. *The Lord's Prayer* as a whole, so to speak, stands under an eschatological prognostic. The limitation to the essential and the stylistic shortness refer to John the Baptist. Lastly we have to discern the reason stated for the request for a prayer, like the one by the Baptist, as having no reference also with the recording of Luke. Probably also here the contact with disciples of the Baptist and disciples of Jesus is depicted in the contrast and their outbidding. Presumably here is a further attempt to prove the emancipation of the disciples of Jesus from the group of disciples of the Baptist, from which they stem .

The complete message of John the Baptist is in its core a twofold thesis of a time of judgement and salvation. In the New Testament this only becomes clear with Mt.3:11, Lk.3:16, where God is described as Baptist of Spirit and Fire in one. In the valuation of the Baptist by the annalist Josephus, the aspect of the herald of salvation predominates, however. The reason, why almost only the judgement -aspect of John the Baptist is reported of in the New Testament is that here the redemption -aspect of the work of John is described in relation to or in the pointing -to to Jesus. Jesus therefore will not only be the fulfiller of those conditions of salvation described by John, rather Jesus is consciously contrasted with the Baptist (Mt.11:2 -6; Lk.3:18-23), and the time of redemption commences with the baptism of Jesus by John.

On the basis of these description-interests of the early-Christian authors, unfortunately a very one-sided and strongly reduced picture of John the Baptist is developed in the New Testament. However, the scarce elements remaining still make it possible to discern the basically central themes of John the Baptist.



## THE FAMILY OF HEROD THE GREAT



## THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN

The public appearance of John the Baptist begins in Jerusalem at around 28 AD, and ends with his imprisonment by Herod Antipas in 31 AD. He preached and worked for approximately three years which he interrupted by sojourns in the desert and periods of silence. Regarding contents and statements of his sermons and teachings, the evangelists reveal only little. In comparison with his message, the group of his disciples seems of minor importance to us, today. However, in the New Testament we find many references, especially to the disciples of John. On the one side this again refers to the situation of conflict of the early-Christian authors with the disciples of John, on the other hand it decisively clarifies the essence and the mission of the Baptist.

The disciples of John the Baptist were quite numerous, they came from all social and religious classes of the Jewish people. During his imprisonment, and especially after his death, his disciples and followers drifted into inner and outward dismay. Some of the disciples of John joined Jesus, others - under the pressure of Paul - later had themselves baptized on the name of Jesus (Acts 19:5). The by far greater number of his disciples, however, continued to see the messiah in John the Baptist, and, historically proved, existed as a religious community, respectively sect, until the 2nd ct AD. In this context, the already mentioned existence of the Sect of the Mandaeans has to be referred to that has its foundations in the disciples of John. A section of the disciples recruited itself from the Essene brotherhood. According to Lk.7:29 f, there existed sympathy and support for the word of the Baptist in the whole people, even from the side of the rebuked customs officers. Mt. 21:32 additionally mentions the whores. There certainly also existed sympathizers among the priesthood and the politicians. So Herod Agrippa I openly owned up to the case of the Baptist.

It would be wrong to estimate the number of direct pupils and disciples too small. A figure of more than a hundred persons is realistic. The disciples of John not only had to fulfil mental-spiritual tasks, but they also had to assist with the baptisms and had to upkeep organized proceedings, when the masses of people came to be baptized. The Baptist movement remained active up to the 2nd ct AD, which points to a very large and convinced crew of disciples. Alone Acts 19:1-7 already reports of twelve disciples of John who let themselves be baptized on Jesus by Paul. In this respect also Acts 18:24-28 is interesting. It describes how a Jew named Apollos<sup>41</sup> came to Ephesus and well-spoken, mighty and ardently preached the doctrine of Jesus. Apollos, however, only knew the baptism of John. He is also mentioned in connection with Paul (I Cor:1.12).

The New Testament does disproportionately of ten refer to the disciples of John, but there are no hints or helpful statements for their identification, as exist concerning the disciples of Jesus. The disciples of John remain essentially anonymous – apart from one decisive exception:

The Gospel of John 1:35-41 describes how two disciples of John the Baptist followed Jesus to see his abode. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter is called by name, while the name of the other disciple remains unmentioned. Andrew again points Jesus out to his brother Simon Peter. From this text it becomes clear that Andrew and Simon primordially were in the inner circle of the disciples of John the Baptist. In verses 43-45 two further disciples, Philip and Nathanael are mentioned as original disciples of Jesus. This passage allows the interpretation that both also belong to the circle of the Baptist, since Philip as well as Andrew and Simon Peter came from the town of Bethsaida, and were close friends. Philip again speaks of Jesus to Nathanael. All those four disciples mentioned, as well as the fifth unnamed one must have been connected by something greater than a personal friendship, namely a common work and aim, certainly arisen from the teachings and sermons of the Baptist.

The whole passage is naïve to odd in its essence anyway: Apparently closest disciples and combatants wordlessly leave their master to follow an until then unknown man. Merely the reference of the Baptist to Jesus as the Lamb of God is the impulse. Reality certainly was different. For one, the disciples of John had been well and long-time familiar with Jesus, Jesus and John the Baptist being connected by manifold points and times of contact. The term *Nazir* finally allows the conjecture that Jesus himself stemmed from the circle of the Baptist. Contemporaries called John the Baptist and his followers *the guardians* (Aramaic *nazren* or with an article *nazraejja*, Greek *nazarnoi* respectively *nazoraioi*).

To distinguish him from a great number of men with the same name, Jesus was called *the Nazir* (Mt., Lk.) or *the Nazirite* (Mt., Lk., John, Acts). This term does not refer to his origin from Nazareth, however, but to the membership to the circle of the Baptist. The *guardianship* referred to *a guarding before the doom in a future last judgement*. This was the eschatological symbolism of the Baptist, and the rite of baptism an outer symbol for this. When studying the exegetics concerning the question of direct membership of Jesus to the circle of the Baptist, the spectre of answers ranges, however, from *maybe* to *probably* to *certainly*. As of now, a concrete and historically founded statement is not possible.

Furthermore, we also have to understand the very symbolic baptism of Jesus by John in such a way that John urged Jesus to independent action and working. The discipleship of Jesus principally could only emerge from the circle of the Baptist, since the foundations and the knowledge as well as the preparedness for the impending existed exclusively here.

Later on - probably even purposefully - constant fluctuations within the circles of disciples of Jesus and the Baptist occurred. The common interests and correlations were apparent and helpful. On this background also the pointing -to and referring-to of John the Baptist to Jesus has to be understood. Apparently, there existed only differences concerning the question of fasting. Intercommunications between the Baptist and Jesus as well as between the respective apostles were by far closer than would be surmised from the coarse reporting-pattern of the Gospels.

The imprisonment and the forcible death of John the Baptist had plunged the disciples into a deep crisis. A powerful, dynamic, and successful movement seemed to end abruptly and traumatically. Certainly, also Jesus had run into intrinsic crisis and outer affliction by this unexpected turn of events and the now unsupported and helpless disciples of John. Thus, the death of John the Baptist was more than a warning signal for the work of both and the religious -eschatological movement altogether. The disciples of John pressed for decisions and actions, at least for distinct and prospective statements. Regarding this, the passages in the text are mere suggestions, but convey the situation of affliction and crisis. In Mt. 14:12-13 it says: *"His disciples came, (disciples of John) and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus. Now when Jesus heard of this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself."* (comp. Mk.6:29-30).

This flight of Jesus into solitude was certainly not only caused by the fear of persecution by Herod or others in power, it rather served the digestion of this traumatic situation and the collection of new energies and strengths, since from now on the complete task rested solely on his shoulders. What comfort, which explanation could Jesus give the disciples of John? According to the Aquarian Gospel (XV;85:14-18) he answers to the question why God allows the severe fortune of the Baptist: *"Look at the single straw. When the ear is ripe the straw has finished serving. It falls and gets equal to the soil from whence it came. This straw John resembles well. Richest harvest did he bring forth, but now his work is done. If he had said but one more word, the even measure of his noble work would be suspended. When one day my work will be done, then Israel's regents will do the selfsame unto me – and more. All this is within the plan of God. Innocence does suffer where maliciousness does rule. But woe unto those conjuring up the innocence's pain."*

After a long period of mourning, of doubting, and of powerless wrath as well as of reorientation, a part of the disciples of John integrated themselves into the discipleship of Jesus to continue the work and aim of their master. The other, probably greater part of the disciples continued to revere him as Messiah and God -sent man and sought to upkeep and enlarge this blessing. In a similar situation the disciples of Jesus also found themselves after the crucifixion of Jesus. They, however, found answer and orientation in the resurrection of Jesus and in the

developing church. Must or may one discern the beginning of a similar mythology of the eschatological interpretation in the narratives about the resurrected John who continued working in Jesus (Mt.11:14; Lk.9:7)?

That the disciples of John were assigned high importance after the death of their master and during the development of the Christian parish and the early Church can be measured by their manifold and obvious mention in the New Testament. Alone on the basis of the change of the disciples Andrew and Simon Peter to the circle of disciples of John, religious science assumes a religious -sociological dependency of the Jesus-movement on John, since Andrew was considered to be among the most intimate apostles and Peter *the first among equals*. In connection with the descriptions of the evangelists of the disciples of John, we well have to recognize that, in some respect, already there the interest of the early -Christian apologeticism, polemic, and mission expresses itself.

In connection with the topic disciples of John there further exists an interesting reference concerning the Apostle Thomas in the context of the Qumran -research: Accordingly Thomas (Hebrew: twin) is identical with the son of Herod the Great from the latter's marriage with Mariamne II, the daughter of the High Priest Boethus (23 -5 BC). On account of complicity of his mother in a poisoning of Herod the Great, Herod- *Thomas* was disinherited in 5 AD. Thomas, therefore, was also called Esau, the twin, referring back to Esau<sup>42</sup> who also lost his right of primogeniture. His wife Herodias left him to marry his half-brother Antipas. In John the Baptist Thomas found his religious ideal and, at the same time, support in the dispute of the illegal marriage Antipas/Herodias. The Philip mentioned in Mk.6:17 therefore would be identical with the later Apostle Thomas. From background and history Thomas could actually have been a member of the Herodian clan, a son of Herod the Great.

Aside from the dispute concerning Herodias, there was a further disagreement in the life of these two half-brothers. A year before his death, Herod the Great had promised Antipas the succession, in the end, however, had favoured the latter's brother Archelaus. After this, Antipas went to Rome and intrigued against Archelaus by founding a second Herodian party that received the code -name fig tree. At a later time Antipas sympathized with a militant Hellenistic party and conspired with the Parthians against Rome. Especially the Hellenistic way of thinking fell on fertile ground in Antipas. With this, however, he stood in contrast to Jewish tradition and religious philosophy and, therefore, also not in unison with ethics and moral of a John the Baptist or Jesus. We also know of Thomas that he - imprinted rather Essene and thereby Jewish-traditionally- supported the movement for renewal of John the Baptist and later that of Jesus. The like, in more moderate form, we know of Herod Agrippa I, the nephew of Herod -*Thomas*.

If the son of Herod the Great and the later Apostle Thomas are actually identical must

remain speculation at present.

Thomas certainly had the highest intelligence of all the later apostles, and was reputed to be a doubter and thinker. He apparently had insight into all the political, social, and religious movements and contrasts of his time, which, again, could point to an intensive education as a Herodian family -member.

In 1947 the Coptic translation of the Gospels of Thomas<sup>43</sup> was found. In addition the Thomas-Files<sup>44</sup> are handed on to us.

## IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH

The birth of John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus, and the decapitation are the most often reported stations in the life and work of this figure from the light.

Next to the baptism of Jesus, especially the forceful death of the Baptist inspired the art to manifold presentations and forms of expression. Thus, the dance of Salome already early became the subject of narrative paintings, like on the Bernward-Column in the Dome at Hildesheim (Germany). The beheading itself is a very frequent motive of paintings, and mostly is depicted drastically, framed by a large public. Well-known works of art are: the John-Altar at Blaubeuren (1493/94) by Bartholomaeus Zeitblom/Bernhard Strigel in the monastic church at Blaubeuren (G.), Salome with the Head of John (1477) by Tizian (Galeria Doria Pamphili, Rome, Italy), Salome with the Head of the Baptist (1530) by Lukas Cranach the Elder (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, Hungary) and L'Apparition (Salome Dances before Herod) by Gustave Moreau painted in 1876 (Musee Gustave Moreau, Paris, France). The Richard-Strauss-Opera *Salome*, based on a play by Oscar Wilde, attained a high degree of publicity and popularity. Especially at the end of the second millennium this oeuvre of music is being rediscovered.

John the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod Antipas in 31 AD. The Evangelist Mark tells of the reason from his point of view in 6:17-20: *“For Herod himself had sent two men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife. And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him.”*

Something quite similar is also described, in an abbreviated version, by the Evangelist Luke in 3:19-20. Both passages have been changed (filtered) several times and convey the only vague historical knowledge of the evangelists. Thus the name mentioned, Philip, probably is not correct. Herodias, the grand -daughter of Herod the Great stemmed from the connection of Aristobulus with Berenike. Aside from Herod of Chalkis<sup>45</sup>, Agrippa I and Aristobulus, she was the fourth child from this liaison. History does know a Tetrarch Philip (died 34 AD), stemming from the marriage of Herod the Great with Cleopatra of Jerusalem, and who is identical with the tetrarch (of Iturea and of the region Tracoonitis, and Lysanias at Abilene), mentioned in Luke 3:1, but he was not married to Herodias.

Naturally, it was difficult for the evangelists to become perspicuous of the Herod -

family, since Herod the Great, as authenticated, had entered into nine different marriages. The evangelists also certainly gave more weight to the continuation of the traditional criticism by the prophets of kings and rulers of Israel concerning their moral offences. Thus, similar motives can be found frequently in the Old Testament. (I Sam 13:11-14; II Sam. 12:1-14; I Kings 14:6-16; Jer. 3:6-13; 21:1-10; 22:13-19). A further traditional subject of this kind is I Kings 21:1-29, where the Prophet Elijah reproves King Ahab and the latter's wife Jezebel, since they had had a certain Naboth stoned and killed for immoral reasons. After all, John the Baptist was considered the return of Elijah. In this respect the evangelists reduced the reprimand of John the Baptist of the socially, gregariously, ethically, and legally deplorable state of affairs to a personal dispute between Herod Antipas and the Baptist. In the historical back-tracing of the prophets of the Old Testament, reprimand and threat to the respective ruling dynasty almost were compulsory. John the Baptist had, however, a serious point for criticism concerning Herod Antipas and Herodias: While divorce and remarriage or the open liaison with another woman were nothing extraordinary, the case was different here. Herodias was not only the wife of Antipas' half-brother, but, at the same time his niece, the daughter of his other half-brother Aristobul. As already mentioned, Aristobul was the son of Herod the Great from the latter's marriage to Maramne I. At about 7 BC, he had his son Aristobul and his further son Alexander throttled. Herodias, daughter of Aristobul, had already been engaged to her half-uncle Herod (Thomas?) as a child. This liaison had been enforced by Herod the Great, so that they themselves could not be reproached for it. From the latter marriage stemmed Salome, the daughter of both. The present marriage with Herod Antipas, also a half-uncle of Herodias, was voluntary, however, and served the greed for power and the vanity of Herodias.

However, the Mosaic Laws forbade a man to marry the sister of his father (III Ms.18:12). It was not explicitly forbidden that a woman married her uncle. Yet, it is quite probable that whatever applied to men also applied to women. A further, but probably negligible reason was that Herod Antipas married Herodias before he had divorced his wife, a daughter of the Nabatean<sup>46</sup> King Aretas. He had rejected her, but she evaded an official separation by fleeing to her father. As we know, the liaison with Herodias and the rejection of the Nabatean Princess had fatal consequences for Herod Antipas. On the one hand Antipas entered into history as the malefactor on John the Baptist. On the other hand Aretas revenged the ignominy of his daughter by a devastating campaign (37 AD) against the tetrarch that decisively influenced the latter's fortune. In 39 AD, Antipas was finally dethroned and exiled to Gallia with Herodias. As already mentioned in a previous chapter, the historiographer Josephus Flavius reports of this incident. Additionally, he records that the Jewish people considered this to be God's penalty for the evil deed unto the prophet and God-sent man John the Baptist.



However, the reason stated in the New Testament for the apparently severe disparities between Herod Antipas and John the Baptist can by no means satisfy an earnest questioner. It was, however, definitely not the task or aim of the evangelists to establish a historic work or even to record all the chronological historical processes with their branched-off and interwoven connections, so that a rebuke in this respect is not justified.

However, in the subsequent judgement of this matter it must be allowed to doubt that the Baptist risked his mission and life because of a marriage doubtful according to Mosaic law or invalid. Also the hypothetical identity of the Apostle Thomas and the first husband of Herodias logically cannot account for what happened. Because then the personal friendship between John the Baptist and Thomas would be an additional reason for the end of the task and the life of the Baptist. Thus there must have existed a deeper and more substantial difference between John the Baptist and Herod Antipas. Exactly the same disagreement later stood between the tetrarch and Jesus. Further, the question must be allowed why John did not simply evade persecution, imprisonment, and being murdered by Antipas by changing from the east to the west bank of the Jordan River, a short but essential distance of only about a hundred meters. Anyway, the west bank no longer was within the realm and sphere of influence of the tetrarch, rather it belonged to the sovereign territory of the Roman town major Pontius Pilate.

One solution to the problem lies in the radius of action of John the Baptist and Jesus. The first one operated chiefly in Perea, while the appearance of Jesus was chiefly concentrated on Galilee. Both provinces were the basis of the power of Herod Antipas as a tetrarch.

Why did they not work in Judea, the heart of Israel? Possibly they feared that their moves would have been too much spied upon by the Romans and that priesthood and magistrate would have stifled them in the very beginning – always under the pretence that they would do damage to the Romans. That both did not operate in Samaria can be explained on the background of the political and religious history of this region: Samaria (today Sebastiyeh) is originally the name of the capital of the North-Realm of Israel and only later became the name of the surrounding area, the Province of Samaria. The town was built by King Omri in 880 BC, his son Ahab erected the Baal-Temple (I Kings 16:24 ...) that was later destroyed as a symbol of idolatry by King Jehu. Samaria, however, remained the symbol of sinfulness and impurity for the prophets of Israel. In 722 BC Samaria was taken by the Assyrians. In the centuries following building-up and destruction followed one another. Herod the Great extended the town magnificently to the honour of Emperor Augustus and re-named her Sebaste. Only the Apostles Peter, Philip, and John began to work in the land of sin and impurity (Acts 8:5 ...). Thus, only the realm of Herod Antipas remained. The latter merely was a vassal of

the Roman town major, but he had the reputation of being quite moderate and liberal concerning Jewish religion and tradition. Antipas himself was, like most members of the Herod-family, imprinted by the Hellenist view of the world and not internally connected with the Jewish religion. From his realm John the Baptist and Jesus therefore could also influence Judea, the core of Israel, undisturbed for a relatively long span of time. Antipas, at the core completely unreligious, however, pursued high political aims and, unnoticed by Rome, pulled many promising strings on the political stage then. To not unnecessarily incur Rome's suspicion, he therefore had to remove John the Baptist from the stage at the Jordan River. The danger that the Romans would spy on him because of the Baptist and unnecessarily would suspect an undermining of Roman interests was too great. Once Rome's suspicion would have been aroused, the secret services would unmask the secretively woven threads by Antipas at a later time. To soften Rome and stifle any distrust in its beginning an imprisonment of John the Baptist offered itself. The great movement caused by the Baptist did not disturb the Tetrarch personally. However, it enhanced the danger that other strategic measures of secretive politics would be laid open. On a merely personal level the Tetrarch even held John the Baptist in high esteem, which is shown by the so-called fire-place talks the tetrarch had with John the Baptist during the latter's imprisonment. Mk. 6:20 reports of this: *"For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly."*

To explain the apparently unsurpassable differences between John the Baptist and Herod Antipas a further, more fully substantiated approach suggests itself, which I wish to explain in the following:

In the Bible, especially so in the New Testament the *fig-tree* often is mentioned allegorically.(e.g.: Mk.11:12... ; Mt.21:20-22; Lk.13:6-9), so is the *vineyard*, respectively, the *owner of the vineyard*.(e.g.: Mt.20:1-16, 21:33-41; Mk.12:1-9). In Jewish tradition fig-tree, olive tree, and vineyard, represent the wealth of the Promised Land. In connection with the vineyard the fig -tree appears in the prophets also as a symbol for Israel. YHWH himself planted it and expects the fruit of righteousness, but is disappointed at the time of harvest (Micah 7:1...; Jer8:13).

It is quite interesting that while John the Baptist and Jesus fulfilled their mission, two contradictory parties with the names *Fig-Tree* and *Vineyard* were founded. Although both groupings were basically more west-ward oriented - in contrast to the eastern way of thinking of the Hebrews, Qumran Essenes, and Pharisees - the Vineyard Party was more religiously aligned and intent on peace with Rome. The Fig-Tree Party, however, was essentially imprinted politically and nationalistically and sought the solutions to its problems in revolt and use of weapons. The basis of this party were the Zelots<sup>47</sup> of Menasse Efraim under the leadership of Simon the Zealot.

The Apostle Judas Iscariot (Man of Karist, or dagger -man) also was a member of the Zealots. Secretly this group was supported by Herod Antipas. In Rome there were respective contact-persons in the Jewish Diaspora who saw to the necessary financing and planning of what was intended. These were joined by influential Romans who worked for manifold reasons in secretive bonds against Rome. The record of Josephus Flavius in "Antiquitates" XVIII.82 -83 exemplifies this. The annalist reports of a finance scandal in Rome in 19 AD, in which apparently followers of Herod Antipas were involved. A man of Jewish descent who is not described more closely thereby influenced, together with sympathizers, high-ranking women in order to obtain money and valuables for the Temple of Jerusalem. Yet, the money never arrived in Jerusalem. One of the betrayed women by the name of Fulvia directly turned – via her husband - to the Emperor Tiberius. After the scandal had become public, Tiberius ordered all Jews to be expelled from Rome.

The group Vineyard, consisting of Hebrews, Palestinian Essenes, and peace-oriented Hellenists, however, saw their ideal in John the Baptist. In this party for peace and movement for renewal - so to speak - priestly guidance was conferred to John. After his imprisonment and decapitation, the leadership was handed on to Jesus. Lastly the Christian movement and mission developed from the Vineyard Party. The machinations of Herod Antipas and his widespread adherents in the Roman empire of course also harmed the religious, peaceful movement of the Vineyard, since nobody in Rome really sought to make distinctions between the various Jewish movements. So also the followers of the vineyard sought and found addressees and supporters for their movement in Rome. Therefore it is not surprising that directly after the death of Jesus a majority of the apostles and disciples went to Rome or to the west of the Roman empire.

An additionally negative role against the interests of the Vineyard may have been played by Herodias. Provided the presumption is correct that Herodias was married to Thomas, the disciple of John in her first marriage, then she had sufficiently detailed knowledge of plans and aims of the Vineyard mission. Herod Antipas and his party now received first-hand information concerning their counter-party from Herodias.

Once the religiously and peacefully aligned renewal-movement of John the Baptist would gain an increasingly stronger foothold and receive support, the political-nationalist power-interests of Antipas/Herodias would be threatened. From this background an opposition between John the Baptist, the Tetrarch and Herodias becomes understandable.

The curse of the fig-tree by Jesus as in Mk.11:13-14, 20-22; Mt.18-22 (comp. Lk.13:6-9), only makes sense in this context. The word of Jesus means that he cursed an egotist group greedy for power and not a tree. The passage in John 1:48, in which Jesus had seen Nathanael "*under the fig tree*" supplements this

assumption and points to the original membership of this disciple in the party of Antipas.

With the imprisonment of the Baptist, Antipas had deprived the counter-party Vineyard of its leadership. The thereof resulting calm for the tetrarch was only short, since Jesus almost uninterruptedly and decidedly continued to lead the party. To shake the movement in its fundamentals, Antipas eventually beheaded John the Baptist. Jesus showed no reaction to the tetrarch and continued his mission. His sermons and works of miracles had aroused great attention and reverence in public. Antipas sent out his spies to learn about Jesus in more detail. In Mk.6:14-17 it says: *“King Herod heard of it, for Jesus’ name had become known. Some were saying, “John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him”. But others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is a prophet like one of the prophets of old.” But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded has been raised.”*

This passage exemplifies that Jesus continued the work of John without any break. According to Luke 13:31, Jesus is warned of Antipas and the latter’s intention to have him killed by Pharisees. Now Jesus, with regard to the tetrarch, found himself in exactly the same position as John the Baptist shortly before. In Luke 13:32 -33, Jesus addresses the Pharisees: *“Go and tell that fox for me, “Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, for it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem.”*

The final figure of speech: *“for it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem”* is a coded message, merely clarifying that Jesus will not die through the hand of Antipas and will also not be imprisoned by him. Alone the fact that Antipas also intended to imprison and kill Jesus proves that the beheading of John cannot be justified with the latter’s reproof concerning the illegal marriage of Antipas with Herodias. The evangelist up-raised a minor fact in the dispute between the Baptist and the tetrarch to a major one. Nevertheless, we cannot exclude that morals and politics were interwoven concerning the decapitation of John and that the mortified Herodias gave the final impetus thereto. If, however, hurt of pride and vanity had more weight than the obstruction of her power-greedy political plans must remain open. We have to record, however, that the movement caused by John the Baptist disturbed the power-political plans of Herodias and her husband decisively. The preacher at the Jordan River was an obstacle to the presumptuous plans of the Herod-party.

This thesis may surprise those who see in John the Baptist merely the prophet and God-sent man, completely secluded from all worldly proceedings. But, what is the merit of a prophet who is sent at a definite time and world, when he doesn’t take heed to these? Despite of his time-transcending work and his eschatological

annunciations, John the Baptist never lost sight of the reality of the world, the political and the social surroundings. The same applies to Jesus and his mission. Without doubt, we have to absolutely own up to the fact that ethical implications do conform with the eschatological preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus, yes, that they have to be inseparable in the criticism and conversion of the spirit of the age.

Concerning the description of the imprisonment of the Baptist, retention and caution have to be exercised. So, until today it could not be ascertained, where and how the imprisonment by Herod Antipas occurred. There certainly did exist detailed oral reports of the disciples of the Baptist until the end of the 2nd ct AD, probably even respective notes on the chronology of this stirring event. It seems in no way credible that the disciples of John, the Qumran Essenes, or the Pharisees would not in some way have taken down the traumatic occurrence to their religious idol: John the Baptist. At the time of the origin of the Gospels respective traditions or text -sources were simply disregarded or rejected, since the story and mission of the Baptist was regarded second in import. Thus, for the research on John there only remains the hope that these texts will still be found.

It is generally assumed that John the Baptist was seized by soldiers of Herod at the site of his work, that is on the east bank of the Jordan River. A legend holds that the Tetrarch made several attempts to seize the Baptists. By the use of magic powers, however, the latter could evade capture, so, for example, by creating a sandstorm that robbed the soldiers of their sight, or, at another time, by magic dissolution of his body. Whether the legends have a true kernel, when and by whom they developed can no longer be established. But they do belong to the myth of a prophet and God-sent person, and are found in modified form with all revered heroic persons of all peoples.

It only seems logical that Herod Antipas would have several times sought for chances to withdraw the Baptist over an extended period of time. The seizure certainly was no spontaneous action, it was planned and prepared. I consider it improbable that the capture occurred at the baptism site, since this would have caused too much attention and opposition. More than questionable is the thesis that Herod Antipas and his court came to the Jordan River to be baptized, so that a decisive argument concerning his marriage occurred. It certainly would not have been the character of John the Baptist to rebuke and humiliate the ruler before all eyes and all ears. Thus, there remain only two credible and logical theses:

Herod Antipas had asked John the Baptist to come to him. Thereby he attempted to influence the Baptist either towards an approximation or even to a renunciation of his mission by pointing the correlations out to him from a high political and diplomatic point of view.

Or, however, John the Baptist himself sought a meeting with the tetrarch and appealed to the latter's conscience concerning his impure intentions and

machinations. In the forefront stood the contrasting interests of the parties Vineyard and Fig Tree, concerning this. So to speak in the meeting of the Baptist with Antipas the two heads of both movements faced one another. The tradition that person, religious renewal, and eschatological annunciation of the Baptist met Antipas' respect in quite credible. His personal power-interests, however, contrasted with the teaching of John the Baptist. There were no chances of an approximation or a further peaceful co-existence. It is probable that John the Baptist remonstrated with the tetrarch and his wife about the unlawful and morally reprehensible marriage during this meeting, but this definitely was not the decisive point in the altercation.

I dare deepen the subject-matter of this meeting that was so fateful for both: The meeting between Herod Antipas and John the Baptist was at any rate not coincidental, but prepared and planned from both sides. It probably took place in Livias the tetrarch's seat of government. Herodias was calculating, cold-blooded, and rigorous like her grandfather. From all the descendants of Herod the Great, she probably was the only one striving purposefully and tactically for a great realm of Israel, like once had existed under her grandfatherly idol. For this, as a first step, the marriage to her half-uncle Herod Antipas offered itself, because the latter held the best secured wealth of power and starting position. Antipas himself was childless. He shared this fate with several of his half-brothers. It suggested itself to Herodias to make Salome, her daughter of her first marriage, the heiress of the intended great realm in the near East. At the time of her marriage Herodias was approximately 30 to 33 years old, her daughter 15, at the most. The connection with Herod Antipas was based on political calculation and was by no means a love-marriage, Herodias spun all the threads and the tetrarch merely served as a tool or a means for her purpose. Once the new princess succeeded in winning the religious renewal-movement of the Baptist, or could at least use it for her purposes, then one could be certain of the political and religious groupings, yes, of the complete mass of people, even in Judea, Idumea, and Samaria. Of course, Herodias did know of the impending messianic expectation of the movement around John and the Essenes, as well as of the hope of a re-installation of a high priest from the family of the Zadokians, and of a terrestrial ruler from the House of David. That John the Baptist could have laid a legal claim onto the position of the high priest was certainly also known in the house of the tetrarch. Now was the time to make an interesting offer to the Baptist. In the case of an expansion of power of the tetrarch and his wife to Judea and Samaria, one would have installed John the Baptist as high priest. Unconditionally accepted by the people, he would soon be able to install his religious renewal. The wavering and swaying priesthood could have at the same time been dismissed and expelled. Maybe Herodias even went a step farther in her thinking and intended a personal union of the office of high priest and king for the future. In the long course of the history of Israel this would not have been an exception. Did not, as a first, step a

liaison between John the Baptist and her daughter Salome offer itself here?

Salome was at a marriageable age, the Baptist of an imposing and charismatic character, of a power that only had to be manifested politically. At first this thought seems alienating, maybe even odd. Taking in consideration the Herodian patterns of thought, practices, and machinations it is normal rather than absurd. Even Herod the Great already married Mariamne II, a daughter of the High Priest Simon Boethus for political tactical reasons. His intention to subjugate the priesthood to his will did not succeed, however. Wasn't it only logical, then, that he disinherited his son (possibly Thomas) from that marriage without hesitation?

Once, having entered upon the hazard of such thoughts, a further possibility has to be considered, namely an envisioned liaison between Jesus and Salome by Herodias. Also the quite legitimate claim of Jesus to the throne was much more publicly known than we surmise in our time. After all, Jesus was son of Joseph, the last proven and renowned descendant of David. The Qumran -scientist Barbara Thiering provides the respective proof for this thesis, the result of voluminous investigations, in her already-mentioned book "*Jesus of Qumran*". However, the issue did come up within the religious and political movements, whether the illegitimately born Jesus could be acknowledged as lawful descendant of David, or, if this was not rather his younger brother James, since the latter had been born after the marriage of Joseph and Mary. In the end the scales lowered in favour of Jesus in this dispute. The latter apparently never made use of his legitimate claim to the throne. The epigraph I.N.R.I. on the cross (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews) refers, however, to the generally known title of Jesus to the heritage of David.

From the point of view of Herodias a connection of the Herodian dynasty with the recognized offspring of the line of David, Jesus, certainly would have been a dream of a pact that would – from the terrestrial point of view - perfectly have united Jewish tradition, politics, and religion. Additionally, also John the Baptist in the office of high priest. Could there possibly be a more ideal and more salutary vision for the afflicted Israel? – all this under the banner of the House of Herod.

For Herodias and her spouse Antipas the way of thinking and theory of life of John the Baptist and Jesus were absolutely unintelligible. It was simply unimaginable that men who were so highly esteemed and had such indirect profusion of power would not act on the basis of egotistic motives and not enter on respective agreements. Thus the ruling couple had to suspect an alliance against themselves in the already mentioned connection of the Baptist with Herod Agrippa I and Herod-*Thomas* and take their respective measures against it.

I am certain that Herodias and Herod Antipas intended to come to an agreement with John the Baptist, the latter's closest disciples, and the members of the Vineyard party (also Jesus and Thomas), in which one common aim and the respective power - functions would be assigned and documented.

It may very well have been that the coolly calculating Herodias had – for reason of this meeting – arranged for a festivity for John the Baptist and his most intimate friends to demonstrate to the ascetic and world-renouncing man the conveniences of terrestrial power and sensual pleasures. Did the dance of Salome already take place here and not at the decapitation as described in Mk.6:21 ... ? John the Baptist and his train apparently neither were ready for compromises nor corruptible. Each attempted approximation or even familiarity was strictly refused. The already existing fissure broadened. Additionally, there occurred an unheard-of insult of honour of Herodias and Antipas, possibly also of Salome. At the end of the dispute Antipas sent his opponent away fully determined to quickly and decisively disturb the movement for renewal. After having considered several alternatives and scenarios together with his advisors, an imprisonment of the Baptist for reasons of his having criticized the marriage with Herodias seemed most suitable. This insult of honour was justifiable as cause for seizure before the simple people. In Rome, respectively, with Pontius Pilate this action would not create any political distrust. On the contrary, this could be interpreted as a precautionary measure to the Roman occupation force.

John the Baptist was seized immediately. He was not permitted to return to the Jordan River again. While a majority of his train was allowed safe-conduct, he himself had to take the bitter way to imprisonment in the Fortress Machaerus. Machaerus is situated in a wilderness not far from the Dead Sea. From the rift valley of the Jordan River only paths lead southward into the desolate and barren range of the Moab Mountains. It cannot be answered whether a part of the disciple-group was also seized. We know from the Bible, however, that the disciples of the Baptist were with him even during his imprisonment or had at least access to him, as is exemplified through the imprisonment-inquiry of John to Jesus (Mt.11:2-3). Nothing is transmitted to us concerning his further conditions of capture. In the artistic and literary portraits the imprisonment is usually depicted as being very severe (dark dungeon; a manhole with rotting rats; raw subterranean cell), whereby the Baptist always has enchained hands and feet. An assessment concerning the truthfulness of this picture is difficult.

On the one hand there is much evidence that Herodias and Antipas wished to revenge themselves on their opponent and therefore did not really treat the prisoner hyper-sensitively. On the other hand the contacts with his disciples and the fireside-talks mentioned by Mark, hint at relief of detention. It is assumed that the disciples who visited John the Baptist during his seizure, could take care of his needs, especially those regarding his vegetarian nourishment. A further evidence for a certain alleviation of imprisonment is the presence of secretive followers within the rows of the tetrarch. Thus, aside from soldiers and tax collectors also civil servants were among his admirers, listened to his sermons and let themselves be baptized. Here I wish to especially mention the steward by the name of Chusa (also Chuza)



installed at the court of the tetrarch. The latter had had himself baptized together with his wife and son. In the Gospel of Luke, Joanna, the wife of Chusa is mentioned in connection with a healing by Jesus and her ensuing discipleship:

*“Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Herod’s steward Chusa, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.”*

Of this Joanna is also assumed that she used all the possibilities of her contacts with the guard and with the domestics to secure mitigations of imprisonment for the Baptist.

Concerning this a reference to the visionary insights of Therese Neumann is interesting, whom Catholics know better by the name of Therese of Konnersreuth. This woman became known by the stigmata of Jesus that she had for several decades. In her description of the imprisonment of John the Baptist she describes that she always saw him *roam freely* in an old castle.

Much points to it that the Baptist was only shortly imprisoned in Machaerus and was transferred to Sebaste the family seat of the Herodians in the heart of Samaria, then. Concerning this an unauthorized action by the steward Chusa is surmised who used an extended period of absence of Herodias and Antipas (probably honeymoon to Greece) to exchange the bad conditions of detention to better ones at Sebaste. He is said to have justified this to Antipas with the already threatening war with Aretas the father of the first wife of the tetrarch. Machaerus actually was situated only a few kilometres off the border to the Nabateans. A liberation to mock Herodias and Antipas could actually have been considered. The argument speaking against a transfer of the imprisoned Baptist to Sebaste, the former and luxurious palace of Herod the Great is that Samaria was under the rule of the Roman town keeper Pontius Pilate and that the Tetrarch, respectively, his civil servants hardly sojourned there.

Historically more probable is a removal of the Baptist to Livias, the residence of the tetrarch. For this the many conversations between Antipas and John the Baptist would speak as well as the solemn birthday carouse that is more easily imaginable at court than in an old, difficultly accessible mountain fortress. Also archaeological excavations and researches have not really proved the Machaerus thesis. Yet, concerning the location of his imprisonment one presumption meets the other. Lastly, however, the by Josephus Flavius expressively stated site Machaerus must not be brushed aside.

Also debated is the length of the imprisonment. On the basis of several theories of convergence a detention-time of at least 6 months and 10 months at the most is assumed. Because of the in Mt.11:2-3 mentioned inquiry from prison to Jesus, and

the in Mt.6:14-16, Lk. 9:7-9 mentioned popular opinion about Jesus as the returning, that is, the already beheaded John, the duration is constantly discussed controversially. Through his disciples the Baptist was in contact with Jesus. The instruction to them to visit Jesus and ask him *“Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?”* certainly just stands as an essential example for the regular indirect contacts between John the Baptist and Jesus. The question does arise whether the Baptist remained a steering element for the movement even while in prison. With his custody work and mission were substantially endangered. Did he now once more vehemently bid Jesus to continue the movement of renewal? Did he issue respective instructions and rules of conduct on account of the changed situation?

It is interesting that Jesus constantly changed his place of abode after the arrest of the Baptist. Did John skilfully elicit from the tetrarch corresponding information during the frequent fireside conversations and hand these on to Jesus via his disciples? Were there pleas and directions from the Baptist to work secretly during the first time of danger and to disperse the disciples in the country or did respective alternative plans and arrangements already exist between John and Jesus already before his custody? Much hints at this, also wide passages of the chapters 9 and 10 of the Gospel of Luke. The exchange of information that had become possible through the disciples was encoded in decisive points, according to Essene practise. To this points the answer of Jesus in Mt. 11:4-6: *“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.”*

On the one side this was a confirmation for John that his complete mission was being continued despite of his imprisonment. On the other hand the answer to the clear question, whether he is the Messiah is not satisfying. The healing of sick persons and the preaching of messages of salvation were nothing spectacular in the surroundings of John and Jesus, like, for example, with the Essenes. If this really was the answer, then it did not meet a doubting, but an understanding John who knew the code behind the message. Therefore, the answer of Jesus must have contained a further message. Thus, it could have been a coded hint to help an support which Jesus had found for the interests of the Vineyard-Party among those who had been *blind, lame, and deaf* in relation to the movement before. The allusion to healed lepers and wakened dead persons could have referred to former fanatics of the party in opposition who meanwhile had become converted to the messianic movement.

I, for my part, assume that the answer of Jesus in its simplicity had a double meaning, just like most parables of Christ show a direct concern and a figurative sense.

The passage in Mt.11:7-14, in which Jesus refers to the grandeur and significance of the Baptist and his work, directly after having answered the disciples of John, is interesting: *“And as they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John. “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you. Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has risen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John came.”*

In this speech Jesus gave a comprehensive and absolute testimony to John the Baptist. At the same time he indirectly conveys to the complete discipleship and to the public that he will decisively continue and bring to an end the interests and aims of the one arrested. Thus, there was no reason at all for hopelessness, lethargy, or disintegration. Especially this phase was the crucial test for Jesus, not only of the point of view of the Baptist, but, also in reviewing the Old Testament. That Jesus could convert exactly that point of time of the greatest risks and dangers for the messianic movement to stabilization and new-orientation, shows his inner strength and dedication to his mission – yet, at the same time also a complete concurrence with John the Baptist.

Whether John the Baptist and Jesus still found support from the Essenes at this point in history is a question of highest importance that until now can only find a speculative answer. Presumably understanding, work, and mission of both had outgrown the essential interest of the Essenes. This was at least so for the broad mass of Essenes who rather saw a withdrawing in the pursuit, extension, and implementation of their original way of thinking. This was caused by a too rigid interpretation of the words of the prophets and the scriptures. In principle, the Essenes were actually passively waiting for a merely outwardly installed messiahship by God. John the Baptist and Jesus, however, taught a partly deviating and more immediate interpretation of the scriptures and prophets. Furthermore, they actively shaped the expected messiahship and demanded that men should aspire towards the Divine Principles and should eventually spiritualize them.

Of course there existed leading personages with the Essenes who *saw and understood* and supported the mission of both. But it was hardly procurable to the basis of the brotherhood to see that that which they expected in the near future in another form, was already happening now. At least there are no references that the Essenes ventured upon something for the rescue of the Baptist or, later on, of Jesus.

This, however, is not proof of inactivity. So they also are not mentioned by name in the New Testament, contrary to the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots, although their way of thinking was the basis for later Christianity.

It remains uncertain how the Baptist interpreted and fashioned his imprisonment. Gerald Messadieu novel-like describes in his book *A Man by the Name of Jesus* how the Baptist several times was in deep meditation with his body hovering in the air. This caused conditions of an anxiety of the guards and inspired with reverence for the confined one.

In this predicament, John was probably deeply worried about the future and the duration of his mission. Certainly he consequently used every opportunity of passive and active support for the continuation of his work. I am sure that the Baptist wrote down texts and psalms during his confinement. Unfortunately they are not handed on to us. We cannot exclude, however, that in the context of the Qumran findings there also are texts of him respectively on him that have not yet been identified as such.

I cannot really believe that there do exist neither personal text documents nor annals of contemporaries on such an important and charismatic personality. Was this directed by coincidence or by the early Church? Can we still hope for respective documents - possibly - from outside the Christian Churches and the Qumran research, like from the Indian sphere or from the Islam?

Objectively viewed, the question how the Baptist personally experienced his detention can only find speculative answers. Alike the question, if he had reckoned with his execution has to remain open. I am convinced the Baptist was not at strife with his fortune. Too much was he permeated by his divine mission that included the resistances of the worldly powers.

Also the gospels express a parallel to the affliction and dying of Jesus. Is the understanding of death of the Baptist and Jesus identical? A certain passion-theological analogy is at least discernible in principle. The much-cited bible verse: *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."* (John 1:5) especially refers to John the Baptist and Jesus.

So we indeed have to assume that the Baptist as well as Jesus gave their complete strength for God and men with the full awareness of their own martyrdom. The Essene picture of the suffering, priestly Messiah was known to both. John the Baptist took the way of suffering as the first one. He is the first victim of darkness that is of the worldly power. Thus also the Evangelist Mark describes in 9:12 the martyrdom of the Baptist as the omen for the life of suffering of the Son of Man. John hereby is equalled with Elijah "redivivus".

To approach the question of the personal understanding and enduring of his martyrdom, we have to ask ourselves whether John the Baptist saw himself in the

function of Elijah or if he even identified himself with the returned Elijah. The Prophet John and the Prophet Elijah actually resemble one another like a mirror-image. There is concurrence as well in their outer appearance, in work, and sermon, as well as in the title given to both to be *forerunner of God* or *messenger of the Messiah*. Actually both are surrounded by the aura of the messianic. In the New Testament there are many references and direct speeches giving testimony of the identity of John the Baptist and the returned Elijah. Thus Luke in 1:17, already at the annunciation of the birth of John from the spirit and the power of Elijah, with which be new-born will be bestowed. Most distinct are the words of Jesus about the Baptist and his identity with the returning Elijah (Mt.11:10; 14 and 17:10 -13).

John the Baptist himself did not claim to be Elijah "redivivus". According to John 1:21, he answered to the questions of the priests and Levites whether he was Elijah with the words: "*I am not*". This does not really signify anything. Analogously Jesus also did not call himself the Messiah. Thus the exegesis of the New Testament values this "*I am not*" as an indirect confirmation.

By his outer appearance (coat of camel hair, and leather belt), and the symbolic actions (identity of baptism site with the place of ascension and the expected return of Elijah) as well as by the topics of his sermons, John the Baptist expresses more reference to Elijah than could possibly be expressed verbally. In my conviction, the spirit and the power of Elijah actually were inherent in John the Baptist. Exceeding this, there worked an additional, new element within him that gave the impulse to asceticism and especially to the baptism, renewal and chance of salvation for the people of Israel. Therefore probably the word by Jesus: "*Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.*" (Mt.11:9).

In the sum of all the words of Jesus the sensitive listener understands that John on the one hand is the returned Elijah, and on the other hand is even more than the latter, which is that he fulfils an additional function and mission. This consciousness of mission and function was proper to John the Baptist. From this it also becomes clear why he did not begin his appearance with the most common prophet-flourish "*the Lord spoke to me*" or with something similar. He did not present himself to the people as a passive medium or tool putting visions or *inner voice* in words, but rather worked actively constructing, with own words, deeds, and by virtue of his own authority. He did not hide behind God by possibly attempting to emphasize his words with the reference to divine inspiration. Thus he himself stood before men for God. As a God-sent man he ultimately sacrificed his life for his message.

Thus it actually is no longer difficult to ask for the self-appreciation of John the Baptist concerning imprisonment and execution. Work, mission, and person had merged to an inseparable unity. Of course, a normal terrestrial way of thinking misleads to the question whether the Baptist was at strife with his fate and God at the

end. However, we must not assess beings like John the Baptist and Jesus from a normal-human point of view. Many so-called wise ones do this nonetheless, and arrive at a reduced, distorted image. So such judgement can only give evidence of ignorance and deficient imagination beyond the touchable and perceivable. Many popularising publications on Jesus, the Essenes, and, to a lesser degree, also on John the Baptist fall into this category, unfortunately. Thus, some indications like scanty mosaic-pebbles are used for the construction of an overall-image. The false-image, scientifically respectively corroborated, mostly falls on fertile and financially rewarding ground, high goals of God-Spirit-soul being reduced to naïve-human and material, political aims. Suitable references and slashes onto interests of secrecy and obscuring by the Vatican increase popularity manifold. On the other hand there are present-time writings up to novels on the topic mentioned before, which indeed are moulded with dedication and love, but, naively so. Mostly the authors cling to fundamental facts of the New Testament or amateurishly interpret the Qumran findings in their opinion. Thus John the Baptist often is described as a wasted-away ascetic and unworldly permanent-faster, as continuous preacher of apocalypse and judgement, or merely as forerunner and precursor of Jesus. All these portrayals merely satisfy and strengthen the clichés and work against the finding of truth.

John the Baptist and Jesus left to the world that working and acting for the salvation of men extinguished the concern for their own well-being, respectively, did not let it develop to begin with. The personal terrestrial search for happiness and self-fulfilment in the family or in the social and political surroundings was certainly not even originally present. The self, the family, and the personal life were subordinated to task and mission.

Thus the presumption of Dorothy R. Pape in her book *Der Vorläufer* that John the Baptist hoped for a Divine salvation of his bodily "man" analogous to the ascension of Elijah does not do justice to his character. Of course the question what the Baptist felt facing his martyrdom must be allowed in principle. However, there must be limits to the curiosity of an author when sufficient sources are missing.

The word of Jesus in Mark 10:38: "*You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized;*" is seen by many experts in connection with the understanding of suffering and death of Jesus. Which baptism does Jesus speak of here? Is there a correlation to the baptism of John in a wider or restricted meaning? If a connection is laid down, does then the same fate apply to John the Baptist as for Jesus? Joseph Ernst (*Johannes der Täufer. Der Lehrer Jesu?*) states concerning this: "*If this were so, one could suppose that the Baptist John already held martyrdom in his view with his annunciation and administration of his baptism. He, however, will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and the fire that is in the martyrdom. Personal completion is not a*

*way-out thought in the New Testament ,as shown as option by Paul in the letter to the Philippians (1:23) and by colourful images in the Secret Revelation (Rev.7:9 -17). Here martyrdom and perfection appear side by side on one level.”*

With this I wish to end the questions concerning understanding and standing up to imprisonment and execution by John the Baptist. There merely remains a final reference to the spiritual message of 11.16.1991, in part IV of this book, to me. Here an *Imanos of Kaneas* is mentioned who, while being still embodied, had overcome his body. This *Imanos* taught John and Jesus the Divine laws . With special reference to John it is reported that *Imanos* taught the Baptist to prevail over the fear of suffering.

Mark, in 6:21-28 reports on the decapitation of John:

*“But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it. And he solemnly swore to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.” She went out and said to her mother, “What should I ask for?” She replied, “The head of John the baptizer.” Immediately she rushed back to the king, and requested, “I want you give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths, and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John’s head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother.”*

The cause for the banquet is disputed. The evangelist bases it on a birthday festivity. The introductory speech: *“But when an opportunity came...”* invites the assumption that this feast did not take place on the birthday of the tetrarch. Many historians presume that it rather was the anniversary of ascension to the throne. Against this speaks the absence of international state guests: the evangelist only reports of noble guests from the principality of Herod Antipas, and here solely from the Province of Galilee. While the actual reason for the festivity is not at all important, the naming of Galilee possibly points to a location of the feast within Galilee, for example to Tiberias. Tiberias was built by Herod Antipas at the west bank of the Sea of Galilee in 20 AD, and designated the capital of the Province Galilee. The name was given to the honour of the Roman Emperor Tiberius.

If one takes the hint in Mark serious, the feast in the Fortress Machaerus far away from Galilee Josephus Flavius mentions seems questionable. A journey of 150 to 200 kilometres of banquet-guests through dreary landscape to a difficultly accessible

fortress is incredible. Even Livias, the capital of the Province Perea northeast of the Dead Sea, and not far from Machaerus seems unlikely as a place of festivity for guests from Galilee. Aside from Tiberias, there logically only remains Sebaste, the capital of the Province Samaria, as site of the feast. It must not be excluded, however, that John the Baptist was actually imprisoned in Machaerus, and was transferred for sentence and decapitation to a residence of Herod Antipas.

The daughter of Herodias referred to in the text of Mark is Salome. The latter is not mentioned by name in the Bible. The name is historically proved, among other things, through a small coin that her later husband Aristobul had imprinted with the script *of the King Aristobul of the Queen Salome*. This Aristobul was a son of Herod of Chalkis and thus a cousin and at the same time half-nephew of Salome. The expression *“even half of my kingdom”* also is interesting. According to biblical terminology this formula is an idiom for generosity and has its origin in the promise of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) to Esther (Esther 5:3). This means a promise of this kind was not to be taken literally, and also in common speech then was regarded as an impracticable phrase, wherefore the evangelist explicitly mentions the promise under oath. That the daughter of an honorary dances even before low-ranking persons in the event of a festivity is confirmed to us by oriental stories and traditions. Thus also the erotic character of the dance (veil-dance) is quite credible. Also the request for the head - for us, today, incomprehensible - responds to then demeanour of the Orient, just like the immediate execution and the presentation of the head on a tray.

The text of Mark attributes a seemingly coincidental beheading of the Baptist. Merely a concatenation of unfortunate circumstances lead to the latter's death: the dance of Salome; the rapture of the tetrarch and of the invited guests on account of the erotic-lascivious dance of the girl; the completely disproportionate and vowed present as reward for the apparently erotic demonstration; the indecision of Salome, what she should ask as a gift from her father; her plea for advice to Herodias; the dependency of the tetrarch on the attraction of his step-daughter and the will of his wife; the tipsiness or even drunkenness of the tetrarch and his guests; the adherence to an inappropriate and impossible promise, to save one's face before his own wife and the step-daughter and the invited guests.

The cause stated in Mark 6:18 for the immediate urging of Herodias for the decapitation of John the Baptist is sufficiently known: his criticism of the illegal marriage of Herodias with the tetrarch.

Extra-biblically, and without proof of sources, oftentimes another reason for the beheading of the Baptist is quoted and assumed: the unreturned love of Salome of John. Even if this assumption and surmise is speculative, it must not be rejected as a mere fantasy. Here rather appears a link to the thesis that Herodias strove for a liaison of her daughter with John the Baptist for tactical political reasons. This one had, however, decisively refused such intentions. The wrath and the hurt of Herodias



and Salome must have been unfathomable. To this also a further tradition refers :

In 1204 AD a certain Walo of Sarton found the head of John the Baptist in a wall close to the imperial palace in Bithynia. As the exact place *at St. George of the Mangana* is named. Walo of Sarton took the silver -enclosed relic to Amiens. The head of the Baptist attracted large crowds of pilgrims until the beginning of WW I, during which it got lost for inexplicable reasons. The head had a peculiar feature: in the frontal bone, above the right eye, there was the wound of a pointed knife. This gave rise to the legend that Herodias or Salome had sunk a knife into the cut -off head in their abysmal wrath.

Traditions or legends of this kind are not so simply made up. They refer - even without exact evidence of source - to other correlations and reasons. Concerning the possible reasons for the imprisonment and decapitation of John the Baptist we must not forget the already several times cited report of Josephus Flavius: Herod Antipas feared that the prophet and charismatic man could incite a public revolt against the worldly rulers with his sermons and appeals. All previously mentioned arguments for the detention and beheading of John the Baptist are based on a partial truth. In my conviction the true reason for the martyrdom of the Baptist lies much deeper, however.

Due to the critical situation Herodias and the tetrarch pressed for a meeting of the Fig-Tree Coalition to which also the high priesthood (honoraries), the military leaders(head of war), many merchants, magistrates (Galilee's most noble men), and the contact-men in Jerusalem and Rome belonged. Outwardly, to avoid any stir, this meeting was declared to be a belated birthday -festivity for the tetrarch. The intention of this convention was to decide on immediate and decisive measures in their own interest, and thus against the movement of John the Baptist that is against the Vineyard Party. With the confinement of the Baptist the "John -Fever" of the movement for renewal apparently had not been overcome. There was indeed calm in Perea, but Jesus increasingly continued the work of John in Galilee (Mk.6:14). To the movement of the Baptist that from that time onwards had already been guided by Jesus, a clear warning-signal had to be given, since all previous measures had remained unsuccessful. Apparently a mock-trial had been staged after the seizure of John the Baptist. In the Aquarian Gospel in XV, 85:8 -12, it says: *"A court-ruling forbids the disciples of John to mention the questioning and the imprisonment of their master. Further they are interdicted to teach and they are not allowed to own up to their faith which Herod calls the heresy of the Baptist. After the news had spread, however, the disciples of Jesus hold that it would be wiser to leave Galilee. But Jesus addresses them: "there is no reason for sorrow. My hour has not come yet. Nobody can disturb me before my work will be fulfilled."*

After the six-to-ten months imprisonment of the Baptist and the interdiction of working

for his disciples had been without result, the Herodian Party Fig-Tree pushed for immediate execution of the Baptist. Should Jesus now disregard this earnest reference and continue to work unperturbedly, then, it was obvious that also his imprisonment and killing were planned. Apparently members of the Party Fig-Tree were insecure about the legality of the proceeding, for Jesus was quickly informed of the intention of the tetrarch by the Pharisees (see Lk.12:31).

The decapitation of the Baptist was probably executed still the very same day of the assembly of the party standing for Herod's interests. The verdict was surprising and led to dramatic reactions of those disciples present and adorers of the Baptist among the guard and service personnel. There is a legendary report of the steward Chusa's attempted intervention for rescue. At the site of action he, only found the already beheaded Baptist, however. Chusa panicked, slid in a pool of blood, and dropped dead himself.

The corpse of their master was handed over to the disciples of John the Baptist (Mk.6:29; Mt.14:12). Until today it has not been established, whether the disciples were also given the head. While the Evangelists Mark and Matthew succinctly report of the handing over of the body and the burying, the Aquarian Gospel (XVI; 117:12 - 19) describes how Herodias, well-trained in many a crime, upholds the head of the Baptist before the eyes of all and warns that everybody disrespecting the way of acting of the tetrarch would have the same fate. Later the head is returned to the dungeon of the Baptist. But the corpse had been placed in a coffin and carried away by the disciples of the Baptist. These at first carry the coffin to the ford of the Jordan River, where John once had baptized and preached, then farther into the hills of Judea. Finally John the Baptist is buried in the grave of his parents close to Hebron.

It is also expressly mentioned that the news of the death of the Baptist quickly spreads all over the country. Upon this the Jews gather everywhere to sing wake-songs. If one takes this text literally, it has to be assumed that the burial of the body took place without the head

The author of the Aquarian Gospel cites "*the vicinity of Hebron*" as the last place of rest, probably also because he mistakenly considers this to be the place where John the Baptist was born.

On the burial site we have, up to now, no documentary references, however. The towns Tiberias, Livias, Sebaste, Machaerus as well as Bethany, and Jericho are being discussed. Apparently nobody considered a burial at Qumran, although this is close at hand. While a group of disciples was fulfilling the sad task of burying, a further group will immediately have informed Jesus about the event. The delivery of the atrocities is taken down in Mt.14:12; Lk. 6:29 .

Jesus was aware of the bearing of this incidence for himself and the flock of disciples. The tribulation for him was great. Out of the blue the burden and the load

rested only on his shoulders. The first necessity was to withstand the imminent danger of persecution and breaking-up of the discipleship and the whole movement. Not only the circle of disciples around the Baptist, but also many Jews expected or even openly demanded measures from him. Yet Jesus proved himself determined and deliberate. The issue was not to enter into conflict with the murderers and foes of the Baptist or even to revenge the mean death in the first fit of despair. Rather it was necessary to continue the work of the Baptist and to expand the mission and to strengthen it. With the reverence and the esteem that were held for John the Baptist and that were additionally increased by his martyrdom, this certainly was a difficult heritage.

Jesus reacted to the news of the atrocity of the death of the Baptist by seeking the calm. So it is reported by the Evangelist Matthew in 14:13. According to Mark (6:31) Jesus sent the apostles *“Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.”*, however, according to Luke (9:10), Jesus left with the apostles *“and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida.”* In the further course of the narratives we learn, however that a great multitude of people followed Jesus and the apostles (Mt. 14:13; Mk. 6:33; Lk. 9:11; comp. John 6:2).

With the exception of the Evangelist John, all others refer to a correlation connecting the occurrences *news of the decapitation, the withdrawal of Jesus and the apostles, as well as the setting out of many followers.”* According to Lk 9:14, they were up to 5000 people following Jesus.

May the figure of 5000 realistically have been estimated too high, it does show, which great panic the atrocity of the death of John the Baptist raised in large parts of Galilee. In Galilee Jesus was exposed to the shadowing and persecution by Herod Antipas. An evasion to Judea was not possible, since there Jesus' life was already at stake, as John reports. While he attempts to withdraw to the solitude to think the difficult situation over, as many people as never before follow him. Where, at first, Jesus had to avoid stir, he was forced to contrary action by the run of the masses.

Even though it is not stated in these passages of the gospels, we must assume, however, that Jesus expressed his opinion on the murdering of John the Baptist before the disciples and crowds of people, and bore a full testimony to his person and mission. It would be quite possible that the eulogy on John the Baptist (Mt.11:7 -14) occurred then, and not in connection with the Baptist's question from prison. Also the word of Jesus about the Baptist: *“But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about him.”* (Mk.9:13; comp. Mt.17:13) fits into this context.

At the point in time of apparent hopelessness and greatest danger for the movement and the mission, Jesus proved himself a true master. Even though he had feared an execution of the Baptist, he was surprised by the great number of men looking for answer, help, and guidance. His word and actions must have transmitted

a maximum of confidence and hope, for the masses of people did not leave off of him, even then, when they were without nutrition. Through the evangelists we know, that this predicament eventually lead to the miraculous augmentation of bread and fish.

With the execution of the Baptist, Herod Antipas gave the unmistakable sign that from then onwards the movement of John, respectively Jesus would be smashed.

Jesus knew of the dangers threatening himself and the whole discipleship, not only from the tetrarch, but also from the Jewish priesthood, and had to react accordingly. From this background, we also have to understand many passages of the chapters 9 and 10 of the Gospel of Luke. In 9:18-21, Jesus asks his disciples, who people think he is. The range of views reached from John the Baptist via Elijah to the resurrection of an old prophet. To the question who the disciples think he is, Peter answers: *The Messiah of God.* Upon this he *“strenly ordered”* and *“commanded them not to tell anyone.”*

Jesus now informed all the disciples about the dangers for body and life, from now menacing from many sides. Synchronously he, for a last time, urged them to have absolute confidence in him and the mission:

*“If any want to become my followers, let him deny himself, and take up their cross daily, and follow me.”* (Lk.9:23). With the words: *“For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?”* (Lk.9:24-25), he again pointed to the danger for everyone and demanded of them renunciation of terrestrial success and earthly self-interests.

The word of Jesus cited in Luke 9:58: *“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”* gives evidence that from then on Jesus was not secure anywhere. That utmost hurry was of need to leave the present site, is shown by the passage Lk. 9:59-62, where Jesus demands of someone of whom we do not learn the name, to follow him. The latter, however, wishes to bury his deceased father, upon this Jesus says: *“Let the dead bury their own dead ...”*. Another person wishes to say farewell to his family, to him Jesus responds: *“No man who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”*

To reduce the danger for his discipleship, Jesus had to divide it up. Luke 10:1 describes, how he divided *others*, that means a further group of 70 disciples into 35 pairs and sent them to different places and towns. The sentence uttered in Luke 10:3: *“Go on your way. See I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves”* also alludes to the danger of persecution.

I presented these passages in such detail and length to illustrate how close the

connection is between the deeds and word of Jesus and the imprisonment and decapitation of John the Baptist. At the same time it is my concern to describe the extraordinary danger and state of distress for Jesus, the discipleship, and the whole movement that arose immediately after the beheading of the Baptist. From the point of view of the Baptist, Jesus was more than a safeguard for the continuing of his mission. And, as a matter of fact, the former companion and combatant of the Baptist, by personal initiative, steered the latter's work into a new dimension.

## THE RELICS

The life of John the Baptist in its completeness can only be reconstructed with difficulty and exertion. Just like a symbolism this holds true even for his death and the whereabouts of his remains.

We actually have to proceed from the thesis that head and corpse of the Baptist found no common place of rest. Certainly, the disciples used all feasible possibilities to attain the head of their master. If and how they succeeded unfortunately remains open. The burial site of the corpse presumably remained a well-guarded secret of the disciples of John that in each case was only handed on to initiated persons. Nonetheless, the remains of John the Baptist got into the hands of the public and experienced a true odyssey.

Especially concerning the Head of the Baptist manifold stories and legends were woven, the truthfulness of which is difficult to assess. Thus one tradition holds that Herodias and Salome buried the head in Jerusalem. By heavenly instruction and guidance, two monks actually found the head in Jerusalem. In the company of the two monks there had been a potter who held the head in trust in his house at Emesa, which now is Homs (a Syrian town at the Orontes River). About 300 AD, Marcellus, however, had a visionary dream about the whereabouts of the head. After this so-called *second discovery*, the head was brought to the Church of Emesa, where it attained highest reverence. According to the vision of Marcellus, the beheading took place on August 29. On this day, therefore, also the execution is commemorated. Marcellus was entered into the history of the Church. He died in January 309, and was designated Pope shortly before his death (after the Diokletian persecution).

However, the head of the Baptist was misappropriated from the Church of Emesa. Person(s) and motive are unknown. Possibly desire for admiration and profit were decisive moments. We must not completely exclude, however, that the still large number of admirers of John the Baptist acted with noble motives.

The head was brought to Comana in Cappadocia, and discovered a third time. Cappadocia was a Roman province in Asia Minor, and still today is the denomination for the highlands north of Taurus between Armenia and Galicia. By the way, in Acts 2:9, Jews from Cappadocia are mentioned. Also 1 Peter 1:1 gives evidence of Christians in Cappadocia.

In the year 379, the head of John the Baptist eventually reached Damascus. The initiator was Theodosius I. He had a church built to the honour of John the Baptist, in which the head of John the Baptist has its place still even today. The Church of John in Damascus was later renewed by Emperor Justinian. In 702 AD, the church was

converted into a large Mosque of the Omayyads (or Umayyads), and ever since has been reputed as a miracle of Islamic architecture. The mosque contains a splendid shrine with the head of John the Baptist as chief sanctuary. Here the relic is the destination of numerous Muslim pilgrims who revere John the Baptist as a great saint. Daily hundreds of Muslims go on pilgrimage to the head, on Fridays even thousands. Aside from this, also Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, is revered by the Muslims. The gorgeous grave of Zechariah is the main sanctuary of the Omayyad Mosque at Aleppo.

In 1148 Knights of the Cross laid siege on Damascus with the intention to bring the head of John the Baptist back into the possession of Christianity. All military attempts remained unsuccessful, however. Still, with this the Odyssey of the head still is not yet ended. Probably in 391, Theodosius I had parts of the skull bones brought to Constantinople. Between 1157 and 1204 the relic apparently was further divided. Thus the fourth crusade brought several relics from the head of John the Baptist to the native land of the crusaders. Bone parts of the skull were brought to Halberstadt, Soissons, Tournai, Paris (Ste. Chapelle), Venice (San Marco), and Amiens (cathedral).

I already reported on the backgrounds of the relic found by Walo of Sarton in Amiens in 1204 in another passage. The relation to Amiens is explained by the fact that Peter of Amiens was the first crusade-preacher, and one of the leaders of the first crusade. It is further worth mentioning that the church administration of San Silvestro in Rome also pretended to own relics of the skull bones of John the Baptist. Pope Clemens VIII demanded the handing-over of a bone-scale from Amiens to San Silvestro in Capite in 1604.

The abode of the bones of John the Baptist is surrounded by further mysteries. Concerning this, the right arm, a relic enclosed in silver, attained greatest attention. It was part of the imperial inventory at Constantinople, respectively Byzantium. This relic, however, came into the possession of the Turks. When Rhodes could be defended against the Turks in 1480, the Knights of John succeeded in having the arm relic surrendered to Rhodes. Legendarily reported is the support of an angel. The herald was Prince Dschem, a brother of the Sultan Bajazet II.

Special prominence was given to the arm-relic at processions at Rhodes, and, later on, at Malta. In 1799 Malta was occupied. Therefore Knights of the Order brought the relic to St. Petersburg, where it was kept more or less as a personal property of the family of the Tsar in the winter palace. To safeguard the relic from the chaos of the October Revolt, Count Alexej Ignatiew and Father Bogayawlenski brought it to Denmark in 1919, and entrusted it to Princess Marie of Denmark, a sister of Queen Alexandra.

In 1931 the Greek King George II eventually reported that the arm-relic had been

transferred with great precautions to Yugoslavia, and was being kept and guarded in the chapel of the Yugoslavian king. With this until today the trace of this significant arm-relic is lost (see: Sir Edwin King and Sir Harry Luke: The Knights of St. John in the British Realm, London, St. John's Gate 1967). The suspicion is patent that the communist regime under Tito consciously effaced the traces. Personally I am convinced of a preservation, however. Thus I have several references that the arm-relic of John the Baptist was safeguarded from destruction or a further odyssey by members of the Johanniter Order or of the Sovereign Order of Malta. These indications lead to the island town of Trogir, close to Split, that was founded in the 3rd century. This honourable and noteworthy place also is in conjunction with the writing down of the gospel of John and the legendary tradition of the Holy Grail. Further there exist several indices leading to the surmise of a connection to Trogir of John the Baptist and a part of his discipleship. So I would not exclude, from the state of my present knowledge, that the remains of John the Baptist were transferred by the latter's disciples to Trogir already in the 1st century AD, and were held in custody at a confidential place. This topic of Trogir, however, would need separate and circumstantial research.

In connection with the arm-relic, it should also be mentioned that there is a similar arm-relic in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul. However, art historians date its preparation to the 15th century. It therefore is assumed that the Knights of John commissioned this copy after they had received the original from Turkish care.

About the whereabouts of the remains we know that Emperor Julian the Faithless decreed to have these burnt and pulverized. Traditions hold that the remains of John the Baptist had worked manifold miracles. Even the bone-powder was still used as a panacea against chronic headaches. Admirers of John the Baptist succeeded, however, in rescuing the teeth and several parts of bones from being burnt. They formed the future foundation for further ornate relics. Parts of bones or rather scales of bone were adopted in so-called John-reliquaries. Famous is the reliquary of Fischbeck on the Weser River, which safe-kept a tooth-relic (Kestner Museum, Hanover); further the reliquary with 12 scales of bone in Halle, or the Staufer-Reliquary of Cappenberg. Relics of John were ranking as imperial relics. Thus the reliquary with the 12 scales of bone is a half-statue with an imperial crown that is identical with the crown of Otto II. The reliquary of the year 1360 attracts special attention. It is kept in the "Johanneskirche" in Aachen-Bretscheid and contains the scale of an arm-bone that can be regarded through a small window. Also this reliquary is ordained with an imperial crown. The features of the face here, rather remind of an emperor, respectively king, than of John the Baptist. Further the so-called Maastricht-Reliquary of the 14th century, and the reliquary of Brussels that is kept in St. Baats, Gent have to be mentioned.



At this point it must not be passed over in silence that there is a sarcophagus in the Monastery Makarios, south of Alexandria that also is said to contain the remains of John the Baptist, or at least parts of them.

At the close of this chapter there remains the reference to the clothes of John the Baptist. Also around these manifold legends and miraculous traditions are scrolled. It is said that most severe sicknesses could be healed by touching them. Parts of the garments as well as a goblet are in the possession of the Church San Giovanni in Laterano, Rome.

The cloth of the decapitation of John the Baptist is part of the reliquary treasure of Charles the Great.

**PART II**

**THE ESSENES,  
A BROTHERHOOD OF JOHN?**



## THE HISTORY OF THE QUMRAN-FINDINGS

From early-Christian sources and antique reports we know that in addition to the Romans, also the parties of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots were a decisive power in Judea in the early 1st ct. Yet, aside from the renowned religiously and politically mighty groups, there must have existed a further movement. How otherwise could the great number of followers and the renewing movement of a John the Baptist and Jesus be explained?

In reports of antiquity, like by Josephus Flavius, e.g., Philo of Alexandria, and Pliny the Elder, one occasionally encountered the *Chassidim* (Greek term: *essèn*), the *Faithful Ones*. In the ever scarcer and more simplified reproduction of the view of the world and God of these Essenes, the origin and the connection to the mission of John the Baptist and Jesus was seen. Yet, there was no concrete knowledge about this mysterious brotherhood. This changed with the Qumran finds, however. The story of this significant discovery, alone, fills volumes (e.g. John C. Trever, "Das Abenteuer von Qumran"), but, even in its short edition it is adventurous reading:

In the years 1947/48, altogether seven scrolls came to light, the origin of which at first could not be decided upon. The story of the finding up to the recognition of the great significance of these leather-scrolls is strange.

In the winter of 1946/47 the Arab herd-boy Muhammad edh-Dhib from the tribe Taamireh was looking for a forlorn goat in the marl rocks. During this process, he came to a cave and pounced upon an unknown number of leather scrolls and earthenware jars. According to the oral report of the Bedouins, they took some well-preserved and useable earthenware jars with them, while some scrolls were used as fire-material for the nightly camp-fire. As place of discovery they named a cave situated exactly 1300 metres north of Qumran at the north-west shore of the Dead Sea. In the spring of 1947 the Bedouins sold the four remaining scrolls to a certain Khalil Iskander Schahin, a shoemaker living in Bethlehem, and received a small sum for the old leather that had already started mouldering. Approximately in the middle of the year of 1947 the scrolls became the property of the Syrian Metropolitan Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samuel in Jerusalem. According to the chronic the shoemaker received \$97,20 in return.

Merely a few months later, in the fall of 1947, Eliezer Lila Sukenik, a professor of archaeology at Jerusalem University reports of the purchase of three further scrolls. Also these had a curious way through manifold hands, before they finally became the belongings of an expert.

Not before the year of 1949 a research team appeared at the cave of discovery described by the Bedouins, and found rests of scrolls, some fragments of manuscripts, crumpled linen-jackets as well as broken pieces of earthenware jars. In

1951 the wider vicinity was searched for historic documents. The labours were not very productive, however. Now the scientists tried their luck right at the hill of the ruin-site at Qumran, but without success.

Only shortly afterwards, in February 1952, Bedouins discovered a further cave with crumbled manuscripts close to the first place of discovery. Although these findings were not very spectacular, they gave rise to a wave of purposive search. Cave by cave of the vicinity was examined. About 300 possible places of discovery were scrutinized. However, the scientist were successful only in one cave, situated approximately 1000 metres from the first place of discovery. At first only a large number of broken earthenware jars and some fragments of scrolls were found. The following procedures, however, brought two copper -scrolls to light. Four years later the value of this find was discovered. In the copper -scrolls altogether 64 hiding-places are described, to the major part in Jerusalem, in the Judean Desert, and in the East Jordan area. There once existed considerable gold and silver treasures as well as depots of money. The inventory list was engraved into the soft copper -material. Every entry informed on the site of the respective hiding -place, and of the exact amount of silver and gold coins as well as of other valuables.

Up to today this financial statement has led to many assumptions and speculations among the experts. Where did these treasures come from, who was the owner or, who could dispose of it, what was the purpose of this wealth, and what did the Essenes have to do with it?

It soon showed that the copper-roll had not been produced until during the war-chaos of 67-70 AD, and was a reduced copy of the original. Thus it served as a hidden reserve in case the actual list would get lost. The inventory list applied to the treasures of the Temple of Jerusalem that were secured from the Romans, but also from revolting Jews. Thus the Temple was more than a house of God, it further served as a secure bank in which international merchants and wealthy people deposited their fortunes. Although the copper-scroll lists 100 tons of treasure, predominantly in the form of gold and silver bars as well as in coins, it only renders a part of the complete property. At any rate, the Romans still took so many treasures with them as spoils of war at the conquest of Jerusalem in 70 AD that Josephus Flavius considered them worth mentioning (Bellum 6:317).

After the war disorders the treasures apparently had been secured from their respective hidings with the help of the original inventory -list, thus the copy was worthless. According to the scientists the copper -scrolls also cannot be assigned to the Essenes, since to use the very same hiding -place for the financial statement as well as for the scrolls seems extremely questionable. Yet, it must under no circumstances be excluded that the Essenes were confidants and co -administrators of the hidden treasure-depot. This in no way contradicts their honourable intentions, however, since also they were interested in the preservation of the Temple and its

cultic-treasures. It therefore is quite probable that there existed respective depots also in Qumran and its vicinity. To deduct from this, however, that the treasures served the Essenes, being supporters of the Zealots, to finance a war against the Romans under the leadership of their commander Jesus, remains reserved to the few sensation-authors.

The major part of the amassed money certainly stemmed from the Jewish mission that had its focal point in Babylon, Alexandria, Asia Minor, and Rome. Approximately four to five and a half million Jews lived abroad, and founded a network of Diaspora - parishes. The Temple of Jerusalem always remained their spiritual centre, however. Outwardly they showed this connection by pilgrimages (Acts 2:9 -11) and regular donations of money instead of the traditional sacrifice of victims. The Jewish aim of mission embraced the recruitment of 600 000 members for the formation of a New Israel, and depended on a fee of entry, so to say a *ransom for the salvation on Judgement Day*.

One to two generations later John the Baptist and Jesus entered the scene in Judea. In principle the system of the Jewish mission was unaltered. It is only too understandable that both considered the blend of religion and money as well as the double-function of the Temple as cultic site and Jewish central bank an uncouth disrespect of the divine will and loudly opposed against it.

Back to the discoveries at Qumran:

In August 1952 they were the Bedouins again who found the remnants of approximately 600 scrolls in a cave in the immediate vicinity of the Qumran ruin. All of a sudden a true Qumran-fever began among archaeologists and theologians. Still in the same year the French archaeologist Father Roland de Veaux went to Qumran and headed the excavations until 1958. The ruins of Qumran were unencumbered, and five further caves with documents were discovered. Additionally, the Bedouins gave notice of one place of discovery in 1952, and one in 1956. Altogether close to 900 written documents were found. However, the by far greatest part cannot be exploited, since they are either totally weathered, or exist only in too small fragments. The scrolls are made of leather or Papyrus, and drawn up in the languages Aramaic, Hebrew, or Greek. All manuscripts are numbered and listed according to the respective caves of discovery in the sequence of their finds. Up to now the evaluation of all manuscripts showed that only ten are well -preserved and allow for a coherent statement. One copper -scroll of a length of 2.42 metres is completely preserved. The scroll of the Book Isaiah, with a length of 7.43 metres is also well conserved. The approximately 9 meters long Temple scroll shows well about the half readable. In relatively good condition are the scrolls on the topics *Commentary to the Book Habakkuk, The Teaching of the Two Spirits, Decisive Battle Between the Forces of the Light and Darkness, Parish Regulations, Rules of Discipline, Formulas*

*of Blessing, Hymns, Psalter, and Book Genesis.*

When the most significant findings were presented to the public in 1950 -1960, a flood of media-reports broke out. The topic Essenes, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Early Christians experienced a true rebirth.

Aside from experienced and serious authors also a large number of sensation-authors took up this topic. The Qumran finds were exploited for publicity. Bestseller upon bestseller, until today, inundates the poorly informed, yet curious readers. The following books found special attention: *“Ein Mensch namens Jesus“*, *„Verschlussache Jesus“*, *„Jesus und die Urchristen“* sowie *„Jesus von Qumran.“* Oddly, the respective authors come to completely different conclusions and lines of argument which, however, does not hinder the majority of the public to declare the respective bestseller of the day the absolute evidence of the events and correlations. And all this with the reference to the Qumran Essenes.

Of course the Dead Sea Scrolls proved extremely interesting, even more so, they led to the assumption of connections to the later on developing Christianity. Much of what was found and deciphered showed a significant relation to the words and teaching of Jesus. Also an immediate connection to this mysterious brotherhood that existed from the 2nd ct BC to the 1st ct AD was seen in the way of life and in the work of John the Baptist

So there were and are many additional questions still unanswered: is Christianity merely a world-wide spreading of the Essene philosophy of life? Were John the Baptist and Jesus merely elite-Essenes? And lastly is Christianity based on a tragic misunderstanding of the Essene view and creed?

Thus it is not astonishing that novelists and religious scientists as well as critics of the Church and the Vatican used the opportunity to fashion the topics according to their own discretion. Some authors even started from the premises that some of the discovered scripts stemmed directly, or by order, from the quill of John the Baptist or Jesus. This changed somewhat, when script -experts dated the majority of the scrolls to the 3rd to 1st ct BC. The scientifically recognized carbon -method finally confirmed this date of time.

Who then were the Essenes, when and how did they live, what was the essence of their doctrine, what was the connection John the Baptist and Jesus with them?

## **THE ORIGIN OF THE ESSENES – THE CONSEQUENCE OF A SEVERE TIME OF CRISIS**

Up to the findings in Qumran, the Essenes were of relatively small significance from our historical and theological point of view. After the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it was suddenly remembered that this religious group had already been mentioned by Josephus Flavius, Philo of Alexandria, and Pliny the Elder. While the Pharisees and the Sadducees are frequently mentioned in the New Testament, the Essenes are not mentioned at all.

Concerning the 1st century AD, the historian Josephus mentions in his annals 6000 Pharisees, 4000 Essenes, and only some hundred members of the Sadducees and of the Zealots. At that point in time about one million Jews lived in Palestine. In the second book on the history of the Jewish War, Josephus describes the Essenes in 42 paragraphs, the Pharisees and Sadducees are described in only five. Like Philo of Alexandria, also Josephus calls the Essenes the best, respectively the most ideal of all Jews. The Jewish people itself called the Essenes also the *“truly faithful ones”*.

Also Pliny, in his work *“Natural History,”* focuses his attention on the Essenes. In book 5, chapter 14, he exclusively refers to the Essenes at Qumran, and describes them as a wonderful and solitary brotherhood living without women and money in the society of palm trees. In his records he says: *“Although nobody is born in this brotherhood their number always renews itself by new members urging to accept the Essene customs.”*

Pliny the Elder took part in the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Being born in 23/24 AD, he thus is a contemporary of John the Baptist and Jesus. Pliny died in 79 AD. He lost his life through the eruption of the Vesuvius. During his military intermezzo as a high ranking officer and vice prefect in Jerusalem from 67 -68, he engaged himself scientifically with the Dead Sea, and by doing so, apparently learnt some clichés about the Essenes of Qumran. In the course of the insurrection against the Romans (66-70 AD), Qumran was finally destroyed in 68 AD. Possibly his knowledge about the brotherhood stems directly or indirectly from this campaign.

The founding of the Essene Brotherhood was preceded by one of the severest crises of Judaism. The period of crisis already began with the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great in the years 333-331 BC. After his death (323 BC), the immense realm was subdivided among his heirs, the so-called Diadochs. Thus Palestine became a fought-for border country between the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria. The people of Israel fell prey to the famous and proverbial fights of the Diadochs. In 320 BC Palestine came into the realm of influence of Ptolemy I, Soter at first. Ptolemy (Greek=warrior) was the name of the Macedonian rulers who



were the last Egyptian dynasty from 323 to 30 BC. Under Soter, a general of Alexander the Great, Egypt became a wealthy Hellenist country. Israel enjoyed a period of peace, into which fell the origin of Hellenist Judaism. Nine years after Soter's death, in 283 BC, the first of six wars for Palestine (274 to 168 BC) between the Ptolemies and Seleucids began. More than impressing is the vision of Daniel. His prophecies about the kings of Persia, Alexander the Great as well as of the wars between the Ptolemies and Seleucids are recorded in Book Daniel chapter 11.

In 200 BC, Ptolemy V Epiphanes had to hand over Palestine to the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III the Great (see Dan.20:20; Macc.8:6 ...).

The Seleucids, named after Seleucus I, ruled as Macedonian dynasty in the succession of the realm of Alexander over the region from India to Syria and Asia Minor from 312 to 64 BC, and reigned strictly over the people of Israel. Already in 198 BC a hard time of religious suppression began. While as a consequence of the conquest by Alexander the Great only a steadily increasing Hellenization commenced in Palestine and successively pushed aside Jewish tradition, now also Jewish religion was to be replaced by Greek life-style, philosophy, educational system and so on. In 175 BC Antiochus IV Epiphanes became king of the realm of the Seleucids. He wanted to oust Jewish religion and to completely extinguish Judaism, and to Hellenize the Jews. By this time many of them had already become that addicted to the Greek cultural influence that they rejected Jewish traditional duties and values, like purification-rules, sacrifices, Sabbath-rules, circumcision, nutrition rules, and so on, and replaced them by Greek values. Thus the new Seleucid ruler found fertile grounds for his plans of reform.

The traditional High Priest Onias III, stemming from a disputatious and unyielding dynasty of high priests (already his grandfather refused to pay taxes to Egypt) anyway, resisted the reforms and prevented the plundering of the Temple-treasure. However, he was dismissed on the spot and found recourse in the Syrian asylum-sanctuary Daphne near Antiochia. In 170 BC he was murdered by the order of his rival Menelaos. To this refer the prophecies Dan.9:26 as well as the records in II Macc.3-4.

The son of Onias III had to leave Jerusalem. He succeeded in fleeing to Egypt, where the Ptolemies allowed him to build a Jewish temple at Leontopolis. Onias III had a brother by the name of Jesus who welcomed the Hellenistic reforms, however. He took over office, and called himself Jason (Greek name for Jesus). By bribery he had helped to win the favour of King Antiochus for himself. In the course of his turn of office an urban district of Jerusalem was renamed Antiochia, and Hellenization was pushed forward so much that the priests no longer exercised their service at the altar, took part in Greek sports-events, and considered Greek symbols of prestige to be of utmost importance. The disgust of the upright and faithful Jews was at best laughed at and done away with as provincial and backward.

In I Macc.1:11-15; II Macc.4:7-17, the misdeeds of Jason are especially highlighted. His period of office did not last long, however, since already in 172 BC. Menelaus dislodged him from office. The actual, Jewish name of Menelaus is unknown which distinctly reflects the wave of Hellenization. Tradition holds, however, that he had held an ordinary office as priest, and stemmed from an insignificant family.

Also the proceedings of Menelaus especially shows the machinations and corruption of this time: Jason sent him with donations of money to King Antiochus IV, yet, Menelaus used the chance of the moment and attained the office of high priest through the king. To Jason nothing remained but to flee. The position of Menelaus was insecure due to his low descent, however. He neither was from the priest family of the Zadokians, like his predecessor nor educated accordingly. II Macc. describes, how he used the absence of King Antiochus IV on account of a revolt in the north, to strengthen his position with Andronicus, the deputy of the king. This man was bribed with robbed treasures from the Temple of Jerusalem. Upon this, Andronicus gave his assent to the murder of the still legitimate High Priest Onias III. This murder in 170 BC, became the starting date for the last hundred-year period of the history of the world before the coming of the divine last judgement for the Essenes.

Even King Antiochus IV was appalled by this murder and had Andronicus executed. Menelaus, however, remained in office and honours. But he had to render money and Temple treasures to the king. Thus already in 169 BC, which is the year following the abominable murder, the Temple was totally plundered. Even the gold-fittings of the outside doors were not exempted. Apparently Antiochus IV financed his wars with these means, for, directly afterwards he advanced against the Ptolemies in Egypt a second time. In Jerusalem the rumour spread that he had died. Jason used this situation in turn to retain his lost position as high priest. He had gathered an army around him, and without hesitation attacked Jerusalem. Thousands died in the act. Many had to flee and were driven away. Antiochus IV hurried back to Jerusalem with his troops, since he suspected a revolt of the Jews against himself, and caused a bloodbath there. It is reported that women and children were slaughtered, and that 80 000 Jews died altogether. The same number was driven into slavery. Jason fled, and eventually found shelter with the Ptolemies in Egypt. These had supported and financed the attack on Jerusalem to disturb their adversary Antiochus IV in their war against themselves. Jason finally died as a hunted-for man in Egyptian exile.

At last Antiochus humiliated the Jews by entering the Temple as a pagan, and by confiscating the remaining effects. His contempt of the Jews eventually culminated in having the sanctuary in Jerusalem changed into a temple for Zeus with the help of Menelaus in 167 BC. For the faithful Jews the place became the scene of loathsomeness and blasphemy (see Dan.9:27). II Macc.6:3-6 reports of excesses like prostitution in the Temple and public sexual intercourse in the holy district.

Immediately before, in 168 BC, Menelaus had executed an unheard of reform of the

religious Jewish laws. Thus, for example, the cult of offering, the ownership of Torah scrolls, the observance of the Sabbath, and the circumcision of boys were imposed a death sentence upon. In the consecutive year the 364-day sun calendar was substituted by the pagan 354-day moon calendar of Babylon. By the way, this moon calendar has been valid in Judaism until today. In the reform calendar of Menelaus not a single Jewish feast could be found, while the birthday of King Antiochus IV was established the highest feast of the year. Epiphanes, the designation of the king, moreover means *the God having appeared on earth*.

Now the Jewish faith was practically outlawed, Jewish traditions were eradicated. The new religious order was not implied step by step, but carried out immediately. The Jews were forced into partaking in the Hellenist cult, groups of priests supervised the observance of the new religious rules (see I Macc.1:54-64; II Macc.6:2-4, 7-11).

To faithful, God-fearing Jews there remained only going underground or emigration. Thus many found shelter in the barren mountain region of the Judean Desert. Thousands again went into exile with bag and baggage. They sought a new homeland for themselves and their God, especially in the neighbouring countries. The by far greater part found this in the area east of the Jordan River, in Perea, Nabatea, and Gilead. Here they united for cultivation and revival of the Jewish faith and traditions.

The Dead Sea Scrolls furnish evidence for the existence of at least seven unions of this kind. The group of the Chassideans who organized themselves in the religious party of the Chassidim (the devout ones) were the group most significant for posterity. This union of faithful ones, among other names also called Asideans, at the same time was the matrix of Essenism, and probably also for the party separating-off: the Pharisees.

At the same time resistance took shape in the person of Judas Maccabeus in the centre of the country. His father, the Priest Mattathias refused the pagan cult of sacrifice, and even killed the first Jew of his home-town who fulfilled the new rite of service. Also the royal officer who demanded the execution of the heathen rite of service died through the hand of Mattathias directly afterwards. He had to flee and he lined up an armed opposition with his five sons to which soon thousands of Jews formed up. In the course of the legendary battles that Judas Maccabeus fought for religious freedom from 166 to 160 BC, he successively forced the occupation forces back. In 164 BC, he even succeeded in the taking of Jerusalem and in the restoration of the Temple to the traditional cult of the Jews. Strangely he left the High Priest Menelaus in office, and saw his task rather in the further military opposition against the Seleucid occupation force. In the same year Antiochus IV Epiphanes died. A twelve-year rule of terror over the Jews came to an end. The prophecies of Daniel (see Dan.11:21-45) about the atrocities of a tyrant against the Jews and their

faith had fulfilled themselves to the jot. The Books Maccabee I, 1 -6 and II 3-9, report about one of the most severe crises of the Israeli people with helpless rage and painful disgust. Apparently his personal profligacy was the undoing for the Seleucid King, for tradition holds that he found a wretched end at a temple -plundering in the area that is Iraq today.

For the Jews this meant a short period of rest. The successor and son of the deceased tyrant, Antiochus V Eupator, granted religious freedom to the Jews again. To be sure, Eupator still was a child, so that the liberalization rather was a decree of his guardian Lysias. Lastly this decree was rather a concession and offer of peace to the successful Judas Maccabeus, however, who courageously and unerringly struggled for the freedom of his people. Therefore, they were not few Jews who saw in him the longed-for Messiah.

Menelaos, however, still was holding office. Despite the opposition of the Jews he could keep his position through skilful tactics. Two years later, in 162 BC, a group of enraged Jews deported him to the age-old Syrian merchant town of Aleppo, the Haleb of today, and flung the sacrilegious priest down from a high tower. In the same year the child Eupator and his trustee Lysias were removed from office. Demetrius I Soter took over the rule over the realm of the Seleucids.

But the sequence of faithless priests did not end. Demetrius I Soter appointed Alkimus to high priest. The Hebrew name is not known for sure. It either is reported to be Eljakim or Joachim. The self-raised ruler of the Seleucids again pressed the Maccabees back more and more. For tactical reasons Alkimus resigned from office, and became council to the regime in the delicate Jewish question. He dissociated himself clearly from the Chassidim, and recommended the killing of Judas Maccabeus to the King. Following this, Demetrius I Soter again installed Alkimus as high priest, and appointed the Commander Nikanor who received the order to kill Judas Maccabeus, administrator of Judea,. Nikanor, however, sought no new military dispute, but came to a compromise with the soldier of the resistance. Deeply disappointed Alkimus betrayed this action of Nikanor to the king. As a result Nikanor received the altered order to seize Judas Maccabeus, and to bring him to Antiochia. Having become suspicious Judas Maccabeus fled from Jerusalem, however, and later attacked the army of Nikanor without notice, who being defeated did not survive the battle. This much of the summary of Book II Maccabee.

A slightly different version is also reported in Book I Maccabee. The author reports that Demetrius I had his friend and administrator enter Jerusalem with an army. In the latter's company was Alkimus who was to be proclaimed high priest and ruler of Judea. Consequently the resistance through Judas Maccabeus formed once again. Demetrius sent further troops under Nikanor as support to Alkimus. This one, however, succumbs to the small host of the Maccabees, and is slain. As a consequence, Demetrius sends an immense armed force to Judea and places it

under the command of Bakchides and Alkimus. Although many desert his rows in the face of the superiority of the opponent, Judas takes up the unequal battle in 160 BC. The battle that rages from sunrise till sunset ended deadly for Judas. It is said that Mattathias, the father of Judas, died of a natural death at approximately the same time. However, the revolts of the Maccabees were not yet broken by this. They should still last for about 25 years under the brothers Judas: Jonathan, (160 -143 BC) and Simon (143-134 BC)

Essential for the increase in strength of Essenism is another incident in this context, however. Directly after the reinstatement of Alkimus as high priest, the Chassidim sent a delegation to him from their exile to negotiate the revival of Jewish tradition in Jerusalem and Judea in its totality. Yet, perfidiously, the latter had all of those seized and killed he could get hold of. Altogether 60 of the devout ones were murdered ruthlessly. According to rabbinic sources also the uncle of Alkimus, Jose Ben Jo ezer, an excellent interpreter of Jewish teaching was among those killed. These had felt secure, for Alkimus *“spoke words of peace and swore: We neither wish to hurt you nor your friends.”* In the massacre that Alkimus worked among the devout ones, the author of I Maccabee saw the prophesy of the Ashaph -psalm 79:2-3 fulfilled, in which is said: *“they have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the air for food, the flesh of your faithful to the wild animals of the earth. They have poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them.”* (I Macc 7:12-17)

The death of Judas Maccabeus quickened Alkimus to take merciless revenge on all Jews disrespecting him and sympathizing with the Maccabees. Alkimus was the worst in the series of the three *faithless priests*. During their rule affliction and persecution of the devout and righteous ones were intensified to the insufferable. He finally died in 159 BC, while he had the walls of the inner Temple broken down. His death was caused by an apoplectic fit. Afterwards the country had a short period of rest of two years (I Macc. 9:54-57).

Only with this knowledge of the chronology of the last 150 years, and the detailed knowledge of the atrocities committed by Israel's spiritual leaders in their function as high priests, anointed by God, the beginning of a movement for renewal is understandable; a movement of the *“the Sons of the Light”*, which is the name of the devout ones who formed and organized themselves in Essenism later on.

These *“Sons of the Light”* laid the foundation for the work and the message of the two God-sent men, John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth.

## THE FOUNDING OF THE ESSEN UNION

The Dead Sea Scrolls report about the existence of a remarkable religious leader from the time of the great crisis and renunciation during the rule of the Seleucids and the faithless priests. This religious leader excelled through the sublime contents and the great strength of his spiritual doctrine and legislation. Further, he was bestowed with prophetic visions and poetic expression. This wise man is revered by the Essenes as the *True Teacher* or *Teacher of Righteousness*. Also the titles *Exceptional Teacher* and *Only Teacher* can be found. Due to the finds of scrolls we know that he was a priest from the stock of Levi and that he was persecuted for his actions just before God by the high priest and the political regime. Further, that his killing had been intended, and that he had to leave his homeland. Yet, we do not know his name that apparently was deliberately not mentioned by the Essenes to guard him against those non-initiated and persecutors. The authors of the scrolls also do not tell the name of his immediate adversary, the high priest. The latter's identity remains hidden behind the titles *Sacrilegious Priest* and *Godless Priest*.

Since the teacher also spoke of the "*last things*" and the "*last days*" before the coming of the final judgement and the impending messianic time, it at first suggested itself that nobody else could be meant by the *True Teacher* than John the Baptist. The concurrence was astonishing. Aside from the proximity to the word of the Baptist with regard to the contents, the persecution of the Baptist by the High Priest Caiaphas and the Pharisees as well as the regime of Herod Antipas was referred to. However, similar parallels also show concerning the *True Teacher* and Jesus.

The determination of the age of the scrolls, however, referred to an origin of the records at about 150 years before the appearance of the Baptist. Subsequently arising contentions that the *True Teacher* would be reincarnated in John the Baptist or Jesus, naturally could not be accepted by the historians and religious scientists.

Eventually, the course of chronology of the Jewish history during the 2nd ct. BC was characterized exactly and compared with the texts of the scrolls. In the Essene Habakkuk commentary: "*This refers to the sacrilegious teacher, installed in the name of truth. Yet, when he ruled Israel, his heart became proud, and he disdained God, and betrayed the rules for wealth's sake*" a connection to the High Priest Alkimus was found, of whom II Macc. says: "*who formerly had been high priest, but had besmirched himself during the times of separation.*" Yet, because Alkimus died in 159 BC, there would not have been any reason for the *True Teacher* to remain in exile at a later point in time.

In the analysis of the further course of history after Alkimus a logical explanation

was found, however. The historian Josephus Flavius reports in *Antiquitates* 20.237, that the position of high priest had been vacant for seven years (159 -152). However, his source unmistakably was I Maccabee that, for obvious reasons, only mentions Jonathan, the brother of Judas Maccabeus as office -holder. The dark tunnel of seven years is lit by the Qumran records, however. In them it is mentioned that the *True Teacher* had exercised the function of high priest before he had gone into exile, and had laid the foundation for Essenism. All evidences point to it that the *True Teacher* held the highest priestly office in the succession of Alkimus, and strove for a reinstallation of the Jewish cult as well as for the repatriation of the emigrants. The further course of history opposed his endeavours, however. Concerning resistance, Jonathan proved himself a deserving successor to his brother Judas Maccabeus. 157 BC he won over the army of Bakchides. According to I Macc. 9:66, the battlefield was in the immediate vicinity of Bethlehem, where two Bedouin tribes came to his aid. As a consequence the Seleucid regime concluded a treaty with Jonathan who, however, had to settle with his troops outside of Jerusalem. Four years later the favour of the hour showed itself to Jonathan. Alexander Balas contested King Demetrius I Soter the throne. In accordance to the manner and morale of the time, Demetrius sought support from his arch-enemy Jonathan to ward off the foe with his help. Jonathan demanded as a condition to transfer his residence from the northern Michmas to Jerusalem. Demetrius I promised, but the strategic aims of Jonathan lay higher. After having entered Jerusalem with his troops, and having established himself respectively, he concluded a secret treaty with Alexander Balas against Demetrius I. With the support of the Maccabees Alexander Balas took over the Seleucid throne in 150 BC, and Jonathan was granted the priestly and terrestrial power over Judea as an act of favour. But Jonathan did not have the benefit of popularity and reverence like his brother Judas. On the contrary, he was feared by the people which is proved by the flight of many Jews from Jerusalem at his marching in. So, also as high priest, he was neither respected among the people nor by the priesthood. His strife for power was no less than that of his predecessors Jason, Menelaos, and Alkimus.

Jonathan dismissed the former high priest, the *True Teacher* on the spot. The latter found refuge in Damascus, where there were already many Jewish religious fugitives. Together with the teacher also many priests and temple officials who were loyal to the expelled high priest came to Damascus. It tells of the honourable intentions of the exiled one that he now, under more difficult circumstances, pushed forward the consolidation and spreading of Jewish tradition and did not, as one might suspect, use all strength for the regaining of the position in Jerusalem.

Studying the sources, one repeatedly is confronted with the Prophet Jeremiah who

inspired the *True Teacher*, his followers, and the complete movement of the Devout Ones. In obedience to his demand (Jer.31:31-34), they formed a *New Covenant* (Damascus Document 8:1-10; 9:10-29), and pledged to adhere to certain laws and rules.

Like the actual history of the Essenes had its origin in the circumstance that the followers of the Law left their country to exercise their faith in purity, thus, the basis for the brotherhood was laid with the *New Covenant*.

The conviction of the *True Teacher* was that he had to unify all those devout and had to lead them back to the Promised Land, because only there the time of salvation could begin for them. Before this time of salvation there would be a final judgement, the decisive battle between good and evil. In their interpretation of the scripture, this battle would take place within a short time. So he unified almost all important groups in exile that were to return to their old homeland under his spiritual guidance. He therefore asked Jonathan to limit himself to the terrestrial power. Yet, this was only a part of the *instruction of the Teacher to Jonathan*. Thus, also the correct keeping of the Torah rules, and the reinstallations of the sun calendar was demanded. A claim to the right to the office of high priest of the teacher, however, is not mentioned expressly. This, however, existed implicitly, the *True Teacher* being of the family of the Zadok-priests. For Jonathan the *True Teacher* became more and more of a danger. He reacted decidedly. To maintain his position of power he attempted to rid himself of the disagreeable critic by murder. But the assassination failed (commentary to Psalter 1-10; IV.8 and Habakkuk XI:2-8).

Without hesitation, the *True Teacher* propagated the return of the exile-groups to the Promised Land. There many like-minded joined who subjected themselves to the rules of the New Covenant. There is a high probability that he thereby operated from his exile in Damascus.

Thus, around 150 AD the Essene Union developed within the Judean borders. This union which understood itself to be the spiritual representation for the totality of Israel was revered and honoured from its very beginning, being a safeguard for the reconciliation with God after a long period of blasphemy. During this time the Essenes formed the largest organized religious party of the Jews. Not all of those having joined the New Covenant remained steadfast, however. Thus, they were the too strict rules, a more liberal interpretation of the Torah, or the lacking readiness to return to Judea that separated them from the New Covenant. The Damascus Document reports about this: *for they spoke the false against the constitution of justice and rejected the Covenant and the confession of faith that they had given in Damascus; and this is the New Covenant.*" (9:36-37).

This passage is worth being mentioning, since from the group of apostates the Schismatics, and the, from then on, strong group of the Pharisees formed



themselves. At the same time a further religious party developed, the Sadducees. These recruited themselves from the priesthood faithful to Jonathan.

Under the leadership of the *True Teacher* Essenism quickly spread in the towns and villages of Judea. Presumably the latter continued steering the organization from his exile for several years. Whether he returned to Judea after the death of his opponent Jonathan is uncertain. Aside from a network of terrestrial and religious rules, he conveyed to the brotherhood a high degree of spiritual wisdom and understanding. In the understanding of the Essenes, he led the brotherhood as a messenger of God. The strong binding to the founder and teacher is also expressed by Josephus Flavius. The latter's information were first hand. He had been an aspirant for membership, however, stood back from it after some time. In chapter 8 of the Jewish War he writes: "*Second to God they most highly revere their legislator, and everyone defaming him is punished by death.*"

While the religious parties of the Sadducees and Pharisees were also active socio- and power-politically, the Essenes totally withdrew to the religious and eschatological plane. The scrolls do, however, still frequently mention the sacrilegious priest Jonathan and his misdeeds against the Jewish traditions, but also against the brotherhood itself. Thus, the commentary to Habakkuk reports, among other things, how this wicked priest took away land from the brotherhood. The successors of Jonathan in the position of high priest indeed are mentioned occasionally, but are not criticized. However, it is generally not certified, whether the negative denominations like *sacrilegious priest*, *godless priest* or *heinous priest* refer exclusively to the Maccabee Jonathan. In some cases also Alkimus and his two predecessors could be meant.

The already mentioned passage about the annexation of territory literally holds: "*wealth robbed from the poor ones (the devout ones).*" As I understand it, with this the confiscation of possession of house and land ownership of the Chassidim by Alkimus or Jonathan is referred to, who in this way attempted to impede the return of those devout ones who had emigrated.

The *True Teacher* died about 110 BC, that is forty years after the founding of the Essene Union. At this time the Qumran settlement had not been built, yet. The beginning of the brotherhood at the north-western shore of the Dead Sea is dated to 100 BC. We must assume, however, that the initiative for the birth of Qumran came from the *True Teacher*.

In the texts found and decoded until now, no successor to the founder and leader is recognizable. Whether there has been one, seems questionable to present research. In the case of doubt it always is presumed that there was no more teacher or guardian, since in the consciousness of the Essenes the *messianic age* was nigh anyway.

I, personally, cannot comply with this thesis. In chapter IV of this book I express my opinion in connection with the spiritual messages of the Essenes and John the Baptist.

## DOCTRINE AND MESSAGE OF THE ESSENES

Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls there were some few exegetics who came near to the secret knowledge of the Essenes and their teaching. Aside from contemporary reports by Josephus, Philo, and Pliny, the essential sources could be studied in the archives of the Vatican, the Habsburg -Library (from 1918 onwards Austrian State Library, Vienna) as well as in the British Museum. According to my research it was possible for only few outsiders to consult the manuscripts of the Vatican and of the Habsburgs, however.

In my evaluation the reports on the Essenes and on their mystic wisdom are too glorifying. The members of the brotherhood were, so to speak, uplifted to supernatural, magic beings who, in the medium of the body should have worked true miracles. On the other hand, many authors exercised accentuated objectivity after the finds of Qumran and their partial decoding. What had been deduced from the scrolls until then was fascinating, but not necessarily within the range of mystic wisdoms. If one includes the group of the tendentious sensation authors as a third source, any possibility of explanation and interpretation of the Essene teachings and motives remains open to the interested reader.

With some modesty all, we included, have to perceive that we still lack a great step to depict the Essenes all-inclusively and precisely. In this respect also the scroll -finds and their interpretation do not change anything. Thus we have to consider that, up to now, only a small part of these finds can be interpreted. A majority of the papyrus, respectively leather scrolls, is in lumps or pasted up. Again another considerable part does not even hold the value of a fragment.

A further aspect seems essential to me: what may be the proportional relation of all the scrolls discovered, in relation to the complete work of scripts of the Qumran Essenes? To what extent did the Qumran brotherhood represent Essenism as such? We know that there were approximately 4000 Essenes in Judea at the time of John the Baptist and Jesus. Besides, a further group of this brotherhood: the Therapeutae or healers lived in Egypt. Additionally certified as former places, where Essene groups existed are the areas of Syria and Mesopotamia.

Taking into consideration the architectural structure at Qumran there was at the most room for 200 people, including the agriculture in Ein Feshka. When expert authors and historians speak of the Essenes, they usually refer the Qumran Essenes. In this settlement at the Dead Sea there were, however, at the most five percent of the whole brotherhood. Therefore it seems more than questionable that the Qumran inhabitants should represent Essenism in all of its depth and breadth. While the scrolls reveal much about the rules, statutes, and the exoteric or outer teaching, they say relatively little about the esoteric or inner part of the teaching. The

search for manuscripts of the province of magic truths and occult mysteries will be in vain to be sure, for this concealed knowledge was only handed on orally to chosen ones, that is: initiated ones. Although the *True Teacher* founded the Essene Union in 150 BC, this by no means signifies that these ideas and this way of action did not exist before. The actual origin of the brotherhood therefore is unknown, even if it is presumed that it had existed under another name in other countries long before its official dating. A part of the Essene wisdoms, of course, is based on age-old wisdoms like are documented, for example, in the about 6000 year -old works<sup>48</sup> of the Sumerians. Unmistakable are the influences of the old -Persian Prophet Zarathustra as well as the esoteric doctrine of the Upanishads in Brahmanism. Basic elements of these wisdoms and teachings are to be found manifold, thus, in the teachings of the Tibetans, with Buddha, in the Yoga-doctrine, and so on. However, in their clearest and most distinct form these teachings were practised and conveyed by the Essenes. Their actual law-giver was Moses, of course, who received the One Law from the Only God on Mount Sinai. Moses who thereby established monotheism (belief in the one God), transmitted more than only the tables of law. Thus he handed on his intuitive knowledge of the origin and essence of things, about power and effect of the elements (basic forces of life), positive and negative forces, as well as causes and consequences to those understanding and initiated. Moses recognized that all things merely are the expression of God and his law, and that every defection from this law bears negative consequences. Only once man attains mastery over all positive and negative forces he has understood and internalised God and His Law.

The greater part of the Jewish people that Moses had led out of Egyptian captivity did not recognize the correlation between universal laws and worldly conduct. Therefore, for most of the Jews the insights of Moses were merely abstract theory which led to a continuous breach and to the renunciation of the Covenant with God. A procedure that permanently repeated itself in Judaism - but also in all other religions. Alone from this the appearance of the prophets, admonishers, and revivers of the covenant – up to Elijah, John the Baptist, and Jesus who saw the actual cause of all terrestrial miseries in the renunciation of God explains itself.

The Essenes were the first to renew the Covenant with God and his One Law on a broad basis. The knowledge handed on by old or even perished cultures about macrocosm and microcosm was deepened by voluminous studies. So they attained much detailed knowledge about the cultivation of vegetable, fruit, and corn. Their insights into the spiritual and material laws of cosmos and earth made the breeding and growing of vegetable and fruit in scanty regions possible for them. So they knew, for example, with which specific added doses of salt water from the Dead Sea to the sweet water, the respective kinds of plants or trees could be wetted. Additionally they saw behind all plants also immaterial, thus spiritual beings, the fields of energy of

which they could influence positively. Alone this explains the fact that the Essenes could reap rich harvests of vegetable and fruit in meagre desert areas.

In the brotherhood of the Essenes there were neither rich nor poor people. In both extremes they saw a divergence from the One Law. From this One Law they deducted their rules and statutes, and proved that human needs for material goods such as nourishment could be satisfied without plight. In many material needs, like nutrition, clothes, and so on they even won surpluses they distributed to needy persons. Plainly legendary were their successes and knowledge in therapeutics as well as in astrology. The accuracy of their prophesies is vouched for manifold.

The Essenes called the sum of all existence the *cosmic sea of life*; the sum of all thoughts in the universe, that is, also of all hopes, wishes, fears, pleasures, prayers and curses they called *the cosmic sea of thought*. Both was factually existing for the Essenes, man was a part of everything, adding to this sea, and was influenced by it. The One Law Moses had expressed in words, was metaphorically transformed into the symbol of the tree of life by the Essenes. In it they showed how man is a unity of energies, thoughts, and feelings. The steering and sovereign authority over it should enable every man to enhance his development of spirit, soul, and body. The Essenes not only knew about this, they also were in the possession of magic wisdoms to use these powers respectively. They had worked hard for a comprehensive knowledge of the characteristic, power, and significance of the angelic beings. With certain magic invocations they made the source of these invisible beings accessible to themselves. Yet, they also knew the beings with negative powers, the demons.

In their opinion only the positive and constructive powers were of decisive importance, however. At the same time they were conscious that there is a corresponding invisible behind everything visible. If a man comes into contact with a worldly power, he at the same time is in contact with the respective celestial power. Therefore it was of utmost importance to them to live in absolute harmony with all forces of the earth and the heaven, the visible and the invisible forces. Thus, the tree of life of the Essenes shows how inseparably connected man is with all elements, the cosmic and the earthly powers, how he can recognize this connection and use the powers positively.

All the concealed knowledge about the magic and mystic forces was only handed on by way of mouth to members who had proved themselves worthy. Who knew of it was a master: an initiated one. Whoever could use the powers of the elements, the terrestrial, and the cosmic energies for the positive, could also do this for the negative. Therefore the knowledge could only be conferred to a brother, who, after having received membership, had passed an additional probation period of seven years. Adjacently he had to swear a sevenfold oath to disclose the secret things to nobody without permission, and to never misuse them for material and selfish things.

A particularity of the Essene statement shall still be set forth in connection with the mission of John the Baptist and Jesus. It concerns the determination of the date of the expected messianic time of salvation which according to prophetic testimonies is preceded, however, by the last judgement by God. From the oldest parish regulations of the Essenes and from the order of blessing we can learn that in the view of the *True Teacher* this time was immediately impending. So they expected the appearance of the Messiah from the house of David still in their, at the latest, in the following generation. The Essenes considered the predictions of the events fulfilled that should precede the judgement of God. Among these fall the renunciation of God under the foreign rule of the Seleucids and their own sacrilegious priests as well as the fateful experiences of the *True Teacher* and the whole Essene union. The hymns of the Hodayot-collection drawn up by the *True Teacher* clearly point to this. On the basis of their interpretation of the prophetic writings, the Essenes finally arrived at the year 70 BC as date for the beginning last judgement. Like the Damascus Document shows, the corner-facts for this were the prophecies of the Prophet Ezekiel (4:5), the beginning of the exile (568 BC), and the murder of Othias III (170 BC), the last legitimate high priest as well as the words of Daniel in chapter 9.

This termination of the last judgement found its confirmation in the alternative formula that there had to pass still about 40 years, as is the instruction in Deuteronomy 2:14, after the year of death of the *True Teacher* (110 BC), before the messianic age would begin. From the point of view of the Essenes there remained only a short span of time to guard the people of Israel from the judgement by God and to lead it to messianic salvation. This explains, why they strengthened their efforts for a pious life and paid no heed to the political scene, in contrast to the parties of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Naturally, it was a fundamental characteristic of the brotherhood to neither take part in politics nor to adhere to a political direction. They knew that neither political nor martial activities could improve the wretched condition of mankind. Like their great successes in the fields of sociology and agriculture prove they were predestined to realize their high spiritualism and intelligence practically. They attained these successes with relatively little expenditure, so that there still remained sufficient time for studies and spiritual practices. As the devout and chosen ones it was their duty to fulfil their main task to reconcile the people of Israel with God. For this it was necessary to live the Word and Law of God exemplarily, and to spread it. Thus, also the beginning of the Qumran settlement (about 100 BC) and the care for the re-availability, respectively the copying of biblical texts that had to the greater part been destroyed during Seleucid rule, fell in this period.

Neither in the year 70 BC nor during years succeeding it, the occurrences in Judea showed strong congruence with the expectations and calculations of the Essenes. In

63 BC a foreign rule, the Romans, fell over the people of Israel. Nine years later they plundered the Temple of Jerusalem. Both events led to a reorientation of the Essene prognosis. One had had to painfully recognize that the respective words of the prophets did not refer to the Seleucids, but to the new pagan power: the "Imperium Romanum". A respective audit of the prophecies, especially in the Book Daniel, led to a new termination of the last judgement and the ensuing time of salvation to 70 AD.

Of course, in the conviction of the Essenes the expected event was not the process of one day. Thus the manuscript called *Melchizedek-Midrash* reveals that a period of seven years is meant with the *Day of the Last Judgement*. The complete process should last approximately 40 years, or one generation, if one includes the transition and the beginning of the time of salvation.

How, then, is the prophecy or rather prognosis of the Essenes to be valued from the point of view of today? Did the Judgement by God occur in the form of Roman foreign rule during the time from 70 BC to 70 AD? If so, how did this possibly differ from the other severe crises of Judaism, like, for example, exile or rule of the Seleucids? Doubtlessly it is a historical fact that in 70 BC a severe final judgement truly began to lay hold on Israel. It started with the conquest and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans. By suspension of the self-administration and the breaking of all Jewish organizations and structures the nationality of the Jews was shattered. Later attempts under Bar Kochba and Rabbi Akiba to shake off the Roman yoke lead to a final destruction. The Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem. A temple for Jupiter was erected on the ruins of the Temple, at Golgotha a Venus-Temple.

Have the prophecies of the Essenes about the fate of the Jewish people not fulfilled themselves already? A further question intrudes: did Jesus base his prediction of the destruction of the Temple on Essene prophecy?

Finally one last question: did the Essenes recognize the messianic in the figures John the Baptist and Jesus, and was their work and mission identical with the expectations of the brotherhood? I will discuss this question in detail in the chapter *John the Baptist and the Essenes*. This much, however, in advance: if the mission of John the Baptist had the purpose of averting the immediately impending judgement by reconciling the people of Israel with God and at the same time recognizing the promised Messiah in the person of Jesus, then the prognosis of the Essenes proved quite exact.

This much concerning the prophecy of the Essenes and the course of history of the people of Israel until the end of the 1st century AD.

The Nation of Israel had been extinct after the destruction of Jerusalem for almost 2000 years, and only was restored under vehement protest of the Arab peoples in 1948. In the interim Israel was a people without land. The Jews were dispersed to

all directions and regions of the earth, they were persecuted and disrespected by many peoples and nations. In the years from 1933 -1945, the hate directed against the Jewish people reached its unspeakably gruesome climax in the national-socialist regime in Germany. With the term holocaust (originally: burnt sacrifice) the mass-killing of Jews to which, according to official sources, six million European Jews fell victim, entered history.

Reading the words of the prophets of the Old Testament and including the prophecies of the Essenes, John the Baptist, and Jesus, and knowing the fateful course of history of the Jewish people one shudders at the thought.

In the non-Jewish observer the question rises, whether the many biblical prophecies exclusively refer to the people of Israel or concern all of mankind, if it disrespects the divine principles. Certainly everybody must find the answer for himself, but it is advisable to disrespect national and religious trimming in doing so.

There is one thing I wish to clearly accentuate here: whoever considers the teachings and messages of the Essenes, John the Baptist, and Jesus to be only referring to the Jews, has not understood their all-comprehensive statement concerning the fate of mankind in its totality, which becomes clear with the last book of the bible, the *Revelation of John* at the latest.



## RULES AND RITES OF THE ESSENES

The Qumran finds furnish evidence of a very voluminous and detailed codex of laws the brotherhood imposed upon itself. This network only becomes understandable from the contemporary historical background, and the self-inflicted task of the Essenes. In the course of the rule of the Seleucids, Jewish religion and tradition were extirpated completely, and replaced by the Hellenistic view. From the texts of the Old Testament, the Torah, and other religious writings only that was left which Judas Maccabeus had been able to secure from destruction in his battle for religious freedom.

When the Essene Union gained shape in the exile-country of Syria, many members proved not steadfast enough to live according to the Mosaic rules. Thus, it is on the one hand only too understandable that after generations of ordered religious abstinence all directives, revelations, and traditions of the father-religion were revived, even those that had not been practiced for more than 500 years. On the other hand it was necessary to examine every new brother, whether he also was prepared to respectfully honour and preserve the heritage of the fathers. This of course presupposed the setting-up and implementation of numerous rules.

In the Damascus Document these precepts are summarized in the so-called second script. Like a Mishnah (after-biblical Hebrew norm, regulating even the smallest trifles to enable a life in accordance with the will of God) it contains rules about the Sabbath, the oath, cultic purity, community life of the brotherhood, and about the renunciation of any private property. Apparently the Damascus Document which had been taken down around 100 BC is the last of all sets of rules the Essenes gave themselves. This script closes with the sentence: *"Behold, (this is) the sum of all that was found as the final inquiry of the Torah."*

Apparently the parish regulations, the community rule, the system of discipline, and so on, which generally are called the rules of the sect of Qumran had been installed first. If these rules applied to all Essenes or only to the Qumran community is not certified. The sect-rule taught the members to live strictly adhering to the Mosaic Laws. It enclosed instructions on the order of life, structure and organization of the brotherhood as well as conditions of entry, measures of punishment, and conduct concerning non-Essenes. The essential outer rules and rites will be described in the following.

## BECOMING A MEMBER; DISCIPLINARY MEASURES; AND EXCLUSION

The age of entry was established at 18, as a rule, and therefore high in comparison with other religious groups. The aspirant had to be on probation for a year, with a final test. Once he had positive results, he had to transfer all his personal wealth (house and lot, acres, gardens, plantations, workshops, livestock, money), and the thereof resulting returns to the community.

The year of probation was followed by a three-year period of preparation. Membership was granted when, during this period respective qualification and general acceptance by the brotherhood was attained. When a brother quit during that three-year period, either by his own decision or by not being accepted, his property was returned to him, including possible accumulated revenues. However, once a member left the brotherhood or was excluded after having attained full membership, the community remained the owner for all times. This was also the rule when a brother died without direct heirs. Membership in the upper hierarchy of the brotherhood could only be attained after having been a full-member for a period of seven years and after initiation to the secret doctrine of the Essenes afterwards.

With this large number of rules and precepts naturally offences, disregards, and counter actions were not rare. According to the kind of offence there were different procedures. For petty or unconsciously performed offences merely a personal reproof was given still before the sunset of the same day. Concerning offences of the next higher rank, the rebuke was already given in the presence of several witnesses and was written down. Intentional disregarding of the Torah or of the rules of the sect was negotiated before local institutions, and either was followed by a reprimand in the official records or by a respective punishment (exclusion from common meals and cultic actions for a certain time). The one concerned, however, had the right to protest. In this case the proceeding came before the highest judicial authority that consisted of three priests and twelve normal members of the brotherhood. The maximum penalty was the exclusion or rather the expulsion from the brotherhood. This advance was weighing more heavily than - for example - the death penalty in the understanding of the brotherhood, since he was eternally excluded from the messianic salvation by this. Every contact with a rejected person, even the wordless handing-over of nutrition or clothing, again had the consequence of expulsion for that very Essene.

The behaviour of the brotherhood towards its own members thus was not much brotherly. However, it is in agreement with Jewish tradition, especially of the time after the exile, and correspondingly was applied also by the Pharisees and Sadducees. These were less strict in their interpretations, however, like they also

made reductions concerning the Torah and the holy heritage of the fathers.

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Ability to marry and coming off age for wedding were coupled to religious majority. This usually commenced with the beginning of the 14th year of life. The average marriage-age of men was between the age of 15 to 17, that of women three years below that. The Essenes required a minimum age of 20 for both, for the religious majority of men as well as for that of marriage. In addition, their rule demanded the *once in a life-time marriage*, not only *monogamy*. In antique Judaism, however, monogamy was common. Additionally there was in rare cases *polygamy* that was allowed by law. The wives and children of the Essenes became automatically members of the community through their marriage, even if their parents did not belong to the Essene Union. Such liaisons were an exception, however. Due to Jewish tradition, not least to the Mosaic code of laws, women were regarded as inferior and, therefore, could never become full members. Since the Essenes laid utmost emphasis on social security of their members, it has to be assumed that the personal belongings of wives were not entered into the community and that widows or orphans were helped by the social network of the community.

Due to manifold traditional rules an Essene marriage naturally was not easily led. Just some examples may clarify this: it already begins with the wedding itself. As a matter of principle, an Essene was only allowed to marry a virgin who had had her menstruation at least three times at regular intervals without negative accompanying circumstances. During her period the woman was considered impure. Not only intercourse, but any touching was forbidden. Only seven days after the end of the menstruation (some exegetics interpret: seven days after the beginning of the period) union was permitted. When a pregnancy occurred, intercourse was forbidden until 33 days after the birth. However, when a girl was born the abstention was doubled to 66 days. Precondition was in both cases, that the monthly bleedings had begun again.

The Essenes apparently had an awkward relation toward intercourse, since all rules boil down to it that it only had the purpose of procreation. Beyond that it apparently was an act that was considered impure and that had to be hidden from God. This is how I myself interpret the Damascus Document, from which the rule can be learnt, that the Essenes were forbidden to have intercourse in Jerusalem “ *to not defile the city of the sanctum by their impurity*” (CD 12:1-2). Whoever had intercourse was automatically excluded from the sanctum for three days. When an ejaculation had happened during sleep, also the man was considered impure for a certain time.

Hartmut Stegemann dealt with this theme in his book „ *Die Essener, Qumran*,

*Johannes der Täufer und Jesus“ . He came to the conclusion that during an Essene marriage intercourse took place 20 times at the most - provided the rules were exactly adhered to. I am quoting his words: “Only castrates could have corresponded with the special purity and holiness rules that hypothetically had been postulated for the inner circle of the leading elite of the Essenes; but castration excluded the one concerned from cultic service for life (Lev.21:20; Dtn.23:2.)”*

I still wish to dedicate some sentences to a persistent and widespread view, namely the alleged celibacy of the Essenes. The thesis of a life without women probably is based on descriptions of antique authors like Philo of Alexandria, Pliny the Elder, and Josephus Flavius. The latter already made reductions. In *Bellum* 2:120 -121, he says that the Essenes not generally rejected marriage, and in 2:160 -161, he already comes very close to reality with the remark: *“they factually only partly lived with wives”*. In *Antiquitates* 18:21, he eventually describes the true state of things, namely that the Essenes did not let their wives take part in cultic ceremonies.

Inspecting all Qumran finds thoroughly, there is not the slightest reference that the Essenes should have imposed celibacy upon themselves. In their understanding the single state even must have been a severe disrespect of the Torah, which in *Gen.1:28* assigned the duty of marriage and multiplying to all Jews. Hartmut Stegeman very accurately substantiates why celibacy was erroneously imputed to the Essenes, and still is. According to his studies, they *“gave sufficient evidence to consider them to be unmarried.”* For this he gives three essential reasons:

While the Jews went with their whole family to the synagogue on Sabbath (women and girls in the aisle, or on the gallery), the Essenes always went to their meeting houses without women. Since they even had to perform this cult three times a day, the absence of any women was especially apparent. Even the preparation of meals was done by men.

Through the established high age for marriage of twenty years for men, these, in comparison to their non-Essene contemporaries continued to live unmarried for years.

While Essene men as a rule reached a high age, the yearly births led to untimely weakening, sickness, or even death of women, at times. If a woman was barren, this led to the separation from her husband. Thus they were only few women who were together with their husbands until old age. Since the Essenes were prescribed the strict once in a life-time marriage, they remained widowers after the death of their wives.

Whether this strict rule of marriage only pertained to the Qumran settlement, or also to the majority of the Essenes in the towns and villages is uncertain. It is generally assumed that there was a stricter adherence to rules within the Qumran settlement.

Thus the Qumran Essenes only went to their families who lived and worked outside the settlement, for example in Ein Feshka, two to three days a month.

In this context also the marriage of Mary and Joseph has to be seen. Joseph was a member of the Essenes. He did not belong to the Qumran community, however, but probably to the brotherhood of Nazareth. Mary was at the most 15 at the birth of Jesus, while Joseph presumably was in his forties. Mary became already pregnant as a virgin before the wedding. According to the custom of the time the wedding-ceremony had to be preceded by an extended period of engagement (one to three years). The marriage itself took place on probation, however. This period of probation was passed by the woman when she became pregnant within a year. In the third month of pregnancy the wedding was finally sealed. By the way, the third month of good hope is chosen, since there is hardly the danger of a miscarriage afterwards.

Joseph apparently disrespected this norm, and thus violated the Essene congregation-regulation. Mary, as a pregnant woman being impure anyway, in addition to this carried a natural child in her womb. This explains, why being an impure woman she did not find reception anywhere at her coming down, especially not in the house of an Essene or even in Qumran itself. According to the rules it was not permitted to find help from strangers that is non-Essenes. Yet, for the sake of the honour of the brotherhood it must be said that they had provided suitable places and houses for such cases. Probably Mird, situated about twenty hours by foot east of Bethlehem, the place at which John the Baptist preached later, was such a site. Likewise there were houses for impure ones in all Essene communities. It therefore is plausible that the birth of Jesus took place in an agricultural building in the farm establishment of a brotherhood and corresponds to the norms. The story of the birth of Jesus also points to it that Mary could not give birth in the house of her parents or in the house of relatives or friends. Thus, she had to make her way, together with Joseph to a place decided upon by the brotherhood, and to a certain house. According to the cult of purity Essenes were not allowed to be present at the birth, however, coincidentally present nomads leading their goats and sheep to pasture were.

...If Joseph broke Essene law of the once in a life-time marriage by entering a liaison with Mary, that is, if he already had been married before and was a widower has to remain speculation despite much an assumption and is of importance neither historically nor religiously.

Besides, despite (or because of?) the strict rules there was a relatively large number of abandoned babies and orphans. It speaks well for the brotherhood of the Essenes that all these found acceptance with them, were educated and schooled without prejudice. This noble way of action, especially accentuated by Josephus Flavius in

Bellum II.120, was known in Judea and thus prevented abortions or killings of new-born ones. Mothers who could not stand up to the ignominy of natural children, thus laid their babies simply in front of the door of Essene communities.

How would the Christian churches gain respect and repute, if they not only took over the moral rules, but also the way of action of the Essenes. Even though the community rules were very strict, they themselves proved very helpful and caring towards those socially rejected and weak.

### ABLUTIONS; MEDITATIONS; COMMON MEALS

The Essenes understood themselves to be the guardians as well as the restorers of their fathers' heritage.

They, in a manner, formed the spiritual and religious aristocracy of the Judaism of that time.

The symbolic tree of life had a central significance for the brotherhood. They placed man in the centre of this symbolism, and thus signalled the dependency of all earthly and heavenly powers, the comprehensible world of nature, and the incomprehensible world of the cosmos.

On Mount Sinai Moses had once attained all the knowledge from God, namely, the higher and cosmic laws, and following from these the rules for daily life. These rules were merely the prerequisite for the Eternal Covenant with YHWH. The cosmic laws, the internal and spiritual vision, however, was handed on by Moses only to those understanding and the initiated. The second table of plates, the Decalogue, however, contained the outer teaching, the *ten commandments* for the large crowd of those non-consecrated.

The Essenes understood themselves to be initiated ones. They daily communicated with terrestrial and heavenly powers. At sunrise and sunset they connected themselves with the spirit of God and all the forms, energies as well as elements in which he expressed himself. They recognized that every single man could attain and use these divine energies as well from the daily nourishment as well as from all elements. At the daily zenith of the sun invocations of the Heavenly Father for the sending of the angels of peace for the harmonizing of human existence in all domains took place (doctrine of the sevenfold peace). These practices are generally called prayer-services by the Qumran-scientists, which however, is misleading in reference to what happened.

At noon and in the evening the common meal took place to which only full members were allowed. The meal itself was titled *the purity*, since in the Essene interpretation only pure ones were allowed to take part. This means that brothers with sicknesses,

pains, disciplinary measures, but also members who had had intercourse, or had had to lament a death within their family shortly before, were excluded. The ritual meal was taken in silence and consisted of bread, vegetable, and fruit. As beverages water, juice, but also wine were usual. The meal and the beverages were blessed on principle. The order of seating in the dining -hall was exactly hierarchically fixed, it differentiated between priests, Levites, simple Essenes, and proselytes (Greek. added ones, pagans who by immersion, sacrifice, and circumcision had become Jews).

Before all cultic meetings the Essenes had to undergo a ritual cleansing. This consisted of a complete immersion. For this they took off their working clothes, and stepped, clothed with a linen fabric, into relatively large basins of water. These immersion basins mostly were situated in front of the convention rooms. Especially in Qumran this cult of cleansing was particularly prominent, as is exemplified by the many excavated basins for ablution and immersion. Of course the bodily cleansing was of a subordinate aspect. The purity of spirit and soul before God was standing in the foreground. If one takes the rules for immersions literally, every Essene would have had at least five immersion a day. Once he was impure for manifold reasons, the number increased respectively.

The cult of purity, by the way, is no Essene invention, but finds its strongest expression here.

## THE FATE OF THE BROTHERHOOD

As already described, the founding of the Essene union by the *True Teacher* is dated to about 150 BC. Analogous movements before, within, and without Judea are undoubted. A certain connection between Judas Maccabeus, who died in 160 BC, and the Essenes, respectively with their leader, the *True Teacher* did exist. Possibly the heroic warrior even laid the foundation for Jewish religious freedom and political independence, possibly even for Essenism. At the safeguarding of cultic goods and scriptures from destruction, Judas Maccabeus proved himself a preserver of the religious heritage. So we must under no circumstances exclude that many a scroll was hidden in the caves by his order or at least was handed over to the *True Teacher* for storage, renewal, and copying. The *True teacher* must already have been a renowned authority in Judea at the times of Judas Maccabeus. Thus, the assumption that Judas Maccabeus wanted to install the *True Teacher* as high priest is not out of the way.

That his brother and successor Jonathan, however, became a *sacrilegious priest* and the greatest adversary of the *True Teacher* is a frenzy of history and fate. Jonathan died in 143 BC. Tryphon, the leader of the army of the Seleucids, set a trap for him, had him deported and killed. The succession was taken on by a further son of Mattathias, Simon Maccabee. In 140 BC he succeeded in the final liberation of the country from Seleucid foreign rule. 26 years of self-sacrificing battle of three sons of Mattathias eventually found their remuneration and the appropriate respect of the country. Simon used the favour for a political act. He had himself appointed the worldly and spiritual head on account of the merit of himself and his brothers. So he was highest general, ethnarch, and high priest at the same time. The confirmation of all of his offices and honours eventually was captured in bronze plates in the forecourt of the Temple of Jerusalem, and was also valid for the family-succession of Simon, only with the secular limitation "*until a true prophet would come*" (I Macc.14:41).

When Simeon died in 134 BC, the worldly power as well as the office of the high priest actually were passed on to his son John Hyrcan I. Already at the taking up of office by Simon, the possible return of the *True Teacher* to the position of high priest was without prospects. With the official authorization of the dynasty of the Maccabees to furnish all future high priests, the chance for the *True teacher* to become high priest was gone. Eventually John Hyrcan I outlived the *True Teacher* by seven years. There is, however, no reference at all to this situation in the Dead Sea Scrolls, so that it can be assumed that neither the Essenes nor their leader speculated on the spiritual leadership of the people of Israel. Considering that the Essenes were already expecting the judgement by God and the ensuing messianic



age within a few years, namely in 70 BC, this is quite understandable. Due to the apolitical and unpretentious deportment of the Essene Union the relation between the Essenes and the Maccabees relaxed. These already had access to the Temple again. Like so often, also here it is Josephus Flavius who provides us with the decisive reference. In *Bellum I.78-80*, he reports about the Essene Jude, who taught in the Temple.

In 103 BC, one year after the death of John Hyrcas, his son Aristobul I took on all titles of his grandfather and father. The Essene Jude prophesied in the Temple that the brother of the ethnarch and high priest Aristobul I, Antigonos "*will be murdered in Stratonsturm still today.*"

*Stratonsturm* was the common denomination for the far away town of Caesarea. However, immediately after this prophecy Antigonos appeared in the Temple. Thus he could impossible reach Caesarea the same day. A few hours later Jerusalem is shocked by the news that Anigonos had been murdered in *Stratonsturm*. The murder happened in a dark city path in Jerusalem that also had the name *Stratonsturm*. Thus the prophecy of the Essene fulfilled itself in an unexpected way.

Still in the same year Alexander Jannaeus took on the power succeeding his brother Aristobul I. In the meantime the once defected splinter-group of the Pharisees had won considerable importance. Their religious and socio-political influence had increased strongly due to a liberal interpretation of the Torah. Therefore the Essenes accused them of familiarity, literally of *search for flattery*. Since the Pharisees tolerated the claim of the Maccabees to the office of high priest, and organized their cult of sacrifices in accordance with the 354-day moon calendar that had been ordered by Jonathan, they also began to win influence in state politics. Aside from the lax Torah-interpretation, especially the moon calendar was the greatest difference concerning the Essenes. These, as the only ones, observed the by YHWH himself installed 364-day sun calendar, which alone enabled the traditional planning of the cultic service and the feasts to them. The Sadducees who were still few in numbers, but faithful to the regime, still formed the leading religious party. The Essenes had long before withdrawn from the daily life of society and from politics, and had given life another value. Thus the planning and the realization of the Qumran settlement fall in this time. This was a difficult undertaking, since all building materials had to be brought from far away to the remote site in the desert. Added to this was the complicated work for an intricate system of water pipes. At the same time the agriculture in Ein Feshka, and the production of writing materials had to be built up. The Essenes especially developed a new procedure for the currying of leather that made them independent of the difficultly attainable tannin.

During the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BC) the Essenes could increase and solidify their structure in calm and with consideration. Already during this phase they won very many adherents and sympathizers by their working. They sent out

teachers, preachers, and healers, and handed their surpluses on to those socially weak. At Qumran leather scrolls were produced and inscribed with texts from the Old Testament. Only a small part served for their own studies, since it was necessary to supply all Essene communities with the word of the fathers and prophets. The words of the prophets were analysed, commented, and interpreted. For a short period, however, there existed a great danger for the work of the Essenes. It originated with the Pharisees, or at least was co-initiated by these. Internal-political adversaries of Alexander Janneus hatched a plot with the Seleucid King Demetrius III, and promptly won his military support. Alexander Janneus stood up against the army, but was crushingly defeated. But Demetrius III also wanted to conquer Jerusalem and to annex the country once again to the Seleucid realm. This united the national powers of Israel for defence, and Demetrius III had to leave the country with his army. The revenge Alexander Janneus took on the traitors to his own country was cruel. He had about 800 persons, to the greater part Pharisees crucified alive. Josephus Flavius documents the betrayal in Bellum I.88-98. We learn of the partaking of the Pharisees from an Essene source, the commentary to the Book Nahum.

Alexander Janneus died in 76 BC. His wife, Alexandra Salome (76 -67 BC) received the kingship and the office of the high priest and procured influence for the Pharisees again, especially in the high council. But already Aristobul II, son and successor to Alexandra Salome demonstrated his distrust of the Pharisees by totally depriving them of power.

Thanks to their power-politically disassociated philosophy of life the Essenes did not have to share the ups and downs of the once Essene splinter-group, the Pharisees. A certain satisfaction about the fate of the Pharisees can be deduced from their commentaries to the Book Nahum, however. The dynasty of the Maccabees, which Josephus also calls the Hasmoneans still reigned till 37 BC. The sons Hyrkanus II and Aristobul II, from the marriage of Alexander Janneus with Alexandra Salome were entwined in power-disputes including their families. These bloody interior fights were used by the Romans in 63 BC. Pompejus conquered Jerusalem and divided Palestine by separating the non-Jewish territories from Judea. Hyrkanus II did again become high priest, the worldly power in Judea was conferred to a stranger, however, to the Idumean Antipater. He was appointed Roman Procurator of Judea 16 years later. The Hasmoneans, however, still continued to consider themselves the heads of state. Aristobul II led several revolts against Rome and the Idumeans. His son Antigonos won back the crown for a short time in 40 BC, however, was defeated after three years of bloody fights by Herod the Great, who in 37 BC became king of Judea.

The once so honourable family from the priesthood of the Hasmoneans had lost all esteem of the people by their devastating family discordances. Thus one cannot really criticize Herod the Great, the son of Antipater that he completely eliminated the

Hasmoneans.

In the expectation and imaginations of the Essenes the political errors and entanglements, the bloody family feuds for worldly power, but also the renewed occupation of Israel were of subordinate significance. They merely saw in it a prelude to the high final judgement, the *Messiah labour(-pains)*. Since the latest course of history had asserted their deep insight that neither politically nor militarily an improvement of the state of misery of man can be attained.

For the distinctly expected future salvation of Israel all kings, high priests, and occupants of this time could have no significance. The future salvation was exclusively reserved to the nearby Messiahship. Thus, also the plundering of the Temple merely was one of many indications of the last judgement. Another assessment was given to the severe earthquake that devastated the whole Judean valley in 31 BC. Not only the Temple and Jerusalem, but also Qumran were badly hit. A part of the plateau and some buildings had sagged. Especially the cistern for the daily immersions was affected. The consequences for Ein Feshka were lasting. The agricultural operation and the production of leather scrolls were significantly restrained. That Jerusalem with its *sinful* people was affected was connectable with their imagination of the approaching final judgement of God. But, why was Qumran, the settlement of the devout ones plagued? In principle the Essene building now was considered impure, and could not be used for living for an extended period of time. Many historians assume therefore, that Qumran was left for twenty years. Archaeologists have proved a number of building measures, however, so that presumably only a part of the brotherhood found temporarily shelter in Jerusalem or in other Essene communities.

The relation of Herod the Great to the Essenes was neutral to positive. The reason is easily explained. The brotherhood was politically inactive. Therefore neither intrigues nor public criticisms nor lusts for power were to be feared. A strengthening and furtherance of the Essenes at the same time meant a weakening of the politically interested Pharisees and Sadducees. Josephus Flavius even speaks of high esteem of the king for the Essenes. Allegedly the Essenes even were relieved of the oath of allegiance as the only ones. The Jewish historian, by the way, a member of the Pharisees himself, describes this in detail in *Antiquitates* XV:368 -372. In the following paragraphs he also names the reason: Menahem, an Essene met the boy Herod on his way to school, addressed him as the future king of the Jews, and foretold him a glorious future. At that time the honour of a king naturally was not to be expected for the Idumean. When Herod actually was crowned king in 37 BC he questioned Menahem about the duration of his regency. His prophesy determined more than thirty years for it.

This Menahem (also Menachem) was met with high confidence by Herod the Great,

and to be sure was an Essene master, that is, was bestowed with magic wisdoms. It is even assumed that he counselled the king in many a respect and made him familiar with the Essene way of thinking. So the decision of the re-erection of the Temple which Herod took in 20 BC may actually have had its origin in the counsel of Menachem and his brotherhood. The Essenes cooperated at the conception of the new Temple. With their understanding of tradition a fashioning according to the revelation of YHWH to the two kings David and Salomon as well as to the Prophet Ezechiel lay at hand. The temple scroll found at Qumran certainly was the basis for the Essene construction draft of the Temple around 20 BC. Although the finished Temple (only 62 AD) did correspond to the Essene blue-print in some details it, nonetheless, was constructed differently in principle. This may have many reasons like financing, static, and so on, but can also hint at a dissociation of Herod the Great from the Essenes for fear of opposition from the rows of the other religious parties resulting from a too close cooperation with the brotherhood. At the same time he, of course, recognized the danger for his dynasty resulting from the Essene expectation of a worldly Messiah from the House of David, and a priestly Messiah from the family of the Zadokians. This increasingly led to reciprocal fears of contact. Since the political visions of Herod the Great went far beyond Judea and Palestine, his aim thus was the extension of worldly power, he inevitably had to detach himself from the Essenes. Naturally these had pinned much hope in the ruler. In some respect they even saw in him the God-sent "tool", with which they could prepare the ground for the near Messiahship. As we know this event was expected by the Essenes to take place in the year 70 AD, that is in a time that at all events would succeed Herod the Great. A conflict between the Messiah from the House of David and the high priest from the family of Zadok with the present king was beyond the Essene way of thinking.

Knowing this, we can easily understand the wave of rethinking and reorientation caused by the birth of John the Baptist in the year 8 BC. YHWH did confirm the words of the prophets and their explanation by the *True Teacher*, but he did not adhere to the work of calendar-calculation of the Essenes and their leader. According to these calculations John the Baptist and Jesus were born a generation too early.

However, the high adepts of the Essenes soon recognized the small error in time of the old calculations. Apparently the Star of Bethlehem, or another occurrence unknown to us indicated to them the prophesied birth of the forerunner of God, John the Baptist. Aside from Simon the Essene, also Menahem probably was one of these wise men or Magoi who knew of the significant event, and went to see the newborn one. What these master-souls saw and recognized had to remain a secret among few initiated ones, of course. Also the knowledge had to be kept away from the broad brotherhood to prevent unnecessary dangers and confrontations of all kinds. Thus it

is not astonishing that neither manuscripts nor other documents of the Essenes refer to this event directly.

Six months later Jesus was born. In this birth the master-souls recognized the incarnation of the also prophesied anointed one from the House of David. The expectation of the Essene masters was completely fulfilled, yet, like with the birth of John the Baptist, also the significance of this new-born one had to remain the secret of the few adepts. This means that, at the latest from then on, there existed two groups within the brotherhood. On the one side the infinitely small number of those consecrated, on the other side the broad basis of the Essenes who neither attached special significance to the birth nor to the later work of the two figures of the light. According to the view of the broad basis both could not be part of the divine plan, since they had appeared about half a century too early.

Qumran research therefore makes a decisive mistake in their interpretation of the relationship of the Essenes to John the Baptist and Jesus. It namely presupposes identical interpretation, action, and recognition for the Essene brotherhood as a whole, beginning from the novice to the full members up to the adepts. This is impossible with the size and heterogeneity of the tasks of 4000 male members, even in a tightly guided organization. The spiritual message from May 28, 1991, which is recorded in part IV of this book, may give a hint at how the few chosen ones of the Essenes perceived the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, and their mission-task in vision.

Thus the contemporary aspects, contents of teaching, and temporal conceptions of the Essenes have to be dealt with first, as well as the inner and outer crisis in the relation of the Essenes and Herod the Great in the time 8-7 BC. Only then it is understandable that the consecrated, wise ones or magi kept their knowledge a secret even from their own brotherhood, provided shelter for both newborn ones, and saw to their education.

We do not know much of the further historical whereabouts of the Essene Union. References to the so-called Essene gate in the south-west city wall of Jerusalem, lead to the assumption of an increased appearance of the Essenes in Jerusalem at the time of Herod the Great. Even the admission of Essenes to the Synhedrium, the high council, is feasible for this phase of time.

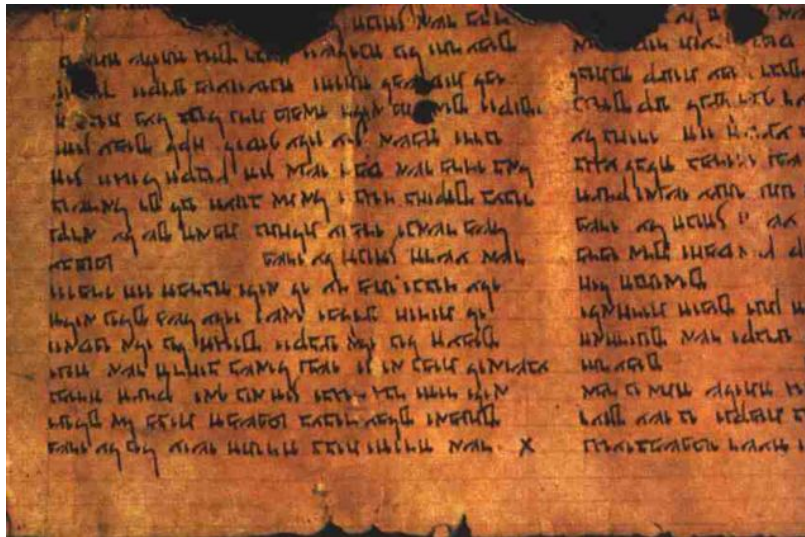
With the year 70 AD which is so significant for the Essenes, also their departure from the stage of the world is connected. Four years before the military resistance of the Jews of Palestine against the Romans had formed.



Ain Karem the place of birth of John the Baptist



The area of Bethany



Dead Sea Scroll - Part of the Habakkuk-Commentary

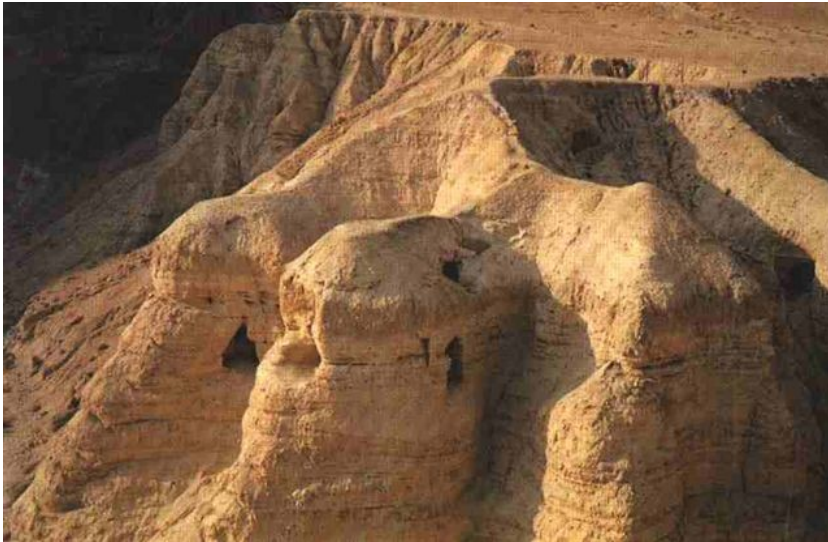


Ruin at Qumran





One of the baptismal basins at Qumran



Qumran Caves (of the scrolls)





PALESTINE at the time of John the Baptist and Jesus

The members of the brotherhood were not exempted from the Roman retaliatory actions. In Bellum II:152-158 Josephus Flavius reports, how the Essenes even despite torture and death stood up for their God and their ideas, and admirably suffered all kinds of martyrdom. This description relates to the greater part to the Essenes living in Jerusalem.

Qumran itself was destroyed during the summer months of 68 AD. To this there are several references, whereby again the report of Josephus Flavius on the Jewish war highlights the course of events best. Having taken part himself as a high military, his description is credible. He tells how the 10th legion conquered Jericho on June 21, 68. All inhabitants who had not been able to run off before were massacred by the Roman soldiers (Bellum IV:450-452). The Romans suspected a centre of Jewish revolt in the nearby Qumran settlement. The Qumran community certainly knew of the conquest of Jericho, but apparently was surprised by the attack of the Romans on their settlement. In utmost hurry they placed the precious scrolls in safety.

All indices point to it that the scrolls were removed from the library within a few hours and hidden in nearby caves. The remaining time was very short. The cave finds show how hastily the precious manuscripts had to be stored. If, and how the Qumran community with its 150-200 inhabitants resisted is not traceable historically. All traditions hold that the Essenes refused the fight with weapons in principle, even in the case of defence of body and life. There exists a historical exception, however. Josephus Flavius calls him the Essene John who as commander in chief headed the revolting troops in the coast plain of Judea. He died, however, in the battle of the coast town of Ascalon. At the same time Josephus Flavius commanded Jewish troops in Galilee (Bellum II:562-568; III:3-21). Thus, he speaks of his combatant against Roman foreign rule, when he tells of the Essene John in his records.

It is understandable that some Essenes changed their basic view in the face of the cruelties in the Jewish War. Additionally, there was the temporary congruence of the Roman suppression of Israel and the date calculated by the brotherhood for the judgement. Some Essenes had joined the legendary resistance in the mountain Fortress Massada at the Dead Sea. Only 74 AD, four years after the bloody destruction of Jerusalem this last bastion of revolt fell. The last defendants chose suicide after a heroic battle, so that the Romans found no living being when they entered the fortress. The last fighters of the resistance withdrew themselves from Roman subjection by suicide (Bellum VII:389-401).

In part IV of this book you find the spiritual message from May 28, 1991. Apparently this is an authentic description by the Essene Emanuel, which has its historical reference in the torments of the Essenes in Jerusalem or in the mass-suicide in the Fortress Massada.

The Brotherhood of the Essenes was extinguished in 74 AD. The Roman legions had not left one stone upon the other in Jerusalem and many other sites of the

Jewish War. Who could not flee was tortured to death, massacred, or deported. This fate also hit the many Essene communities. Members who survived were dispersed in all directions. Probably many found each other again to revive the brotherhood. A continuation of the brotherhood is not historically furnished.

Spirit and teaching, however, have outlived the earthly decline. Much of it has become the basis of Christianity. Another part of the Essene way of thinking, like their mystic insights and the magic wisdoms were neglected or even rejected by Christianity.

Only he who can be touched by the mysticism and the magic wisdom of the Essenes will not make light of the fact that their spirit and work always return in great mystics. So it may not astonish that in saints like Hieronymus, Benedict, or Francis of Assisi the rebirth of a high Essene master-soul is seen.

It seems as if the White Brotherhood has never been extinguished. Even though there has not been any reference to their named existence since 70 AD, the Essene philosophy reflects itself in many groups and movements. Like a red thread Essenism is woven through time and world, thus, for example, with the order of the Temple, the Knights of John, and the Maltese. The legendary brotherhoods of the Rosicrucians and the Cathari are also linked with the spirit of the Essenes. Even the prophecies of Nostradamus are traced back to the secret knowledge of the Essenes due to latest insights.

I myself tend to the view that the author of the prophetic *Revelation of John*, the last book of the New Testament is an Essene, by the name of John. The assumption includes that this mysterious revelation immediately originates from the prophecies and visions of the Essenes.

At the end of the 20th century we receive spiritual messages from once great master souls of the mysterious White Brotherhood. They convey to us their great sorrow about the world of matter, so to speak from the spheres of the spirit. Their endeavours to teach life on earth again the true values and the Divine laws, give testimony of their great solidarity with us. This reflects in the spiritual message from May 2, 1993 (Part IV, chapter: *Spiritual Messages of John the Baptist and the Essenes*).

I have attained the inner vision,  
and through your spirit in mine  
learnt of your wonderful secret.  
By your mystic insight  
you caused the source of wisdom  
to spout forth within me,  
a fountain of great force,  
from which arise living waters,  
a flood of love,  
an all-comprehensive wisdom,  
like the glow of the eternal light.

From the Book of Hymns  
of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

## JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE ESSENES

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the figure of John the Baptist also entered the centre of interest of the research and the public.

The scarce knowledge of life and mission of the Baptist induced even specialists to make assumptions and statements that merely rely on few circumstantial proofs. This is especially so with the connection of John the Baptist with the Essenes. So the range of proofs varies from *John the Baptist was no Essene* to *John was an expelled Essene* to *John was the head of the Essenes*. The argumentation lacks objectivity for the most part. It is always overlooked that single and fragmentary references cannot be the basis for a general statement, and certainly not of a detailed interpretation of life and mission.

There actually exists no reference that John the Baptist belonged to the Essene brotherhood. Even Josephus Flavius does not indicate in his writings about the suddenly appearing popular idol which religious group the preacher and Baptist was affiliated to. This is remarkable, since the analyst often uses the epithet *the Essene*, when he mentions persons like Simon, Menahem, or that John who commanded the Jewish force of resistance and died in combat in 66 AD. That Josephus Flavius who, as it was, was a contemporary of the Essenes and John the Baptist does not mention any relations to the brotherhood is of course significant. At the same time, it allows the conclusion that the Baptist never called himself an Essene. Apparently also the crowds of people who streamed to his sermons and baptism did not relate him with the brotherhood. While he was dressed with a coat of camel hair, the white linen garment was regarded typical for the Essenes. Even for the casual observer there were further differences. The Baptist neither had a family nor a steady abode. He drank no wine, and ate no meat. He preferred the life of a nomad to the rites of cleaning and cultic meals. For him and his disciples the times for meals were rather set by the feeling of hunger, or the availability of food than by the position of the sun. The forgoing of a meal certainly was not felt to be an offence against cultic rules. There was no hierarchic order of seating during meals, which was a strict component with the Essenes. Also he had no sense for agriculture or for the keeping and tending of fruit trees or vegetable plantations.

John the Baptist taught and preached. This again the deputies of the Essenes did too. Maybe these spoke more gently and more compassionately to the people, yet, they had a barrier: their traditional conduct towards the impure, like for example those sick, pagans, women with bleedings, and so on, which imposed special rules and

rites of cleansing on them. The preacher in the camel coat took no notice of these. He did not consider it a breach of the divine law of purity, when he approached impure persons, laid his hand on them, or even baptized them.

The Baptist, thus, had no fears of contact with those who were impure at all. This leads to an important conclusion: he must have been aware of the absolute power of his inner purity, so that he could not become impure by people. The basis for this was laid by a strict, disciplined inner and outer way of life. His life-style in many respects deviated from strict Judaism, but also from that of the Essenes. Also in his actions he probably often did not obey their rites and rules.

Only with this background the words of Elihu in the Aquarian Gospel chapter 7:23-24 make sense. He says that nothing can make ways even, blast rocks, tear down hills and bridge abysses (namely: laws, rules, rites, prejudices) like purity. He further says: *“But man cannot understand life’s purity. Therefore purity must come in person. John is purity embodied, and it is purity which makes even all ways for love.”*

But there are even more differences between John the Baptist and the Essenes. However, these only become clear when looked at more closely. Thus the often upheld assertion that the baptism of John would stem from the Essene ritual of immersions is completely absurd. Especially the baptism allows to discern penetrating differences to the cleansing baths of the brotherhood. The baptism in the Jordan River was accessible to everyone on principle. It was a unique act, a sacramental action that granted forgiving of sins, and showed him who was like sealed, the way through the final judgement to the future time of salvation.

The Essenes, in contrast, had erected immersion basins in all their communities that solely served the purpose of cultic purity. The immersions were practised several times a day. Only members who had passed the year of probation could enter.

As we know the site of John’s baptism had an eschatological significance, whereas the immersion basins of the Essenes were constructed at all their places of living.

A further decisive difference shows concerning the circle of recipients of the chance of salvation. For the Essenes the access to salvation was depending on entry into the brotherhood. According to the statement of the *True Teacher* Israel could only attain salvation, if it, as a whole, joined the New Covenant, the Essene Union, or, at least, lived according to their rules and rites. Additionally, the grace of salvation could only reach those living within the borders of the Promised Land on the day x. With this the Jordan River was the eastern border.

John the Baptist, on the contrary, dismissed all who had received his sermons and baptisms back home to their families and occupations. He neither demanded enrolment in an organization nor the adherence to certain rites and rules, merely reversion. Thus, salvation itself could be experienced through the internal self -

determination of each single person, by no means it depended on a certain outward location. So there are no references at all that the Baptist made the chance of salvation dependant on the sojourn within certain borders of the Promised Land. Does the baptism site east of the Jordan River chosen by John have an additional symbolism here? Anyway, the Baptist did not make salvation dependant of certain geographic borders. He, for example, also baptized people from Perea without demanding from them to move within the borders of the Promised Land.

For the Essene brotherhood it certainly was not understandable that the mission of John outside the Promised Land could have an eschatological significance at all.

A further difference can be seen in the dating of the judgement and the appearance of the Messiah. Here clearly a temporal difference of almost exactly forty years shows. While the Essenes dated it to 70 AD, John the Baptist considered it to be immediately impending. From the point of view of today the difference of forty years is negligible, however, related to the generation concerned it is considerable.

To the Torah: being the order in the name of YHWH, revealed to the people of Israel by Moses, it was the foundation of everyday life for the Essenes. Their interpretation of the Torah was very narrow, especially concerning the questions of cultic purity. John the Baptist did not emphasize the laws of the Torah in his sermons. We even have to assume that he rejected many instructions. Thus the Torah demanded the annual day of reconciliation for the remission of the sins from all of Israel. In the understanding of the Baptist atonement and expectation of salvation were only attainable for Israel through his baptism at the Jordan River, however.

A further difference needs to be mentioned: the 354-day moon calendar upon which the Temple cult in Jerusalem relied was a great breach of the law of YHWH. Concerning John the Baptist we find no reference that he took offence with the practiced calendar.

Do all these deviations suffice to say that John the Baptist was no Essene, or that there was no connection between both? Did he then come from the rows of the Pharisees or the Sadducees? Certainly not, since he called them both a "*brood of vipers*" (Mt.3:7). Was there a fourth religious movement the name of which we do not know? Yes, there was one: the movement of John the Baptist. But this movement had its root in Essenism. Despite of all differences, there also do show essential congruencies between John the Baptist and the Essenes. Both had more than a visionary imagination, namely, the certainty that the divine judgement and the messianic time of salvation would fulfil themselves in the near future. Both admonished conversion and suitable preparations for the turn in time. And, finally, the movement of John was, aside from the Essenes, the only religious formation in Israel that rejected, respectively criticised the cult of sacrifice in the Temple of Jerusalem. Just like the Essenes, also John the Baptist operated outside the centres of power. He neither was interested in political nor social influence and rejected

military combat solutions. Like the Essenes, also the Baptist considered the Desert of Judea the place from which the future salvation should come. All of these concurrences do certainly weigh.

In the utmost concurrence of John and the Essene thinking, the leading -back of the people of Israel to God, at the same time the greatest difference shows. The Essenes only saw the way in the entry to the New Covenant, John the Baptist, however, presupposed conversion and the baptism in the Jordan River. Since both ways excluded one another, this, necessarily, must have led to a situation of conflict between the brotherhood and the Baptist. Especially at the climax of the "fever of John" that seized Palestine around 30 AD, the Essene movement noticeably lost its public influence. After the death of the Baptist, the Jesus message had found central prominence in Israel.

If Qumran research interpreted the scroll finds correctly, work and mission of John the Baptist and Jesus must have been in many a contrast to practiced Essenism. Not only their disrespect of some Essene fundamental elements, but also their temporally premature appearance must have excited criticism and aroused demand for clarification. But, we neither find the slightest reference in early -Christian nor in Essene documents. On the reverse, there are also no references in the words of John and Jesus to the Essenes cited by early Christians. We may assume, however, that also the White Brotherhood, like the Pharisees and the Sadducees, would not have been spared from criticism, if it had opposed John and Jesus.

To thoroughly explore the relationship of the Essenes to John the Baptist and Jesus we have to return to the beginnings.

The *True Teacher* had achieved something great. He had founded the Essene Union and had given fixed rules to the brotherhood. In the New Covenant he always was surrounded by the nimbus of the visionary, prophet, or even forerunner of the Messiah. When John the Baptist was born in Ein Karem in 8 BC, the *True Teacher* already had been dead for more than hundred years. During this span of time development and recognition of the Essenes did not come to a standstill. The assumption that the brotherhood only consisted of novices, gardeners, leather producers, and inscribers as well as of full members after the death of their founder is absurd. Since the *True Teacher* had dated the point of time of the judgement to 70 BC, there must have been wise and visionary ones working out a correction of the date to 70 AD. After the death of the *True Teacher* the Essene Union neither was without head, panic-stricken, nor without leadership of adepts. On the contrary, the strongly increased influx of members up to the appearance of John points to increasing inspiration and impulses by personalities. This certainly does not mean that the rules and rites were changed. But, at the latest at the birth of John the Baptist some few visionaries and consecrated ones of the Essenes attained new



recognitions, yes, revelations that were kept from the basis of the brotherhood for manifold reasons. So they were the masters of the Essenes who understood the signs of God and time in the births of John and Jesus. Both newborn ones came under the safeguard of these wise ones. They not only protected them from dangers (persecution by Herod the Great), they led the chosen ones to teachers and masters of manifold kind. These teachers were not always members of the Essene Union, but closely related to the view of the brotherhood. The undertaking necessarily had to remain a secret mission to neither endanger body and life nor the designation of the two God-sent ones.

In the view of the wise men, John the Baptist and Jesus formed a unity in the eschatological sense and in divine providence. Within this inseparable divine principle, John the Baptist embodied purity, Jesus love.

Both had essentially the same teachers, but at separate times. Repeated meetings were not coincidental, but carefully planned. They spent the greater part of their education outside of Palestine. Schoolings in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Syria at Essene communities or related brotherhoods are probable. Only in this way the dark tunnel of 30 years in the life of both can be explained. Additional places of education, for example in India, Tibet, etc. are more than credible, but have to remain within the possible according to the present state of research. Periodical stays at Qumran for the study of the scriptures are actually only logical, for there was nowhere else such a suitable voluminous library of Jewish religious literature. Whether John the Baptist and Jesus were enrolled members of the brotherhood, really is doubtful. Actually more speaks against than for it. We have to become acquainted to the thought that neither John the Baptist nor Jesus belonged to the innermost circle of the New Covenant of the Essenes.

Later also Jesus uses the term New Covenant. By this he does not understand the continuation of the Essene Covenant, rather, he calls the eucharistic goblet the new covenant: *"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."* (Lk. 22:20).

The long-time maintained thesis that John the Baptist and Jesus entered the brotherhood of Qumran as youths, took the way of several years from novice to full member, and then were sent out to teach seems self-evident, but is factually wrong. Nonetheless, both were quite intimate with the Essenes. They honoured the person of the *True Teacher*, who had the function of a model and also of the forerunning to their mission. The decisiveness of the brotherhood for the safeguarding of the heritage of the fathers and the renewal of the reconciling covenant with God furthermore is the starting point for the message of salvation of John the Baptist and the messianic working of Jesus. Both were in close contact with their Essene teachers and wise counsellors as long as they lived.

It is striking, concerning the determination of sites of John the Baptist that he

moved, so to say, in a half-circle around Qumran. Thus his desert abode in Ein Gedi is approximately 30 kilometres south of Qumran, Chirbet Mird, the place of his sermons about 10 km to the west, Jericho 10 km to the north, and the baptism site Bethany 15 km to the north. From all these places the Essene community at the Dead Sea was at a distance of three to nine hours on foot.

The Qumran-scientist Hartmut Stegemann maintains that despite the immediate vicinity of the baptism site to Qumran, John the Baptist and the Essenes were separated by worlds. Although this is a good pun, I by no means believe it. After all, there was no historically or biblically ascertainable religious party or movement that was as close to the view of the Baptist as the Essenes. The concurrence of basic theme as well as of the essential testimony in teaching and message are clear. Other religious parties, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees did not take up the circle of topics of John the Baptist to begin with. Of course, there were, aside from the congruencies concerning eschatological expectation and pronounced "theocentricity", also the strong differences in life-style, interpretation, and expression, to which I already referred at length. From this certainly a certain distance developed between the broad "Essenism" and John the Baptist, yet, no schism.

Appearance, message, and designation of a prophet or of the founder of a religion certainly can be illuminated historically and religious-scientifically, the full truth, however, remains hidden to the rationally thinking person, if he pays no heed to the non-tangible.

Thus, John the Baptist took the way God had imposed on him. This path led away from the walls of stone and the spirit of the Essenes. At some time, at some place, John comprehended the full truth, and from then on he knew that he not only had to trespass, but also to burst the limits of Essene thinking and doing.

He recognized that the up-keeping of the tradition, devoutness, prayer, and waiting for the time of salvation do not suffice to fulfil God's plan. A true tool of God could not tarry behind walls, and be wholly given up to rituals, it rather had to actively and reforming step before the people.

Thus selfishness and vanity had to be torn down, lethargy and indifference needed to be swept away, petrified laws and cultic actions had to be rejected. Reversion, hope, and message of salvation had to take the place of the old values.

Place and time, where John the Baptist was fulfilled by this task are easy to determine. It was in Ein Gedi, at the end of his stay as a hermit in the cave of David.

The thesis that the appearance and the work of the Baptist merely were the result of a personal exegesis of Enoch and Daniel, unfolding to him for judgement and time of salvation a date earlier than 70 AD, are foolish, since merely the personal interpretation of prophetic writings neither grants power nor a ability to the great work of the Baptist.

In chapter 12:20 of the Aquarian Gospel the teacher Elihu is cited. He speaks to the mothers Elizabeth and Mary about their children John and Jesus: *"Many countries will they see, and at many master's feet will they sit."* As already described, John the Baptist was guided to chosen masters in the east (Mesopotamia, Persia, India) after his instructions by Essene teachers. This analogously applies to Jesus. While the teachings of these masters conformed with the fundamental wisdoms and mystical insights of the Essene teaching, the Baptist recognized strong deviations from the rules, cultic traditions, and rites of the brotherhood. Already here a distance to the cultic traditions and rites of the brotherhood developed in him. After his return to Palestine this must have led to discussions with the council of the brotherhood. Also Jesus will have confronted the Essene leadership with similar experiences and suggestions for reform. For the wise men of the Essenes who knew of work and mission of both, the conceptions of their pupils and entrusted ones were not applicable within the framework of their brotherhood. The latter was already too rigid in its overall structure. Just as rigid and fixed was the expectation regarding contents and form, placed in the actions of the God-sent John and Jesus as the prophesied heirs of the families of Zadok and David. This resulted in a further distance between the Essenes and the like-minded John and Jesus.

At the latest by then the Baptist felt how the divine revelation completely took hold of him now, how God's plan urged towards fulfilment. It must have hurt him that the brotherhood met his inspirations with reservations. Precisely they who had prepared themselves for the Day of the Lord for two centuries, now neither recognized place nor hour where the prophesy should fulfil itself. Naturally, it was not easy for the Essenes to recognize that that which they had been waiting for for so long, should suddenly begin in the here and now. In a figurative sense they actually had prepared the way for the Lord in the desert, and made even the path (Mal 3:1; Ex 23:20; Jer 40:3). They had also helped to prepare the ways for John and Jesus, whose way and whose point in time of action did not correspond exactly to their notion or even fixing, however.

But God did not wish to walk the so rigidly prepared way, the so very even street of the Essenes. He proceeded at the side of way and street. The place and hour where the words of the prophets crossed was the vertex of promise and fulfilment. John the Baptist stood in the centre of this point of intersection. He must have burnt and blazed within from the recognition of the Divine plan. Now, there existed only one human being who completely understood his intuition, his aim, and his way: Jesus of Nazareth. What John talked of, what he felt, also arose within that one. They were only these two understanding place and hour of the vertex of promise and fulfilment in its complete significance. This point of intersection is at the same time the hour of birth of the movement of John, of the messiahship of Jesus, and of Christianity. Prophecies never fulfil themselves the way they are expected to. Prophets appear

and hardly measure up to the respective expectations. The Messiah appeared, and will always appear, like it was not and will not be in the plan of man. This especially applied to John the Baptist and Jesus.

John the Baptist went to Ein Gedi in the desert at the Dead Sea to find the truth. He returned with great strength, knowing about the teaching of conversion and realignment for all of Israel.

His symbolic acts and sermons, his baptism set Israel in motion. Nothing comparable to his message of salvation and announcement of the Messiah for that time can be found in the religious history of the world. With this he who never had been a direct member of the brotherhood, but had grown up under the safeguarding and spirit of the Essenes, burst open the limits of his teachers. However, deep and internal reciprocal attachment always remained.

The few adepts who had known of the mission of John the Baptist from its beginning certainly also had a special conception about his appearing and work that certainly was not met completely; however, they put their trust in the strength of the prophet and preacher and in the divine guidance of the chosen one. The broad basis of the brotherhood naturally was questioning the work of the Baptist. However, also they felt admiration for him.

The vision of the visionaries and inaugurated ones strove towards its fulfilment. The prophesy of the *True Teacher* became reality. The acts of baptism of John the Baptist at the Jordan River, his sermons and appeals as well as the miracles worked by Jesus and his crucifixion were outwardly visible signs of the divine plan of which the Essenes knew, and which they had been serving for generations. To be sure, the brotherhood had expected the course and the results to be somewhat different. Certainly they also saw the Supreme Commander of the Sons of Light in John the Baptist who as victorious hero would win over sacrilege and darkness in the terrestrial world, and hand over a cured world to the Messiah. Their only error consisted in having established a plan for God, and, as chosen ones, hoping or even insisting on the adherence to this plan. They had too much subjected the future action of God and his messengers to their ideas. At the latest the sermons and actions of John and Jesus had made them realize that neither God nor his prophets subject themselves to standards and rules of men.

So the understanding of the deep mysticism and significance of the complete divine plan was reserved only to the few adepts of the brotherhood.

With the public appearance of John the Baptist and Jesus also a change of the whole brotherhood took place. Solid structures and models of thought began to crumble. A large part of the circle of disciples of the Baptist, beginning with the novice and

ending with the initiated one, came from the White Brotherhood. So Simon Peter was a member of the order of the Essenes, Naftali, Bartholomew, and Thaddeus came from the rows of the Therapists, the Egyptian branch of the brotherhood. Also the author of the Revelation of John, commonly identified with the Apostle John, son of Zebedee, probably is another John from the Essene brotherhood, however, in any case from the circle of disciples of John or Jesus.

It was a duty with the Essenes to provide lodgings and nutrition to members of the brotherhood or friends, once these came to their house. Also the supply with sufficient provisions for their further journey belonged to the established rules. John the Baptist, especially Jesus, his apostles, and sent-out disciples presumably often made use of this. In the Gospels there are several references that Jesus “was received “at manifold places, respectively “entered the house of...”.

Much points to it that Jesus upheld the relationship with the Essenes more intensively than John. So his acts, like the breaking of the bread and the blessing of the wine at common meals, point to the cultic meals of the Essenes.

Within the whole circle of the apostles, and disciples of Jesus and John the Essenes certainly had a considerable share. Their religious philosophy, their wish for reconciliation with God formed the decisive fundamentals for the early Church and the later Christianity.

One further word on John the Baptist and the *True Teacher*. It of course arouses suspicions that such a great and significant figure like the founder of the Essene Union escaped the biographers, temporary historians, and biblical authors. Who or what hides behind the pseudonym *True Teacher* or *Teacher of Justice*? If he really also had held the position of high priest for a short time, why then is his name not known, yet those of his predecessor and his successor?

In the outset of Qumran research all these questions misled to see in John the Baptist the *True Teacher*. Barbara Thiering still today proceeds immovably from the identity of the *True Teacher* with John the Baptist in her book *Jesus of Qumran*.

From the contents of the statements of the *True Teacher* and his apparently charismatic, prophetic radiance actually a bridge can be easily erected to life and work of John the Baptist. The whole assertion and line of argument is, of course, a question of asserting a date in the first place. Although congruencies shine up between the *True Teacher* and John the Baptist as a matter of fact, exactly the assertion of the date of the Dead Sea Scrolls unmistakably speaks against an identity.

Palaeography (science of the dating of old manuscripts on the basis of writing and writing materials) and the carbon-14 method, however, date the manuscripts of the *True Teacher* to the time around 150 BC. Even if we allow for a tolerance of 50

years, an immediate connection to John the Baptist cannot be established, since he was born in 8 BC.

I could observe that poetry and expressiveness of the spiritual messages of John the Baptist return in the psalms of the *True Teacher*. When I started writing this book I did not know the texts of the Qumran scrolls yet, consequently also not the psalms of the *True Teacher*. Many other reasons led me to the assumption, however, to see in John the Baptist the *True Teacher*. Only after I, step by step, had approached the life and work, especially the message of the Baptist, I noticed the difference between both figures.

Even if future scientific methods brought the dates of the respective texts closer to the life-time of the Baptist, I would consider an identity impossible. From the scrolls we learn of the decided will of the *True Teacher* for the foundation of a stable organization with manifold rules and rites. They also give evidence of a strong, irrevocable testimony to the Torah. Especially these things are of little concern in the Baptist's life, however, occasionally even meet disrespect. In the spiritual messages of the Essenes John the Baptist nonetheless is titled "*Great Teacher*", "*Greatest Teacher*", or similarly. This at least applies to that part of the brotherhood that lived with him, or according to him, and recognized his work. Also a master-soul of the Essenes, Emanuel, did alike, who, according to his own words, lived at the time of John the Baptist and was in his circle of disciples.

In this, however, I never saw a relation to the *True Teacher* and founder of the brotherhood, but certainly a close connection of the Essenes to John the Baptist and their high esteem of his person and his work.

I dedicated some space to the spiritual messages of the Essenes in Part IV of this book. From many the close relationship of the brotherhood to John can be perceived. At the same time they throw light into the dark surrounding the *True Teacher*. At one place it is mentioned that the Essenes conferred the title *Great Teacher* to John the Baptist, since the latter had continued and fulfilled his work.

**PART III**

**THE RETURN  
OF JOHN THE BAPTIST  
IN PROPHECY**

## **ON THE VENERATION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, THE VENERATION OF JESUS; AND THE RETURN OF THE FIGURES OF LIGHT**

All religions are based on the fundament that the existence of God is omnipresent that the word and the working of his messengers and prophets own validity beyond time.

Thus also Christianity proceeds from the basis that the power, the love, and the light of Jesus of Nazareth are permanently present. Therefore there do exist neither political nor social nor society barriers and obstacles for the being Jesus. This applies similarly to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and to John the Baptist, but also to all the saints of the church. The awareness of the presence of the working of power and healing of the respective figure from the light depends on the personal veneration and hope of each believer. The venerations of Mary, connected with worship and intercessions, have a special character. The reference to the many places of pilgrimage to Mary and the manifestations of Mary underlines this. The great effect of power and blessing many an intercessor experiences, can only be understood by the person concerned and, in reduced form, by someone approaching this theme without prejudice.

Many believers also adore an individual patron saint aside from Jesus and Mary, to whom they lay open their needs and intercessions. These inner relations are mostly explicable by personal occurrences and experiences, or by intuitive suggestion.

Next to the devotion of Mary, also the veneration of John the Baptist has a long tradition. Thus the oldest bishop-church in Rome, San Giovanni in Laterano, was consecrated to the Baptist by Pope Gregory in 600. The oldest church of the world carrying the name of the Baptist was in Jerusalem, however. It was situated in the immediate vicinity of the hospital, and was the central place for the service of the *Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem*. Especially the Order of St. John/Order of Malta erected many churches consecrated to John the Baptist in its sphere of activity. The best renown probably is the Cathedral in La Valetta, the capital of Malta. Here the frescos with 18 scenes from the life of John the Baptist by Mattia Preti, a member of the order, are of great artistic value.

Aside from a large number of churches carrying the name of John the Baptist, there are also numerous altars of John. The most impressive altar of John in the German-speaking area is in the Benedictine Abbey at Blaubeuren. It was shaped in the 15th ct., and reproduces the life of John the Baptist in 16 pictures. The famous Altar of



Isenheim by Matthias Gruenewald also portrays the figure of John the Baptist, standing at the side of the central scene of Christ.

Additionally the up to the high Middle Ages elaborately fashioned fonts give evidence of the high ranking of the rite of baptism installed by John the Baptist. Up to the 5th ct., the fonts were embedded in the ground. They were fashioned so large that the candidate strode into the basin and stood in the baptismal water up to his breast. About 50 of these baptismal fonts are still preserved. One of them is the famous Baptistery of the Dome of Naples, built in the 4th ct. Further worth being mentioned is the baptism basin of Luettich from the 12th ct that is decorated with the baptism scene of Jesus.

Until the greater part of the 16th ct, there additionally existed a special object of the cult of John in churches and cloisters: the St. John's bowl. The head of John had always been the object of extraordinary veneration, and refers to the head as a relic, respectively its copy. These St. John's bowls, manufactured by stone-masons, wood-carvers, sculptors, and smiths, lay on altars, and constantly reminded of the death of John as a martyr. Like the cross of Christ, also the St. John's bowl was to remind of the patiently and courageously suffered affliction for God and men, and help the beholder to perceive his personal misery in another context. At La Valetta there are still today pilgrim signs with the shape of a St. John's bowl. From the 11th ct onwards the St. John's bowl has been a subject in Byzantine painting, later on also in iconography. Further it is of interest that the Pommerian town of Koeslin holds a St. John's bowl in its coat-of-arms, and that in the Dome of Regensburg heads of John form the capitals.

This short discourse on the veneration of John the Baptist cannot be concluded without the mention of orders that chose the Baptist to be their guiding figure or patron. At first place, here, *The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem* has to be mentioned. In 1113 the Pope confirmed the founding of the order and the patronage of John the Baptist. In their articles of incorporation the Knights Hospitallers gave themselves the motto "*for God, for John the Baptist and for the Holy Paupers.*" From the beginning the service to the needy and sick has been in the forefront of the duties of the order.

Many orders branched off from *The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem*, safeguarding its traditions and duties, and performing their services in hospitals, sisterhoods, and manifold support organizations. The best-known are: *Soverane Militare Ordine Ospedaliero di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme, detto di Rodi, detto di Malta.* (= *The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta*, in short: *The Sovereign Order of Malta*).

*The Bailiwick of Brandenburg Knightly Order of St. John of the Hospital at Jerusalem*

(in short: *The Johanniter Order*) with further associations in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Finland, France, and Hungary.

*The Grand Priory in the British Realm of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem.*

*De Johanniter Orde in Nederland*

*Johanniterorden i Sverige (Sweden).*

A further indication for the adoration of and high esteem for John the Baptist is the frequent choice of the surnames, Johann (Hans), Giovanni, Jean, John, Ioannis, Jan, Ivan etc., but also the many designations, enclosing the name of John, like.: St. John's fire, Johannisbeere (red-currant), St. John's wort (hypericum perforatum), St. John's belt (lycopodium), St. John's flower (arnica montanus), St. John's blood (cochenille), St. John's bread (carob-bean - ceratonia siliqua), St. John's worm (glow-worm), etc..

St. John's wort, by the way, is a traditional and approved remedy in popular medicine. It strengthens the nerves and brings inner calm and peace. School medicine could prove this therapeutic value, and even found out, that St. John's wort has the characteristic to store sun energy. Cows, goats, and sheep, grazing predominantly on meadows with St. John's wort show symptoms of a light sunburn of their intestines and mucous membranes. It shows of the great insight of the unknown name-giver that this *herb of light* carries the name messenger from the light: John the Baptist.

The reference of Friedrich-August of Metzsch that the rose is considered to be the flower and symbol of the Baptist is interesting. According to his words it is still custom in Poland today, to decorate the graves of those deceased by the name of John with three roses on June 24 (St. John's Day).

This reference is of great import, since on March 18, 1993 (Part IV) a spiritual message by John the Baptist was received, enclosing the following passage:

*"So receive my sign now: The Rose of the Night that blossomed the Day Jesus was born. It is the symbol of resistance. It shall be the sign of our brotherhood."*

An interpretation is difficult. Does this message contain a direct reference to the rose as his symbol? In another passage of this book I pointed out that the *Rose of the Night that blossomed the Day Jesus was Born*, could also have been a constellation of stars, or some other recognition mark for the birth of Jesus.

The previous discourses refer to the a strong connection of the Christians to John the

Baptist. To this the fact adds that every Christian begins his religious life with the baptism. Is this connection with John the Baptist so strong that his permanent presence or even his return are imaginable? If so, in what form and figure should this return occur? Does solely his spirit, his mission come again, or will he even appear embodied? Many believers consider a renewed appearance of Jesus probable. Many mysterious statements by Jesus may be the reason for this. For example according to John 14:3: *"and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."*, in John 14:28: *"You heard me say to you. 'I am going away and I am coming to you ...'"* or in John 16:16: *"A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me ..."*. Also in Luke 21:27 Jesus distinctly refers to his return: *"Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with the power and great glory."*

It says in Luke 21:6-26 that before all this will happen, affliction and doom will come over world and man. So Jesus says: *"the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another"*, and he further speaks: *"nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines, and plagues ..."*

Regarding the recent years one becomes truly frightened on account of this prophesy. How many peoples are divided, or are waging war against one another! Let us merely think of what is known: the decomposition and the blows of the Yugoslav and Soviet peoples, the insurrections of the Kurds, and the unrests in Palestine. Let us further not forget the series of earthquakes and natural catastrophes in 1995, and the rapid increase of incurable diseases and epidemics. The Jesus-words in Luke 21:25-26 still increase the uneasiness: *"there will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth distress among nations, confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."* (comp. Mk. 13:24-25).

These Jesus-prophesies even weigh before cynics and disbelievers, for in one and the same breath (verses 20-24) he predicts the future of Israel: the destruction and devastation of Jerusalem and Judea, but also the imprisonment, killing and dispersion of the Jews among all peoples by the heathens, *"until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."*

The fate of the Israelites from 70 A.D. until 1948, or even till today, confirms this prophesy to the jot!

Jesus also speaks in John 16:7-11 about the judgement of this world and the sending-out of the Comforter.

The Jesus-prophesy, but also the admonitions of John the Baptist about the impending judgement by God, find supplement and visionary description in the last

part of the New Testament, the Revelation of John.

The point in time at which Jesus revealed his prophecies is of great importance. The Gospel of Luke (22:1-3) discloses that this was shortly before the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, thus at Easter, and that the high priests and scholars of the scripture were intent on killing him. Additionally, Jude Iscariot had already sealed the contact and the treason with them. Did Jesus painfully realize that neither John the Baptist nor he himself could guide mankind towards God? Did he become conscious that only few people were and will be prepared to spiritualise the words and deeds of both and to live according to divine values? Did he know that martyrdom and death of the Baptist and his own impending misery, would only move a small number to convert? Even if these few ones search for and find salvation, however, the course, the fate of this world through the estrangement from God could not be stopped any more. This world apparently at no time possesses sufficient love and insight to accept the messengers of God. The reference of Jesus that the prophesied saviour Elijah already had indeed appeared in the figure of John the Baptist and that men, however, had done unto him whatever they pleased (Mk. 9:13) is meaningful. Just as well the words to his disciples that they would be hated by the world (John 15:19), just like he had been hated without a cause. (John 15:25). Eventually he says to them: *“they will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God.”* (John 16:2).

Tracking down the fate of the apostles, one discovers that the prophesy completely fulfilled itself. Analysing origin and statement of all apocalyptic predictions, beginning with the prophets of the Old Testament via John the Baptist and Jesus up to the visionaries of the last two millenniums, a consistent basic topic shows: estrangement from God and judgement over the earth. A world-incendiary fire of incomparable extent destroying all that is sinful. Only a quick conversion, the rejection of the Antichrist, the prince of this world, and the turning towards the One God can avert this. Thus greed, power, hate, envy, and egotism stand for the Antichrist; however, for the One Law of God stand charity, selflessness, and the recognition of the Divine Values.

At manifestations of Mary the admonitions, pleas, and messages are especially urgent. A reference to the words of Mary at Fatima (Portugal) and Medjugorje (Bosnia-Herzegovina) may suffice as an example. That especially the mission of Mary in Medjugorje in the recent past and the sad proof of her sorrows and admonitions by the chaos of war in Bosnia did not succeed in shaking the world awake, gives evidence of the ignorance and presumption of our time. It is apparent and giving hope, however, that God has never ceased to send his warning voices, prophets, and signs into this world. Most vigorously he did this through John the Baptist and Jesus. But 2000 years passed since. Their heirs, the Christian Churches proved themselves to rather be administrators of teaching and message, without truly

reaching the majority of the believers. Rules, dogmas, commandments, rites, and exterior things are in the foreground. The reason why things are like this may possibly rather be due to the spirit of the age than to the Churches themselves. This spirit of our time and the erroneous belief that everything can be worked by men are disrespecting the divine admonitions and signs, even making light of them.

But now, at the latest, when mankind intuitively has a foreboding that the whole earth is standing before an inextricable chaos, we have to ask ourselves the question: were we only granted a postponement, so to say a chance and period of probation of about 2000 years plus "x" by the appearance of John the Baptist and Jesus? How long may the period "x" last? Regarding the history and the present-time of mankind we have to admit that we have not passed the test. Are all the descriptions of the prophets, John the Baptist, and Jesus still ahead of us? Will the visions of those seeing, and the admonishing words of the Mother of God be verified? I am afraid, yes, because in many parts the prophesy has already fulfilled itself. If the ultimate will come, then there also is a hope. According to Jesus the days will be shortened on account of those who are righteous, and he will take care of them.

Before this, the Baptist will once more repeat his mission as the final admonisher and fighter, to seal the crowd of those respecting the divine law from the impending calamity, however. When and to whom will the Baptist again say: *"You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance."* (Mt.3:7-8). *"Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire."* (Mt.3:10). *"His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor, and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."* (Mt.3:12).

Who are the Pharisees and the Sadducees in our world of today? Which people will again flock to him in crowds to hear his word and his appeal for conversion? Who will follow him and will again have himself sealed from the judgement by God through his baptism? And who, lastly, will believe him, when he will point to the returning Messiah? What will the world again inflict up on the renewed precursor, and who is the Herod Antipas of this time?

There exist a large number of prophesies and visions on this. Most clearly in form and statement are, however, the prophesies of Hildegard of Bingen and of Bertha Dudde, which I wish to accentuate in the following.



## PROPHEESIES

### HILDEGARD OF BINGEN ON THE RETURN OF ELIJAH AND HIS FIGHT AGAINST THE ANTICHRIST

Only few visionaries and prophets attained such high esteem and veneration as this nun.

Her person:

Hildegard was born the tenth child of Hildebert of Bimersheim and his wife Mechthild of Bermersheim in Alzey (Rhine-Hesse, Germany). She was a contemporary of Francis of Assisi and Elizabeth of Thuringia, two great saints in Church history. Hildegard of Bingen was a blessed and brave woman, the greatest visionary in the area of the German idiom, who, additionally, had healing powers. Her herbal recipes are well-known and helpful even today. She is generally venerated as a saint, although she was never canonized officially. Ignaz von Doellinger, a renowned German church historian of the 19th century said of her that she was *“an appearance, singular and unattained in all of Christian history.”*

Already at the age of eight Hildegard had to leave parents and brothers and sisters. So to speak as the title; she was placed in a hermitage led by a hermit called Jutta. At the age of 15, during a conversation with Jutta and her fellow students, Hildegard suddenly recognized that *“she had ‘the inward vision in addition to the outer’*. An experience that presented her with grief and tears, and which she would well have liked to render void. After the death of Jutta, Hildegard took over the running of the hermitage that in the meantime rather had become a nunnery. She was 38 at that time, and de facto abbess. A few years later (1141) she learnt of task and mission of her life on earth. The abbess herself reports about her decisive hour: *“when I was 42 years and seven months old, a fiery light with the radiance of a light-bolt came down from the open sky. It streamed through my brain, and slid through heart and chest like a flame that did not scorch, however. Now, suddenly, the meaning of the writings of the Old and the New Testament disclosed itself to me.”* She further reports of the task she heard: *“take down what you hear and see!”*

Hildegard of Bingen was by no means ignorant of the world. On the contrary, worldly skill, personnel management, talent for planning and organisation distinguished her. So she had erected and headed the Nunnery St. Rupertsberg (Bingerbrueck today) in 1150, and, at the same time, directed the Nunnery Eibingen

near Ruedesheim since 1165. Always under occupational stress, she refused to follow the vision at first. Besides, she was tormented by doubts and fears, disbelieving her intuitions. Only through a sickness she took the decision to fulfil her spiritual task.

The prophetic vision of Hildegard of Bingen very soon aroused sensation. Pope Eugene III (1145-1153) ordered assessors for verification and analysis. It is certainly a unique occurrence in the history of the Church that the prophetic writings of a living person, moreover of a woman, met with positive resonance. The Holy Bernhard, of course, bore a share in this, seeing to it that Hildegard did not hide her light under a bushel within the Church. In 1148, Hildegard was allowed to continue heralding "*in the name of Christ, and the name of Holy Peter*" by a Breve. With this, for the first, time a woman had the Papal Title to teach in the name of the Church. The abbess and nun suddenly became one of the most prominent persons in Europe.

A few years later, Pope Eugene III sent an emissary to her to tell her of his joy, so that the number of the believing peoples asked themselves in astonishment: "Who is this woman, ascending from the desert like a pillar of smoke?" Hildegard answered: "JOHN THE BAPTIST". In modesty she herself withdrew, because she only wanted to bear witness of the light. "*I am merely the trumpet of the one who speaks,*" was her description of her role. The person to whom she disclosed something of her vision of the light certainly had to be ready for criticism. Whoever she thus addressed was, Pope, bishop, regent, or professor, her words came distinctly and not seldom harshly. More than 300 of such letters do still exist, and give evidence of her word as clear as glass. So also Pope Anansthadius IV, and Emperor Barbarossa were not spared from her criticism.

From 1151-1158 Hildegard drew up her manuscripts on nature and therapeutics. After extensive travels for sermons through Germany she arranged the "*Vision of the True Light*", like it had flowed into her feather, into three great themes: the creator, the world, and man. This dramatic vision connects theology, cosmology, and anthropology. In her brave struggle for truth and justice the conflict with the Church did not fail to appear. She allowed the ceremonious burial of an honourable, but excommunicated knight, and, by this, fell into disgrace of Christian, the Archbishop of Mainz.

Hildegard of Bingen died on September 11, 1179.

The Prophecies of Hildegard of Bingen on the Coming of the Antichrist and on the Return of Elijah:

The tenth vision of Hildegard of Bingen deals with the end of times. At the beginning of this vision, she sees the people of the occident still living in peace and progress, and with rich harvests. During this period, there will be "*numerous predictions and*



*many wise persons*". People have understanding for one another and try to attain purity. The words of the prophets are decoded more and more. At the same time also many false doctrines are being spread, and misdeeds as well as works of sacrilege become publicly known: *"a sign for the impending arrival of the antichrist"*. Most evil doings and crimes committed to mankind and to the earth are being revealed. *"The time of crisis has come, when the purity and the calm of the faith dwindle, and the believers will desert in masses."*

Into this phase of world history falls the birth of the antichrist who is raised in remote and frequently varying places. Hidden from mankind, he is instructed in all the *"diabolic arts"*. From the time of his birth onwards, quarrels, wars, and unfriendly actions of all kind will increase, and what is good in men is overshadowed by bitterness and roughness. Additionally, false teachings of all kinds become presentable, and their spreaders esteemed, so that even the most faithful person doubts that there is a God.

Although the person of the antichrist has not appeared publicly yet, the Creator begins to announce the impending calamity by many signs. The by far greater part of mankind disrespects them, however, and also is not interested in their interpretation. Thus disaster takes its course in the world without disturbance. Eventually *"numerous signs of the sun, the moon, and the stars, in the waters, and all the other elements as well as in the whole creation will appear"*, leading man in such tribulation that he will consider death a relief. Only the unshakeable belief in God will still be of help during these days.

But, during this time of utmost distress the antichrist will appear and will reject the precept of God and Jesus Christ. Equipped with the powers of Satan, he disposes of great persuasive power and enthralling eloquence. Also his outer appearance is imposing. His high intelligence enables him to play off human and scientific insights against the Divine Law. *"By the devil himself he receives the input to open his mouth for the false teaching, and to destroy everything that God laid down in the old as well as in the new law."*

Hildegard of Bingen exhorts at this point: *"man shall keep himself free from all the threatening seduction of the end of times, and shall look for help and centeredness in faith, now, that the mystery of evilness so openly is at work ..."*.

The speech of the antichrist will increasingly turn against the teaching of Jesus, since this would be contrary to human nature and would prevent recognition of the self, and that of matter, and especially that of the flesh. His philosophy is widely accepted, and causes the desperate people to hope that they may find new true and lasting salvation in the renunciation of God.

The antichrist will be revered all over the world, yes, even worshipped. Thus he will declare himself to be the *"golden head"* which shall mean as much as God. *"He will create by devilish arts and the rousing of the elements horrible monstrosities and*

*vehement storms, which God will allow to last until all of mankind will have recognized the fall of the antichrist."*

He will convince the last doubters and faithful ones to God by feigning through dark magic *"the death for the redemption of the people, and the resurrection"*. Then he will have letters imprinted on the fronts of his adherers, as visible proof for the defection from the baptism of John and the Christian name. Just like the believers named themselves Christians after Christ until then, his followers will then, with his letter, name themselves after him. Now the time has come, when God will lead his fighter Elijah (John the Baptist), together with Enoch, into the world.

Hildegard von Bingen describes the Divine vision with the following words: *"towards the end of the world I will show men how they shall accept the testimony of these two full of confidence. I will brief Enoch and Elijah in My secret, and reveal to them the works of man, so that they will recognize these as if they saw them with their own eyes. They being more wise than the scriptures and the speeches of the wise ones. For, since they are bodily carried off, also fear and trembling is taken from them. Thus they bear everything surrounding them with equanimity. And I keep them at a hidden place without their bodies being harmed. Then, when the Son of Doom will spit out his wrong teaching, then the same power, who took them away from amongst men, will lead these back as it were in the wind. As long as they then will be sojourning among men, they shall each time take up some nutrition after forty days, like also My son was hungry after forty days. They will own such power in My miracles that they will work greater wonders than the Son of Doom on the firmament, on the elements, and on the remaining beings, so that the latter's deceitful conjuring tricks will be made a laughing-stock through the true works of miracle of those men."*

The words and works of Elijah and Enoch will make men of all peoples prick up their ears. Ruefulness will finally lead them to a public testimony to the Creator and his Figures of Light. However, the antichrist will have everybody renouncing him cruelly executed, so that *"the victims of those slaughtered will not be countable any more, for the mass of their blood will be flowing along like streaming water."*

Since even these atrocities will not be able to secure his power any longer, he will attempt to present the deeds and miracles of Elijah and Enoch as fraud. When even this will have been fruitless, he will wish to win both by flattery and threat. Since these will turn away from him, however, he will have them fiercely tortured and killed.

The antichrist, then, will present himself to the world as the final winner and chosen one. The crowd of followers of Elijah and Enoch will be mercilessly executed, and the number of martyrs will be so great that *"the golden figure of the blessed blood witnesses"* will be fulfilled. But, the triumph will be misleading and of short duration, since God will set another sign: the bodily return of Elijah and Enoch.

The unavoidable final struggle between the power of God and the strength of Satan will arrive. As last means to convince the world, the Son of Doom will attempt to rise

to heaven. An experiment that he will wish to perform before the eyes of everybody. He will intend to demonstrate that he will command the heavenly elements in the presence of the crowd of people.

Hildegard describes the further course of her vision with the following words: *“at this time the Son of Evil will be unmasked, and it will be proved before all the people that he was a liar. For he had dared to rise to heaven, whereby then the Lord and Saviour of all Peoples, the Son of God, will kill him. This he will do with that power, with which he, who is the word of the Father, will judge the whole orbit with fair judgement. For then, when the Son of Doom will raise himself upwards through devilish arts, then he will be flung down by Divine power, and the stench of sulphur and pitch will swallow him up, so that also the masses standing around will flee to the protection of the mountains. Such a horror will seize all those seeing and hearing this that they will renounce Satan and his Son, and convert to the true faith. Completely beside himself the Old Snake will grind his teeth against himself and admit: “now we are gone to rack and ruin. From now on we will not be able to subject men like did before.”*

In the further progress of her tenth vision the nun and prophetess describes how, after the overthrow of the antichrist, the honour of the Son of God will be glorified, and the earth, like newly fashioned, will be free from the dark and negative characteristics of the evil. Divine love, the light of Christ, and the world will melt into indivisible unity.

The prophesies of Hildegard of Bingen about the appearance and the fall of the antichrist are very moving. They are reported only in abbreviated form here. Similar prophesies on rise and fall of the antichrist can also be found with other visionaries. Very well known is the prophesy of the French astrologer Michel de Notre -Dame (1503-66), better known as Nostradamus<sup>49</sup>.

With the visions of Hildegard of Bingen, the question whether Elijah is identical with John the Baptist is unanswered. In the eschatological context, however, both have to be seen as a unit. In my opinion, also John the Baptist is mentioned, when Elijah is mentioned. The reason, why Hildegard of Bingen who by her own words was inspired by John the Baptist, always speaks of Elijah, probably lies in the assertion of Jesus that John is the returned Elijah.

I do not find a direct explanation for the connection between Elijah and Enoch (Son of Cain). Maybe a special symbolism is expressed with Enoch, a life pleasing to God, and a heavenly being carried away, like the Books Enoch report.

## BERTHA DUDDE ON THE RETURN OF JOHN THE BAPTIST BEFORE THE WOLD-INDENDIARY FIRE

Also Bertha Dudde had a vision of the rise and the fall of the Antichrist. With other words she reports of the same subject matter as Hildegard of Bingen. Before mankind will enter the messianic age, however, the Creator will again send John the Baptist to earth, so that he will contend against the defamation of God and against the Antichrist.

But, to begin with, facts on the person of the visionary:

Bertha Dudde was born in Liegnitz (Silesia) on April 1, 1891. Together with five further brothers and sisters, she spent a materially poor but harmonious childhood. To ease the steady financial problems of her parents, she pursued the trade of a tailor at an early age. Since she was critical of the Catholic doctrine, and her parents were very tolerant in religious concerns, the young Bertha already soon did not go to church any more, listened to no sermons, and had no biblical knowledge whatsoever. She wanted to separate herself from the Catholic Church, although she was very religious, which eventually led to internal conflicts. In the quiet she asked God for the right decision. As she herself says; her plea was answered on June 15, 1937. She was at the age of 45, when God revealed himself to her. Yet, with the revelation the doubts increased and the inner struggles. The words she received resembled a stream of wisdoms that never ceased. So her doubts were cleared away more and more, and she began to take down her inspirations daily. The contents of the messages by far surpassed the knowledge of Bertha Dudde. In her autobiography she says: *“never heard or read expressions, foreign and scientific terms and references flowed incessantly towards me.”*

Years later she comes across the writings of the Styrian visionary and mystic Jakob Lorber. Full of joy she finds the confirmation of her endowment. Only now she becomes conscious of the grace and love of the Heavenly Father, whereas before she had, lacking education, considered herself inferior and insignificant. Bertha Dudde also speaks of the meekness of God, for she never felt a must in her spiritual vision. Always she felt free and unconstrained and was fully conscious.

The she-herald of God, as she is frequently called, died on September 18, 1965. Her spiritual heritage are altogether more than 9000 messages. They, in their greater part, deal with the themes: *the plan of salvation of God, the soul in the hereafter, false prophets, the antichrist, the predecessor of Christ, the return of Christ, and the New Earth* .

## The Prophecies of Bertha Dudde on the Return of the Baptist:

The visions Bertha Dudde received on this are collected under title *“The Precursor of Christ. John the Baptist, the Last Voice in the Wilderness of the World – His Mission and his End”* and was published in 1972.

Already the introductory words of this revelation are informative. God speaks to Bertha Dudde about the levelling, and of the great spiritual and emotional misery of the man of today. By materialism and egotism mankind is in greatest danger to lose the truth of life. Men are in need of Divine help. Men, however, are not open for it, since they do not wish to recognize. Literally she continues: *“therefore the world of light has to work as a mediator, beings of the light have to choose suitable receptacles on earth into which they can let stream the emission of My word, and – if there is a scarcity of these – the beings of light step down to earth themselves to – as embodied man- be a link between men and the spiritual world – to be intercessor between ME and men.”*

A short description of the term “being of the light” follows. Accordingly, such “beings of the light” are already among us to help the world to make delusion and ignorance become visible, and to point out their consequences. In appearance, education, and profession they hardly differ from common man. Their, so to speak, internal piloting is directed towards high spiritual aims. Terrestrial goods and worldly temptations cannot lastingly divert them from their way. They are free of egotism, and intuitively recognize the One Law, the Will of the Creator. In their words and deeds they often are not in harmony with the exterior world, the structures, the patterns of thinking, and acting of the time. Their birth always occurs purposefully and voluntarily, yet, the incarnated “being of the light” usually lacks awareness of this. Thus it is within the Divine plan that their constant strife and steady hard struggle for spiritual aims are an example to their fellow men. A “being of the light” who would be discernible as such begin with could not serve as an ideal for men, since then the weak and imperfect mortals never would feel able to ever come close to their ideal.

There are exceptions, however: *“only especially high spiritual beings know of their mission and origin and also let other people know about this, although they find no credence among them”*, it says in one of the visions of Bertha Dudde. Such high beings of the light, then, are recognizable for everyone, however, who wishes to discern, for their mission is for all those hearing and seeing it. The whole world shall take notice, *“of the supernatural working, the power, and the glory of the one who is sending down an extraordinarily radiant light from the height.”*

The introductory words to this revelation end with the reference: *“and such light will testify of ME, and will therefore cause a stir. And when it will begin to shine, then know that you are standing shortly before the end, that only a short period of grace is given to men, for, if that one will not be listened to, and his call of warning remains*

*without success, then there will be no rescue for the derailed world any more – then the end of the world is irrevocable, like announced in the word and in the scripture.”*

In the following passages the revelation purposively directs toward the announced light. This is done by sympathetic, instructive, and elucidating words. Additionally the great mercy is referred to, which God renders through the appearance of this light, to the final chance for the lukewarm ones, for those vacillating, and the self-righteous ones to confess to God. Who, however, will remain in the claws of the opponent will be torn by these. To for a last time give mankind the chance of reversion, God will send an extraordinarily great being of the light to earth. Immediately one recognizes who this light will be: *“and before ME the greatest light on earth will shine in the plainest clothes. Once again it will herald of ME, like it did before MY coming in the flesh onto this earth, before MY mission of teaching to men to whom I wanted to bring the Gospel. He was MY predecessor, and also then he will be it again. And you men will recognize him from his speeches, since he chooses the same words and testifies to ME, like he did once! . His spirit is only coming down to earth to fulfil the law, which is that he must precede ME in the fullest consciousness of his origin and his mission.”*

It becomes evident, who is meant: JOHN THE BAPTIST. When the point of time of his renewed mission on earth will be reached, he will be initiated in the occurrences and interrelations of the terrestrial processes, the satanic aims, but, also in those of the Divine plan of salvation. Even his hard fate on earth will be known to him, from which he, however, will not withdraw himself for the love of those unredeemed.

When John the Baptist will return, the often prophesied ultimate battle between God and Satan will be immediately impending on earth. To this is referred to frequently, so, also in the sentence: *“when he will appear, the end will be at hand, for I will follow him soon and make My prophesies come true.”* The proclamations alluded to are: the world-incendiary fire, the destruction of the previous earth, and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth, whereby God will be right among those who are His, for the new earth will allow His sojourn on it.

When and where will the return of John the Baptist happen, and how will the world be able to recognize him? Figures of speech, like: *“and the time has arrived.”* or *“thus this is the time, in which you men are living already”* point to a not too far-away future. The following sentence is of great distinctness: *“already he is among those living, but as of yet, he is not conscious of his mission”*. The reference: *“The country, however, shielding him is blessed by his presence”* does not allow an interpretation, however. We have to presume that he will appear in a country of Christian denomination. Only here the whole extent of his renewed return as forerunner of Christ can be understood. In the widest sense, his return could also occur in the area of the Islam, since also here John the Baptist experiences a high degree of esteem and veneration.

On the how of the recognition it further says in Bertha Dudde's vision: *"therefore let me tell you: You will recognize the one walking the earth with the fiery sword of his mouth. Not one will doubt his word, for it will be Divine, and an outflow of God's deepest love. But seek him not in glitter and pomp, his name is little –unknown – he well calls himself John, but his body on earth has not the figure adorning him spiritually. He wanders right amongst you, and teaches in words and deeds, and he will be a precursor to the LORD before His return on earth. Similarly his word will testify to the Love of God wherever he sojourns, and will awaken deep longing for the truth and the light in the hearts of men."*

Who hears the words, it continues, will be permeated by his speech, for he will herald the true salvation and will work in the glow of truth. His words will not deviate from the Gospels of Jesus.

But, it is also not concealed that there will be many voices mocking him and wishing to render him to ridicule. Even more: he will be chased off and persecuted, and the mighty ones will stir up the people against him, and will strive for his life. Although he will preach of love and the Divine salvation, and will prove helpful to all men, many people will be *"listening full of hate"*. There will erupt a great dispute between those discerning the God-sent one in him, and those doing homage to the bustle of the world.

*"He will endure all afflictions in patience, and will always hear the voice of the Lord. Do think of these words, when he will be seized to seal his lot on earth"*, it says literally. But God announces at the same time that he will not permit the death of the precursor, before his mission will be fulfilled. John the Baptist once again will consciously agree to die for love of men and God. His death will be part of the whole work of redemption.

With the resistances also the power of the messenger will grow. He will heal sick ones and bring help where it will seem impossible to men. Aside from his works of miracles, also his voice will increase. His admonitions and rebukes of the mighty ones, heretics, and seducers of this word will become ever louder.

*"There will be a battle against him, but his word and the power of his word smash down the opponent. He will wrestle for the souls, he will preach of love, and he will enflame the hearts. He will not fear terrestrial power, and by no means will exercise force, but will with utmost patience and love show men their false way of living, their craze for the world, and their doom."*

Over and again the revelation points out that not much time will be left, and that the end is nigh, so that John the Baptist will appear again. The crowd of those, however, who will join him will be blessed. They will be able to draw much strength and light. And, once again, it will be John the Baptist who will work the Divine salvation of those acting in adherence to his word.

*“His spirit will once again come to earth to fulfil the Law”* it says. Actually it is easy for men to recognize John the Baptist, since he again *“will choose the same words and will testify of ME, like he did once.”* His word and deeds will so much be corresponding with those of Jesus that even the greatest heretics and doubters would have to prick up their ears. Nonetheless, they will only be a minority, *“who will recognize the unusual light, and will be able to interpret the signs.”* The great number of those who will not recognize, maybe even will mock, will let themselves be driven to nowhere by presumptuousness and haughtiness. They only believe in worldly matter, egotistic luck, and material proofs merely. That, which is erroneous will be pushed forward with greatest speed by those of this world mighty and knowing, the souls of men will fall into a wilderness.

*“Therefore John the Baptist will once more be a voice in the wilderness, only expressing what he will receive from ME through the inner word, through the spirit working within him extraordinarily. He will bear witness of ME, for his voice is MY voice, and who will listen to him will listen to ME”.*

In the prophetic vision of Bertha Dudde on the return of John the Baptist the appearance of the antichrist is mentioned too, but also that it will take place synchronously. Here the antichrist is defined as the embodiment of the foes of God, whom men will proclaim their ruler. A religious controversy of unheard-of extent will be inflamed, in which the antichrist and John the Baptist will – embodied – be face to face with one another. Since the antichrist will be equipped with extraordinary persuasive power, cunning, and intelligence, and will proceed with brutality in this final combat on earth, *“therefore also an extraordinary light will be sent to earth – the precursor: John the Baptist.”*

An unimaginable battle between light and darkness will take its course during which it will seem as if heaven itself would start swaying (see Lk.21:26)

John the Baptist will work extraordinary signs. He will become the wonder-worker of the poor, the unhappy and afflicted ones during the great misery of the world - incendiary fire. However, the antichrist will have his word interdicted all over the world, and will demand John's death. Nevertheless, the Baptist will fight with the *“Sword of Christ, the Sword of his Mouth”*. He and his teaching being persecuted, many will not have the courage to own up to him, but for those awakened and faithful this will mean an exceptional strengthening. *“They will receive much strength from him to endure the affliction during the greatest time of need.”*

According to Bertha Dudde, then the time, that was announced by visionaries and prophets will be fulfilled. All faithful ones will be comforted, since, wherever John the Baptist will reappear, his word and his voice will be heard. And they will know who hides behind this light, But, also they will have to discern the law of the hour. Unerringly and without fears John the Baptist will take his way, and fulfil his mission. Neither interdiction to speak nor persecution nor threat of death will silence him. His



courage and his speeches will kindle a fire and will even give the weak ones the power to withstand. Who will own up to God and the words of John the Baptist is in utmost danger, but the immense light of the precursor will endow many with the strength to die for God and the truth.

Also John the Baptist will know of his renewed end. At the height of his mission he will suffer the same fate as 2000 years ago. This time, however, it will not be Herod Antipas, who will have him imprisoned and killed, but darkness in the figure of the Antichrist. Concerning this the prophesy of Bertha Dudde states: *“but eventually he will be seized, for Satan will urge those men in bondage to him to take hold of him. And then the coming of the LORD also will not be afar, for then lack of love will also have reached its climax, and even the believers will be in utmost danger of becoming wavering. Then the LORD himself will come to guide home those who are his, to save them from the power of those in bondage to darkness - for by them things will be done that nobody will be able to imagine.”*

At the end of the heralding the last phases of time of our existing earth are once more referred to, and the new earth is sketched as a planet full of love, light, and splendour. Liberated from the satanic powers, the earth thus purified from darkness will become the paradise for those upright. Also the origin, the appearance, and the mission of the precursor is referred to once more. According to this, God will keep the high being of light as long in concealment until the time of his mission will begin. The messenger is guided by God, from birth to death. God himself will prescribe his way, and lead him to where many men will be able to listen to him.

Once again God admonishes to discern the signs of the time and the great grace, once the precursor will appear. Even although this one is already sojourning among men, the time must not be considered fulfilled already today or tomorrow, for also God himself needs time on earth to prepare men. Thus the veil is still laid before the eyes of the world. Nobody shall make guesses about the appearance and the fate of the forerunner, because men will recognize in time, *“for he will come from where you will at least expect him to come.”*

*“Those who are mine will recognize him and his work: to rescue those still undecided, - to strengthen those wishing to remain faithful to ME, - and to announce ME and MY coming. – And even though this time is not afar any more, there still will have to pass some short phases. But then will be fulfilled what you were heralded in word and script.”*

Looked at more closely, the spiritual vision, respectively the revelation to the visionary Bertha Dudde contains two essential messages. The first one is clearly discernible: the renewed return of John the Baptist, whereby his mission is identical with that of 2000 years ago. The second and collateral message deals with the recognition of the

God-sent one: here mankind is put in a great test. His return is not planned in such a way that he will appear in radiance and magnificence on earth. On the contrary, at first he will resemble a normal man, but will be completely seized by the spirit of God at the given hour. His word will arouse a stir, but also distrust, up to rejection. The latter will commence with ridicule, and will lead from interdiction of speech to murder. The mighty ones will be against him, the majority of the people will consider his teaching not liveable. A small crowd will recognize him, the by far larger one, however, will see the sectarian, heretic, and deluder in him, living in a world far from reality.

The actual problem, thus, lies in the second and indirect message. Consequently, only those persons will be able to attain grace and the chance of salvation who will attach themselves to the message of John the Baptist and will also stand up for it.

Who now could the opponents of the returning forerunner be? One will probably assume them to be the mighty ones in politics and economics, at first. In an interior image of our world we will therefore have to ask ourselves, against which interests the renewed mission of John the Baptist will counter-work, which institutions will be exposed to his criticism. So we must by no means exclude that the Church will be his greatest opponent at first, those formally believing, and large domains of science. The revelation to Bertha Dudde foreshadows something: the returning precursor clearly will set forth that the human being Jesus, Christ, and God are an indivisible unity, and will not allow for any differentiation. This statement of John the Baptist will apparently arouse opposition, and they will try to prove his ignorance. The question literally intrudes into one's mind: will the leaders of our Churches then possibly be the high priests, the theologians, and priests, the scholars of the scripture and the Pharisees of tomorrow?

But all these questions and surmises have to remain speculations. By more intensively studying prophesies, be they biblical or extra-biblical, one quickly recognizes that they all hold a strange characteristic. For they occur otherwise than expected. . This is mostly due to our too literal interpretation and limited way of thinking. We, so to speak, are subject to a paradigm. Thus men always over- or undervalued to significance of the history of their time, however, mostly did not understand the signs of their respective time. Considering that creation does think in another dimension this is not surprising. The human factor of time does not suffice for this.

Thus, we also should not form a fixed picture from the repeated prophesies of the return of John the Baptist. Not even then, when the clarity of the words and references tempt us to do so. Yet, we should consider one thing: the Messiah had been prophesied frequently. And when he came, he had the name Jesus, and was not recognized. The return of Elijah had been foretold. And when he came, he had the name John, and was not discerned. This analogy runs like a red thread through

almost all prophesies. The expectations, imaginations, and interpretations men connect with the respective prophesy, alone form the limiting factors of recognition.

In the revelation to Bertha Dudde the following is written concerning the predecessor: "*from where you will not expect him he will come.*" So at least this sentence keeps us from overly concrete imagination and interpretation

I wish to end this chapter with the following comment: if there exists a Divine plan for the salvation of mankind, then the being John the Baptist will apparently have a decisive function. If the prophesies on the imminent disaster do grow from Divine care and love, then again the last admonisher and caller in the wilderness, John the Baptist, will be guided to us. We do not know which name he will carry. Similarly not, where he will come from, and in which part of the earth he will work. Will his message then be accessible to the greater part of mankind, or only to few? Will his word be credited with significance while he is still alive, or only after his death?

If the time now is standing at the intersection of prophesy and fulfilment, will we then be wise enough to understand the signs of time? Many people will not believe in the apocalypse, in the great world-incendiary fire. Others again already have experienced it bodily and during life, the victims of the wars, natural catastrophes, famines, severe illnesses, and epidemics.

Our century has uplifted the attributes reason, logics, research, development, science, and watchwords like motivation, innovation, justice, peace. Nonetheless, the world is out of joints. Mankind walks erroneous ways and precipitous paths. The problems of the individual person, and the whole earth are manifold and insoluble. Frightening realities like war, expulsion, torture, abortion, mistreatment of the creature, criminality, famines, over-population, economic decline, social unrest, incurable disease seem to grow the more they are fought against. Those powerful and so-called wise ones of this world, the Churches, the religions, and the sciences cannot heal the world any more.

Are these already the previous indications or even *the signs* by which we must recognize our impotency and errors and are asked to revert?

If John the Baptist actually returned, would we then also listen and adhere to his admonishment, his appeal to conversion?

I do hope, "yes". I do fear "no", for so many will, especially then, wish to prove to the messenger of God that they know more and are wiser than he.

**PART IV**

**UNUSUAL SIGNS AND PHENOMENA  
TODAY**

**JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES  
HIS RETURN**

## HERE AND YONDER - THE NEW CONTACT

What I will describe now will appear like a fissure to the reader, at first, since it seemingly has nothing to do with the figure of John the Baptist. I will give an account of the circumstances and impacts causing me to think, feel, and experience in a new way. The route into this so different world does and did not resemble a drawn line. Many doubts and resistances accompanied me, many a question remained unanswered.

I tried to thoroughly explore my personal process of life and the personal lots of the people surrounding me. Do connections and correlations exist that are withdrawing themselves from recognition through our superficial thinking? This question led me to the so-called spiritual path.

At the end of my search I encountered a biblical figure: JOHN THE BAPTIST. My knowledge about him was scarce, I only vaguely knew his mission from the few verses in the gospels. For the early-Christian tradition leaves John the Baptist in a puzzling semi-darkness.

Without becoming aware of it, I more and more came into contact with the name of John the Baptist. Hereby the points of encounter were more than astounding. After some time, I began to thoroughly explore and study the life and work of John the Baptist. I recognized a deep correlation between that which today is still happening in his name in the quiet, and his mission once. Of course, all the documents within my reach, the historical writings, and the biblical sources could not lead to this result. I received the reference to the steadily acting power, the future work of this figure from the light from another world. I call this level of experience the *spiritual world*, since it stands out against the material plain of recognition of our worldly life.

So I will attempt to show the impacts and connections leading me to the spiritual way.

## GUIDANCE TOWARDS THE SPIRITUAL PATH

For many people the term *spiritual path* merely is a reference to a special way of thinking, acting, and feeling. That which is most extraordinary is being questioned too little, so that it remains undefined and foggy in a large number of heads. Therefore, outsiders often associate the spiritual way with lack of realism, fantastic reverie, search for personal healing, and religious wishing. Slogans like meditation, finding of the true self, mystic practices, etc., then form the framework for a wrong idea about the *spiritual path*.

While followers of the esoteric way of thinking see in this way the only chance to find the truth, the opponents speak of ways of error, false teachings, compensation for religion, and so on. Terms like New Age, reincarnation, re-birthing, channelling rather cause confusion and scepticism than help for outsiders. People having no relation to these themes, when required, usually side with the critics and adversaries, since in public view the spiritual way rather is esteemed in the negative. When questioned more closely what the spiritual way is, the presumed concrete ideas often turn into an intangible nebulous formation. This applies to adherents as well as to critics. The reasons are manifold. Lack of basic knowledge, experience, imagination, and of earnest effort are the major causes, however.

The permanently carried-on discussions between adherents and opponents mostly culminate in the absurd attempt to counter every argument. In the end frequently a vexed and presumably pitying smile for the one thinking differently remains. Yet, it seems quite simple. In every human being there is a spirit ruling his thoughts, deeds, wishes and goals, his body, and all his self. Everybody can permanently experience that the spirit is not bound to the body. How could we otherwise think of people, things, experiences, times, and areas far away from us, or even develop plans for the future? Thoughts are truly free. As form and expression of our spirit they have the power to surmount time and space. Only those able to free themselves from the daily sorrows and plights, fears, frustrations, and especially from their restricting self, attain awareness of the unlimited power intrinsic to our thoughts. This *letting go* and *becoming free* is difficult, especially in today's world of materialistic goals, a world of belief in technology and progress. But technology knows no other end than further development, progress knows no other motivation than ever more progress. In connection with materialistic values, power, and acknowledgement this leads to the

loss of the metaphysical point of reference of *wholesomeness*. Our life is increasingly directed by forms as well as by outer and inner coercions. Meaning and sense are being pushed aside. Thus the form dominates the essence, the outside rules over the inside. The access to the psychic and spiritual meaning of our life gets lost. Because we no longer are able to understand the correlations of entirety, we subdivide it into ever smaller portions, and proudly name this analytical process. We are able to make a distinction between these fragments or recognitions, but we can no longer fit them together to an overall -knowledge.

The actual reason for this is embedded more deeply, of course, and has its roots in the polarity of human consciousness. The polarity becomes evident, when we differentiate, or, more accurately, split up between self and non-self, male and female, good and bad, inside and outside, true and untrue, etc. . So we are prisoners of polarity, and oftentimes experience these contrasts as conflicts. It is necessary, however, to understand that not the world is polar, but our consciousness, our perception. Time and again adepts and philosophers of all times pointed this out to us. This is difficult to understand with our rationally and analytically imprinted patterns of thought, however. That we perceive our world to be polar probably is a consequence of the structure of our brain. Maybe cerebral science will find a key to this. It discovered that the two halves of the brain clearly differ in function and task. The left hemisphere is, among other things, predestined to analytically and rationally assimilate impressions and experiences of this world. Also our perception of time stems from the left half of the brain.

The right hemisphere rather operates contrary to this. It is impressed more archaically. Analogy and symbolism, recognition of complexes (figure, form - by a part only) are located here. The right half of the brain is not subjected to the understanding of time of the left hemisphere. The so-called picture and dream worlds of the soul are directed by the right half of the brain.

The psychology of the subconscious speaks of a layered consciousness, and differentiates between upper and lower consciousness. The conscious can be associated with the left hemisphere, the unconscious with the right. We mark ourselves out from the subconscious through the self, and thus from the all-comprehensive consciousness. We thus live with a subjective upper consciousness. People not identifying strongly with their upper consciousness, automatically reduce their self. With this they attain a certain resonance with the subconscious. Medial faculties, premonitions, visions, and clairvoyance are the consequences. However, the state of enlightenment (cosmic consciousness) only enters, when the self is overcome, yes, dissolved. Upper and lower consciousness fuse to a unity, the all-comprising consciousness. This is a process only few mystics and adepts attain. Concerning Jesus of Nazareth we have to assume that he completely surmounted the self, and had unified all spheres of consciousness within himself, wherefore he is

also called the *embodiment of the cosmic Christ* in context to this.

Thorwald Dethlefsen, therefore, also interprets the words of Jesus "*I and my Father are one*" to be the fusion of the upper consciousness (self) with the lower (Father).

Once again regarding the functions and are as of performance of the two halves of the brain, we have to admit that our scientifically imprinted view of the world is one-sided in the literal meaning of the word. It predominantly is the expression of the left hemisphere, in which the rational, the analytical, the causal, and the understanding of time dominate. We have to become accustomed to the thought that our recognitions only are a part of the truth, the half-wisdom. It therefore rather is ignorance than arrogance, when wide parts of science deride the rather analogously perceived view of the world of the right moiety of the brain, and discard its essential contents as irrational, or even naïve. Once we have learnt and accepted that both hemispheres form a unity in their polarity, we will attain the capability of greater insights.

Until then we have to admit to ourselves that that which lies beyond our recognition and our upper consciousness is the by far larger part. We also have to understand the All-Embracing One, the Unity, also called Cosmos that by definition encompasses everything, being beyond our recognition. Consequently, nothing can exist outside this Cosmos. In our human imagination the universe only has an undefined content and no shape, wherefore we always describe it with the adjunct *without*. Thus: without space, without time, without beginning, without end, without limits etc.. Describing our polar world, we have to give to all the afore-mentioned terms the adjunct *with*. Following the Law of Analogy, we have to understand, however, "*that that, which is above, is identical with that, which is below.*" (Hermes Trismegistos) and that "*the microcosm is equal to the macrocosm*". (Paracelsus).

In the Lord's Prayer taught by Jesus this synchronism is again expressed in the words "*on earth as it is in heaven*". Eventually we also have to comprehend that Jesus referred to this All-Embracing Unity, when he spoke of the "*Father*", "*the Dwelling of the Father*" or of "*the Kingdom of Heaven*". Jesus called the polarity "*This World*", however, and explicitly emphasized: "*My Kingdom is not of This World.*"

Jesus came from the unity (from the Father) into the polarity (this world). He overcame polarity, however, and returned into unity. Thus the significance of his teaching and his terrestrial life lies in the demonstration of and the example set by the surmounting of the polar state of consciousness. With the surmounting of polarity also the world is overcome. Thus, the way of salvation and the redemption were exhibited by Jesus.

Only he, who no longer differentiates between the self and non-self, good and evil is capable of the All-Embracing Divine Love, as taught by Jesus and extended to his fellow men. Under this aspect the word of Jesus "*Father, forgive them, for they do*



*not know what they are doing*” becomes significant. He pitied his torturers, for he saw them still deeply entwined in polarity, still far away from salvation. Wholesomeness presupposes the overcoming of the self. Without this step the chains of this polar world cannot be laid down, paradise not be reached. Jesus points out the significance of the way to us. He steadily advises us to take this step. But he also depicts to us the steep path to salvation by saying: *“if any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross, and follow me.”*

The words of Jesus are spoken in vain, however, once we flee into forms, prayers, and dogmas, and fearfully cling to the polar world: the self. This, however, is understandable, for this way to salvation also gives rise to fears, and is connected with experiences of affliction until the renunciation of the self is attained, until the ego is surmounted. Do attentively read the Gospels. You will not find one Jesus -word asking us to convert the world into a paradise. We hear him voice several times, however, that the state of salvation, the kingdom of heaven is established within ourselves. Through our way of thinking, the analysis into fractions, we mostly make our salvation, respectively ruin, dependant on the outside world, however. If man is unhappy, he generally connects his misfortune with the projection of guilt. Therefore the cause is sought outside the self, like in political or social circumstances, in the profession, in the circle of the family, and so on. The reasons seem inexhaustible. The modern sciences of psychology and sociology occasionally support this kind of projection of guilt. Even if connections are established here, at a closer look they merely are correlations. Once the alleged outer disturbing factors are eliminated, we are no closer to Divine healing, to unity, in the sense of the teaching of Jesus. Only our ego, the self-world is smoothened.

Jesus taught us the active internal experience of salvation, however. He preached the way out of polarity into the bliss of unity. With this he is in full harmony with all founders of religions, saints, adepts, and mystics. In their root, therefore, all religions, mythologies, and esoteric teachings are of the same essence. Once a religion becomes institutional, it becomes frozen in forms. Superficialities increase, essence is transformed into rituals. The originally esoteric teaching of salvation increasingly becomes an exoteric confession of creed. So religion often turns into an invisible cage, excluding the actual aim. This goal is the unity with the All -Embracing Spirit, which in the world-religions has the name God or Logos, Tao, Nirvana, and Brahman.

Why did we fall from this unity and tumble down into the polar-experienced world? All religions and mythologies give an essentially congruent explanation. In Christianity and in the Jewish religion I.Moses describes in the beginning the expulsion of Adam from the Garden Eden (unity), since he ate from the tree of recognition of good and evil (polarity). Into this act the snake seduced him. The whole statement must be understood symbolically. The step from divine unity into becoming human was difficult for the hesitant Adam, since this act was equal to

reversion from the accustomed state of wholesomeness and the entry into a world full of conflicts. Adam had need of the encouragement by the snake (symbol for Lucifer = bringer of light, in figurative sense also mediator of wisdom and recognition). It showed to him the possibilities of the polar man, like freedom of action, creative work, establishment of an own order, etc..

At the latest at this point the question must be allowed, if not God himself laid the foundation stone for a polar world with the creation of Eve. The splitting into the aspects male-female, namely, is an essential criterion of polarity. Was the fall of the angels from unity intended by God, or a fundamental error by man? Does this process make sense, and, is it correctable individually or even globally?

We more easily find the answer in Greek mythology and its parallels to the Christian view. Let us here regard the person of Prometheus, as described by Homer and Hesiod. Prometheus was a member of the Titans who looked at closely neither were gods nor men. Also the originally androgynous Adam was neither god nor man. Being sons of heaven, the Titans were a part of the Olympic world of gods, however. Prometheus (the one knowing in advance) is described as intelligent, versatile, and cunning. The deity Athena taught him sciences and arts. When men cleaved off from the gods, (Hesiod 535: *"when namely the Gods and the mortal men parted at Mekone ..."*), a large cattle had to be fairly divided among both sides. Prometheus sided with mortal men. He deceived Zeus, and merely gave the bones to him. He furnished men with the meat and the juicy intestines, however. Additionally he robbed the gods of the fire (symbol for knowledge and wisdom) and let his protégés have it. The father of the gods in the Mount Olympus did indeed know of the ruse, but submitted to the betrayal. Hesiod further reports: *"evil, however, did he in his heart announce to men, and this should fulfil itself"*, and *"ever since the generations of men on earth have been burning white bones on fuming altars for the immortal ones."*

In antique tradition Prometheus becomes the progenitor of the mortal human race. Zeus does let him stay in the world of man, but illustrates the consequence of his self-willed action towards the gods. From the trilogy of tragedies of Aeschylus we learn that Zeus has Prometheus, the friend of men, nailed to the peak of the Caucasus, and that an eagle (bird of the Zeus) eats up the latter's immortal and regrowing liver day by day. This martyrdom is to last as long as the world will exist, whereby Greek mythology understands this to be the end of an age. Heracles, the son of Zeus, brings the eagle down with an arrow; but Prometheus continues to be nailed to the rock. Zeus is prepared to free Prometheus from his affliction, however, demands, the surrender of a certain secret and a substitute for Prometheus who is prepared to take the latter's torments and death upon himself. For this the Centaur Chiron offers himself, an immortal one, who in his wisdom desires mortality.

In the Christian religion Adam corresponds to the figure of Prometheus (Adam in

the Garden Eden = Prometheus as son of heaven, Adam after the Fall = nailed Prometheus). At the same time there exists an unmistakable parallel between the liberated Prometheus and Jesus. On this background Jesus also is called the *second Adam*.

The topic *fall - wrong human way - redemption* is the basic structure of all religions and mythologies. The last two members of this chain appear to us to be a long, laborious way. However, we do not know, how long a process the dissociation from unity was.

Being human in the sense of the esoteric religions means nothing else than being more or less separated from God. This separation demands for individuality and forming of a self, philosophically called guilt, theologically sin. In principle there is no negative valuation connected with it, however. Christianity, therefore, also speaks of original sin, and thereby basically refers to the Fall (into sin), and the recognition of good and evil, the polar consciousness. We men thus excel by this guilt, respectively sin, however. We grow and reap on it, we refine ourselves. It is also maintained that the angels envy us for this chance to find recognition. The finding of recognition is not possible within the unity, within the cosmic consciousness. Recognition presupposes subject and object. Thus, there are as many worlds and subjective recognitions on earth as there are men. Not to speak of animals, plants, and minerals. Alone from this it can be understood into how many individuals (fragments) unity divides itself. All segments are active creatively. We merely have to acknowledge this, and to not evaluate it. Creation in this sense also means division. Creation is refusal of unity. The world therefore is the visible result of the abandonment of uniform unity. Let us regard the polar world from the positive point of view therefore, and let us dare to make a comparison: just like the prism glass cuts up the unity light into the single colours, thus the polar world is an instrument splitting up divine unity into innumerable components, individuals, and aspects.

The question, if this whole process is reality or even illusion seems fascinating and futile in one. However, the question of the purport of the polar detour of guilt and sin back to God actually is cogent. Even if this detour is not logical, we can have a foreboding of a meaningfulness, however. The miserable and painful process we experience between Fall and Redemption is necessary to attain consciousness. The way embodies the deep mystery of man's freedom and personal development. Guilt and freedom are twins, like innocence and unity. (An angel cannot do wrong, having no free will.) The polar way of man is recognition and affliction. Misery is instruction. In the experience of the greatest despair we voluntarily open the door to the House of the Father. Who, of his own free will and by conviction, re-incorporates himself into the Divine Order has achieved a higher cognition than he who, for fear, never left paradise. The words of Jesus in the *Allegory of the Prodigal Son* say more about this than all theoretical discourses could.

One final question remains. Does the polar recognition of *where there is happiness, there is misery; where the good is, there is the evil, etc.* eventually free us from the restraint on our inordinate self-awareness? Is it an invitation to spread misery and pain, to thus bring the world closer to recognition and redemption? Is the utmost measure of recognition reached by total self-idolization? Most certainly not. With all the theoretical knowledge we cannot approach the Divine principle of unity. The self-awareness rather should be active creatively in the sense of creation of love, of peace, of *unity with everything*. So also all the founders of religions, saints, and adepts always preached humility and charity to be the highest expression of self-awareness.

Here, for the time being, the circle closes to John the Baptist again. In the mania of recognition, in the frenzy of the seemingly unlimited personal freedom of the individual and collective egotism, we produce affliction, pain, and wrongs of an immense extent. The danger of degeneration and destruction is great. Once we are at too far a distance from the *magnetic field* of God (out of the right track), the power of attraction fails. The patience of the heavenly powers on earth is not infinite. Therefore we will be in need of a warning voice setting our polar world in the right place again, pointing out the borders trespassed, and summoning conversion, as long as the history of man will last. A figure like John the Baptist who wishes to change haughtiness to humility, self-love to compassion, and who exhibits possibilities of salvation. Divine Unity sent us teachers in profusion of grace.

I beg the reader's pardon that I cannot elaborate on the themes of the Fall, polarity, and the way to salvation. A preoccupation would lead away from the intent of this book, however. The sketching of this topic is necessary, however, when we speak of the spiritual path, and do not wish to depart from the deep esoteric wisdom of the religions and mythologies. The sum of all esoteric wisdoms is the recognition of the unity with everything and the way towards this unity.

Thus, the intensive pursuit of esoteric sections like meditation, channelled writing, astrology, spiritual healing, gem-therapy, tarot, cabala, etc. is not necessarily a spiritual way. Also here everything only is a part of the whole. A too intensive concentration on partial knowledge and sections encompasses the danger of stagnation. Again a demarcation from unity occurs.

When can we say a person is entering the spiritual path in the sense meant here? Let me express it in this way: when man begins to discern that his spirit, his soul is the actual individual. When he acknowledges a reality beyond the visible, touchable, and measurable, and is convinced that all matter and its reactions merely are the visible mirror-image of a higher, yet, invisible reality. When he clears the analytic-concrete in his left hemisphere, and does not limit his existence to the terrestrial,

bodily existence. And, last but not least, when he begins to fathom the structure and hierarchy of this higher intelligence and reality or even to initially experience them. A corresponding inner transformation and reorientation of the contents and aims of life is the logical consequence.

The question of the where-from and the where-to, and the meaning of life is asked by everyone. The intensity of inquiry is depending on many factors: inner preparedness, outward impulses, individual goals, horizons, and religiosity are some of them. The adept, however, unites all these impulses with the expression *degree of maturity of the soul*.

Every person experiences outward and inward impulses. Whether he perceives and understands these messages, depends on his resonance. Often the comparison with a tuning-fork is made here that only can resound the tone corresponding to its vibration. Or the short-wave radio that cannot receive a long-wave message. These similes are by no means compelling, but throw light on the problem of reduced preparedness for receptiveness.

I wish to describe my impulses in short. Not because they are especially significant, they merely serve the purpose of facilitating the understanding of the following chapters.

In 1986 I was faced with a great professional challenge. A busy time of daily twelve to fifteen hours of work began, during which I pondered for many nights. Into this time of strain and limited personal freedom fell the actually peculiar, however. Innumerable meetings, succeeding one another within a short time, with people of many "couleurs". They neither had to do with my profession nor with my circle of friends nor with my family. Without exception they were characters and biographies, which very much occupied my mind. In my inner circle of acquaintances fateful changes occurred additionally. Two of my friends died within a few weeks dramatically and untimely. It was especially striking that precisely those people with high ethical standards were subjected to hard changes in the course of life. Modesty, charity, helpfulness, understanding, and a readiness to forgive marked them.

While making a visit in a hospital, I had a decisive encounter with a fifteen year -old girl called Tatiana. She had been suffering from epilepsy since she was four. The profile of the illness was especially severe, and there was a continuous deterioration. A long way of suffering began that still has not ended: check-ups, stays in hospitals, and therapies took turns with sojourns in schools and homes for the disabled. A further change for the worse showed gradually. The system of motion deteriorated and the girl was gradually forced into the wheel-chair. While - in the beginning - as the cause for this deterioration the high dose of sedating remedies had been named, later the actual illness: multiple sclerosis was diagnosed. In all her suffering this girl experiences the blessing of the strong and indivisible love of her mother.

With that girl I had already come into contact before, however. In a dream I had seen a large fluorescent plate, on which the name Tatiana was blinking, and below it a combination of letters and figures, resembling a chemical formula. Intuitively I knew that this formula expressed a remedy or a way to healing. Unfortunately, up to now, I have been retracing this dream and formula in vain.

Of course, I could have suppressed all these experiences I had had within a few weeks. Like with the pithy argument that everybody decides his own fortune, or I even could have referred to the karmic law – of which I knew nothing at that time, by the way. Something within me sought an explanation and for reasons beyond medical knowledge and usual schemes of thought. In the classical literature of Anthroposophy I found rudiments and references to correlations, meaning of fates, and to the similar.

Naturally, I also fell to the belief of learning more in so-called esoteric circles. So I did, but, for the most part in a disappointing way. Very often the topic is approached too one-sided, plain, and uncritical. The expectation from the *outside* is too high, the power of self-assessment and self-correction too weak. Meditations, attempts at healing, and medial messages are well carried by good will, but the results are evaluated too euphorically.

Due to my critical questioning I soon was an uninvited person in many a *caring* circle. The breach eventually occurred, when chosen ones of several circles went to see a world-renowned visionary to learn their own karma and that of their acquaintances. To take along a photo of the respective person was sufficient. The statements of the visionary came without hesitation. The karma of the girl Tatiana, her guilt and atonement were transmitted devastatingly. With some statements, going far back into previous lives, it was conspicuous that the description of the conditions of the time did not correspond with the historically certified dates. This interested only few people, however.

From objective, well-founded literature I was acquainted with documented medial messages of high quality, however. Carefully I collected all attainable protocols of channelled messages, compared them, and structured them according to themes. Additionally, I observed the respective media over an extended period of time. Soon I discovered that almost every circle had a structure and attitude of expectation of its own. These are consciously or subconsciously steered by the medium. But, I also recognized that unselfish and discreet media received messages of high quality. Selection of words, figures of speech, and contents are indicative of a knowledge that is not within the medium to such extent. I witnessed wonderful healings of persons suffering from severe illnesses. The spiritual messages pointed to reasons and correlations of the afflictions, and caused a spontaneous process of healing. To this I testify readily.

My positive observations made me take a venture. Tatiana's mother and I dared to attempt medial writing. We hoped to receive an advice how the suffering of Tatiana could be eased. After long minutes of waiting we received the following message:

*"Yes, I am Jonah.*

*God be with you. I am little and, nonetheless, a herald of the Lord.*

*Prayer is capable of more than men understand. It resembles the ray of sun enclosing everything in light.*

*Do not expect too much from your brothers in the spirit. God alone knows of the end.*

*Dr. H... in H...can be a terrestrial helper within Divine salvation,*

*but you must take the worldly way alone.*

*Be humble and patient in your heart.*

*Go forth in peace."*

Our inquiries showed that this physician actually existed in the named place, a small town in Austria. Without hesitation we travelled there. The physician was surrounded by an extraordinarily large number of patients. He immediately recognized Tatiana's disease. For a few seconds he put his hands upon her and said: *"I can ameliorate, but not heal."* In the course of a two-year therapy, frequency of attacks and intensity were visibly reduced. Tatiana's character lit up, her interest in her surrounding increased distinctly.

I, however, continued to be concerned with the question, if the named karma of the girl was the cause for her path of suffering. The statement of the well-known visionary naturally did weigh.

It cost me much effort to talk the mother of Tatiana into again establishing contact to the spiritual world. With some fear and excitement we waited, if that Jonah would answer again. To my unvoiced question we received the following answer:

*"Yes, I am Jonah.*

*God be with you, peace to your hearts. Do bestow, o Lord, the Love that alone frees mankind. Do lead the souls to the way to the light. Let your mercy work, where hate and envy rule.*

*Hard are the hearts of men. Hard are the words said about Tatiana.*

*God does not wish that presumably wise men conjure fate. God's love takes hold of every soul.*

*It is not your task to penetrate karma. Your human being is not capable of comprehending it. Sense and not-sense of karma are unknown to you men. May a living one be seeing, he is still limited by his subject, and his statement is of little value.*

*I cannot, and wish not to say anything concerning this, since it is the soul's very own*

work.

*Do have faith in God's might. It is omnipresent. Do be patient. Connect your hearts with Christ and recognition will develop within. He knows of the long way leading to salvation. Ask him, and he will guide you.*

*God's peace shall seize you. Time is nigh, during which you will hear his word.*

*Many helpers are ready for you. Be not afraid.*

*A heart is set afire. God's blessing is with her. She sacrifices herself for the blessing of men.*

*Do follow this faithful servant to the Heaven of the Holy Trinity.*

*O Maria, she is a pearl in the light. I know of her light. God has blessed her. God is within her. To Him nothing is impossible.*

*My words may still seem strange to you today, yet, they are spoken in love. Free your spirit for the light and the calm within you. Only then I can reveal myself to you.*

*I bless you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.*

*Go forth in peace."*

This statement was explicit and enigmatical in one. It was so unexpected and well-formulated that we remained speechless for a long time. Further the reference to Mary was interesting. In my first conviction I saw a reference to the mother of Jesus in it, until I unexpectedly soon met Maria. I became acquainted with a person who had deeply penetrated the mysteries of the spiritual world. A woman who, after a colourful life, internalised and lived all the things of which I heard and read. Always a crowd of searchers, desperate and sick ones gathered around her. To them she gave back hope and being centred in life through meditations, prayer, and charity. I would even say: the light and the healing of Jesus Christ. Once Maria meditated deeply, words in the name of Christ flowed from her mouth.

I openly admit my doubts and reservations that worked in me for a long time. Eventually, I was allowed to gain understanding that the energy of Christ can manifest itself in persons devoting their existence completely to the service of this power.

The words of Maria in reference to the way of suffering of the girl Tatiana showed me new dimensions and values.

Near the town of Rosenheim Maria erected a work of light in which many desperate persons found their healing of spirit, soul, and body. The words of Jonah verified themselves.

When I once visited Maria, a lady by the name of Barbara was in her company. Soon I recognized that also she was an adept, and, so to speak had laid the foundation-stone to Maria's work. They were both women who quite unintentionally mediated deep insights into spiritual power and Christ-energy to me.

Just like I would still have been in need of further proofs, I experienced two



extremely miraculous adventures in short sequence. They happened in the presence of witnesses unfamiliar with this topic. If it had not been for these witnesses, I, myself, would doubt that they had actually occurred thus. They were events giving evidence of the great power of divine energy. They are not credible for outsiders, which is why I will not further report of them here.

Another experience I had in the quiet, however. I will describe this one in detail. On a grey, desolate winter day I went for a long hike. Snow-covered ground and rainy thaw presented me with cold, wet feet. I only had the wish for a warming footbath. Eventually arrived at home, I sunk my feet into warm water and indulged in day-dreaming of a summer during my youth at the Baltic Sea. Abruptly I was snatched out from this daydream. A face arose before my closed eyes. Instantaneously I realized that this face was unfamiliar and had formed differently from faces one recalls or imagines. This picture was reality and still not graspable. It furthermore had a specialty: The face was black-white, and, despite of this, full of colours. The long, black hair on the head had a bluish gloss, just like the beard of the upper lip, of the lower jaw, and of the cheek-bones. Hair and beard fell in strands, but, they seemed well-groomed and strong in expression. The colour of the eyes seemed dark brown. The whole face had an extraordinarily noble and wise expression, full of love and kindness. Yet, undoubtedly it also portrayed resolution.

I experienced all at once: alarm, fright, uncertainty, joy, and being overwhelmed. The first I did was to open my eyes widely. The face was before me, without change. I jumped up, tipped-over my foot-bath, and ran to the mirror. In it I did see my face, but clearly and distinctly there was the unknown face between me and my reflected image. I returned to my chair and closed my eyes. Now the face came closer and closer, as if zoomed. In the end only the right eye in manifold enlargement was before me.

Instinctively I decided to surrender myself to this image. Only then the wonderful occurred: the eye radiated such love and power, withdrawing from human notion and art of description. It seized my whole self as it was. Slowly and cautiously the eye continued to approach, until it seemingly flowed into me. I felt body, spirit, and soul being streamed through. A kind of weightlessness came over me, ere I comprehended that the face did no longer exist.

I was so deeply moved that I left my house on the spot, drove to the clearing of a forest, and sat down on a tree-trunk. A feeling of limitless love and loving kindness took hold of me. At this moment I even would have carried the most poisonous snake on my hands. I suddenly comprehended the trees within my range of view to be singular beings endowed with a living spirit. They resembled motionless men exchanging their thoughts with one another. I was a part of their world, could grasp their hopes and needs. My surrounding did take notice of me, but did not pay any

attention to me. At least I concluded this to be so from a group of does who had entered the clearance and scraped and grazed directly in front of me. They eyed me with great calmness.

This strange state of being was beneficial and full of uncommon insights. It did not last long. Suddenly my body became heavy as if liquid, cold lead would flow into my veins and members. Without moving or uttering a sound, I appeared normal to my surroundings again. The does fled abruptly. A veil of forgetting laid itself over my thoughts. What I had been granted to experience in detail, remained as vague as described here. Hours later I got second thoughts. Would this state appear more frequently? Would I then still be apt for the normal, terrestrial world? Later I desired the return of this experience. Unfortunately it has not returned.

Who or what hid behind this face? At first I connected this picture with Jesus. Then I doubted it, for my intuitive imagination of the Jesus-physiognomy was different. The experienced image pointed to decision, determination. It operated as a part and parallel to the Jesus-energy in one. Such things can be felt, but hardly described.

Some time later I could find it out. It was the visionary facial portrait of John the Baptist. To understand this, however, I had need of helpers from the spiritual realm.

## THE HELPERS FROM THE SPIRITUAL REALM

Jonah became my friend, confidant, and teacher. Even though the helper from the spiritual world was invisible, he did win in contours and figure. I admire his patience and forbearance which he always showed in the conversational contact with me. For, I remained reserved, critical, yes incredulous, despite of my experiences. But his words always remained full of friendliness, loving kindness, and wisdom. Additionally, the poetry of his words, and the veneration of God in his statements were striking. Also the courage with which he exposed himself to my innumerable questions deserves recognition. He never evaded or gave a void response. The questions were quite disruptive for a being from yonder, representing a certain spiritual view. How, for example, should he express his view about war, murder, famines, misery, natural catastrophes, epidemics, suicides, abortion, mass-killing of animals for human nutrition, and many more such things?

His answers surprised us ever and again. What backgrounds and correlations was he able to confer to us from his point of view. One thing became increasingly clearer in the course of this: the hopelessness of human action, once it deviates from the true Divine law of love. Always Jonah ended his explanations with the reference that they would merely reflect his present state of knowledge and that also his form of existence demanded a steady checking and learning. Several times we were

honestly ashamed about our judgement concerning many a theme. We became conscious that scarce knowledge (when does one recognize this oneself?) mostly is the reason for premature judgement.

Jonah did not want to accept our praise, however. He referred to the wisdom and patience of his teachers. Additionally he added: *“my knowledge is questionable like yours. It corresponds to the sphere of my existence. But how many spheres of recognition are still lying ahead of me? Only with humility and God’s help I will be able to reach them.”*

He never answered questions relating to personal decisions or future ways of action, however. Mostly he referred to the free will of man as a part of the Divine law.

The conversations with Jonah fill volumes. Reading the protocols of the conversations coherently, the red thread is unmistakable: he pointed out the meaningfulness of human existence, the polarity, and entanglement, and the way to salvation. He gently and lovingly made me recognize my truly wrong ways in this respect. All my questions never pleased him especially. They prevented him, as I see today, from telling of things which seemed essential to him. Yet, he let me have my way, for, as he once owned *“your questions draw us closer to one another.”*

One remark is important to me: some time ago I read the works of Novalis. A spiritual relationship between these two is unmistakable for me. I rediscovered many a way of observation of my friend Jonah in the philosophical fragments of Novalis. At the same time a parallel to the esoteric philosophy of Thorwald Dethlefsen is recognizable, especially on the topic of polarity.

Who, now, is this Jonah, and how did we receive his messages? In August 1988, I asked Jonah to tell us about his existence, his state of consciousness. His words were beautiful, but he only vaguely presented himself:

*“Yes, I am Jonah.*

*My name shall not mislead you. I am but a minute being in God’s unity. You are not yet prepared for inner calm and Divine peace. Be patient you, you both. Help will be administered to you. God is merciful on those, seeking him without selfishness.*

*God has not the moral of man. He measures for names and the selfless love within them. Only he acting lovingly, acts correctly. It is the time to become sensitive of God’s unity. Do not hesitate. Learn to in patience lay faith into his words.*

*Yes, I am Jonah. I chose this way to no longer leave you alone in the dark.*

*Life and strife is misery. Hark to the voice of the soul. For continuously it calls for her master. It is He who takes off the afflictions from your souls. Heartily is the love connecting Jesus Christ with you. Only through him will you find true hope and bliss. He never ends and always will be.*

*Your senses are perturbed, your thoughts flee doubtfully. You look for a proof of my existence. Do not worry. One proof is the word of the Lord.  
How shall I answer your question about my self to please you? I am an individual, yet, nonetheless do not have a self like you. If I had one, I would be a human being like you. I enjoyed the world, I did wrong. I wish nobody would have to return to there, but this will still be along way.  
I will guide you, my brother, until my time has come.  
God be with you. Peace to your hearts.”*

In these few lines we had learnt so much, although little about Jonah. Only now I understand that he actually had said everything about himself. My normal way of thinking, the search for the analytically concrete prevented an earlier recognition, however. So it is only too understandable that, only a few weeks later, I wanted to again find out the background and correlation of our communication by questioning. We could veritably hear his sighing, as if he were saying: “what do you wish to hear, o man, in your simplicity?”

In his infinite patience he did well give in to my naïve curiosity. He described a common life in the late Middle Ages within the frontiers of present France. According to his words, our connection had begun in misery and did end in it. It was predominated by poverty, hunger, and persecution, but, also by resistance against injustice and suppression. By treason, I was caught in an ambush and was murdered. The extraordinary tragedy was that Jonah had been informed of this treason. The *“mighty and noble ones of that area”*, as he expressed it, had detained him, however, until the message of my death had reached them. Thus he could not help me. According to his description to him the span of time between his confinement and the news of my death was torments of hell.

Contrary to my expectation, the description was explicit and detailed, contained the topography of a landscape, and reproduced the social grievances of the contemporary history of the 17th century.

At the end Jonah added informatively: *“may the past have its roots in the now and today, yet, it is overcome. Man is to convert disaster into welfare. That which has been, must merely only be significance and recognition for that lying ahead of you. Yet, it shall point out to you that connections develop between souls outlasting times and worlds. If here or yonder, love and trust are born by Divine power. They are unswerving and eternal, once they have stood the test of affliction. Let us discern this and look ahead.”*

His last sentence suddenly weighed heavily, for he continued: *“Remember the face. Recall the signs. Be without sorrow, the vision of the face is a great grace. It developed within you. It was projected to the outside by particles of light, to let your human eye behold it. Always this image will touch your heart. Only a being of the*

*light can transfer what you have seen. Do go with him. Do listen to the voice within you, and follow this light. A great power will re-arise from this light on earth. It shines forth in most magnificent splendour, carried by the heavenly hosts.*

*My little being feels the waves. The day will come, when you will understand my words.*

*Allow me an instructive word: still time is young. Your human existence is standing at the parting of the ways. Do search for this light with all your might, then you will arise in the light.*

*Do not ask me the name, for my ways are not infinite. Only that, which you recognize yourself is of value before this light.*

*Go to a house of knowledge. How soon will you learn to separate the foolish from the wise.*

*Go forth in peace.”*

Thoughtfulness and deep emotion took hold of me. Now I felt the waves. Was the visionary image maybe the face of John the Baptist? Why had I so frequently and unexpectedly come upon his name during recent months? Why had many a businesslike, matter-of-fact fellow-man suddenly, and out of the blue, told me something about this figure, although I had no conscious relationship to John the Baptist? Had the law of resonance and affinity worked here? Had this John the Baptist even been the release of all my miraculous experiences during the times before, and had Jonah not even secretly referred to him in his words? And what was it that this figure from the light eventually wanted to say to me? To me, this little, little man.

It is not easy to put these things in their proper place, to come to terms with them. Who can be of help by interpreting? I looked for quick explanation and did not find it. But, how often did I hear the word of *humility, patience, and trust* from Jonah's mouth. And, was there not the sentence by Jonah: *“only that which you recognize yourself is of value before this light.”*

Thus I decided for humility and patience, but secretly had the hope to receive hints from the spiritual world. But, when we communicated with Jonah, he did not enter upon this theme. Yet, we could learn something about himself. He loves poetry, his steady interest and learning is aimed at the natural sciences. He enjoys expressing himself metaphorically, occasionally uses algebraic figures of speech. Like when he says: *“haughtiness is the higher power of self-consciousness”*, or makes the comparisons: *“the root of time is space, and space is a logical consequence of time – nonetheless they originate together,”* or *“the body relates to space, like the soul to time”* (comp. Novalis).

In haughtiness the spiritual being Jonah sees a fundamental evil of the history of man that also does not stop short before the terrestrial sciences. His sentence: *“who*

*does not treat the ideas and recognitions of others like his own is no true scholar*", makes thoughtful. I cannot answer, if his once voiced statement: *"the dynamics of the natural-scientific thinking automatically lead to metaphysics"* renders his opinion, or is an axiom of the spiritual (expert) world.

How did we receive the messages of Jonah? There are various methods of communication. In the beginning we chose the orthodox technique: The alphabet is written forming a circle on a sheet of paper. Two or more persons touch an easily movable object that spells the single words and sentences. This technique of spiritual writing is disputed, since it is misused by unversed and curious ones. Especially with labile, uncritical people with sensationalism, this occasionally leads to misinterpretations with negative consequences. The danger of manipulation by persons partaking (rather small) or by the being communicating additionally has to be excluded. A medial contact should never take place light-minded, as a joke or for curiosity' sake. Like there are many people showing off and pretending to be important, this also cannot be excluded concerning spiritual beings. Like in the here, there are also blockheads and earnest ones in the yonder. Comprehensive knowledge in this field is an absolutely necessary prerequisite, just like critical analyses are. Beginners and curious ones, just like deucing critics do well to have the correlations, backgrounds, and contents explained to themselves by an expert. Spiritual messages lasting over an extended span of time, should, aside from a critical assessment by oneself, also be subjected to the judgement of an adept. (Who considers himself a master or an adept, refutes himself by his own haughtiness).

Jonah approved of our hesitations, since they were a sign of an upright and critical effort. At the same time he made it clear to us that the technique is of subordinate importance that the law of resonance and affinity is decisive, however. (*"The vibration of the soul decides on the message"*). Nonetheless, he chose another method that surprised us. We received his messages in mirror-writing. Ursula (Tatiana's mother) wrote from the right to the left in seemingly unmotivated waves, without spacing and punctuation. Nobody knew significance nor contents. The process of writing was faster than a taking of notes by hand. Days later the puzzle was solved. A sheet was lying in the sunlight close to an opened window. Once the viewer stood in the suitable angle, the writing was readable.

Jonah rid us of our last doubts, by addressing the same message word by word to me via a close friend. He received the message in normal writing. It was quite voluminous, so that I will reproduce it in extracts only:

*"Yes, I am Jonah.*

*Peace be with you.*

*The earth, this seething planet is in danger of destroying itself. Mankind is looking for peace and harmony. But it is not in agreement on the way to chose.*

*Neither you nor I will be able to unite them.  
Our bond in Divine love outlasted misery and affliction, and many forms of existence.  
This alone is the reason for the grace that you can experience my word .  
It is not time urging me to reveal this, but the calling of the seeking souls, of the  
afflicted hearts.  
It is not sorrow pressing me, but the recognition of Divine grace.  
A great light will again be sent to earth. Not you two have chosen this light, but this  
light has chosen you.  
If I could be of assistance to you, I would not hesitate a moment to become man.  
You men, do end the question of deception and truth. God alone is Truth.  
Here we feel, how the light is amassing its forces. It is as if this light were sucked off  
from the heavens, to return brighter and more brilliant than ever.  
Do not doubt, understand!  
Excuse my many words, but also a spiritual being like me feels wistfulness and pain.  
I checked and re-examined each of my words, for it is not a trifle to say this. It will not  
be something easy for the proud man to recognize this light.  
Peace beyond all frontiers. God guard you.”*

I purposely omitted some topics of the text. Some concerned myself. Others again referred to symptoms to be expected in the further course of the history of man, if we find no firm standing in the Divine Law of Love. (*“Haughtiness, hate, and anger of thoughts always take possession of the hand murdering, burning down, and destroying,”* said Jonah in another passage). Jonah in his logic pointed to the conclusion and bitter consequence. He used the comparison with the inclined plane, and spoke of a *“declining contingent of time, the more acute the angle of inclination is”*. He mentioned some danger zones of the earth, in points erroneous ways of men, and their short-term consequences. Some of this can also be deducted by clear human ratio. An open-minded spiritual being has an additional plane of view, however: the immense energy-potential of all negative human thoughts, aims, and emotions (also fears) that are bound to the planet earth, and urge toward realization in matter. Sum and degree of compression of all these negative energies are not visible to us human beings, occasionally they can be felt, however. If a discharge of these energies occurs, we - with our partial insights – can only discern partial and outer correlations. The comparison with de-rained clouds, in which steam condenses until, under appropriate circumstances, a discharge occurs, is a metaphorical explanation.

Not to influence the reader, I have to assess for myself, and keep to myself to what extent some of his conclusions have taken place up to now.

Of by far greater significance, however, is the reference to the coming light that shall bring help to those searching and afflicted. Jonah describes this in moving

words. His sentence: *"It will not be something easy for the proud man to recognize this light."* makes quite pensive. Being familiar with the way of speaking of Jonah, by now, I see in it a softened down expression for fight, persecution, and mockery of this great light. At the time of the Jonah-message I did not reflect that concretely what had been said, however. In the *"great light"* which will be sent to earth, I saw a further reference to John the Baptist. But, it was not a conviction yet, since concrete data were missing. The whole message neither depressed me nor upraised me from the terrestrial. Simply because it was inconceivable for me that perchance a John the Baptist should return to earth. If so, in what form would he come to earth again? In biblical form, in the shape of his spiritual field of energy – and finally when? If this happened in a 100 years or more, what should a message of this today be good for? In addition to me, who could not at all classify these words, much less understand them. In a way I considered it a waste of energy of the spiritual world to reveal these things to a dark horse like me. Who of all could do something with it? On the other hand there was this spiritual being Jonah. By then I had been communicating with him for five years, and all he had said was understandable and comprehensible. The contents never were of dubious range. Also it did not seem that he was a secluded prayer-brother or even an esoteric spinner from the other sphere. On the contrary, I tendered many a scientific discourse of him to experts who paid tribute to his processes of thought. Occasionally an unknown quantity remained open, which probably can only be decoded in a metaphysical approach.

This one and some other Jonah-messages I had checked by adepts. So by the already-mentioned ladies Maria and Barbara as well as by an old and honourable mystic in far-away Istria. All of them saw in the *great light* a reference to John the Baptist. The word of Jonah did not need to be deciphered any more. They had the character of revelations and guided to deep pensiveness.

The mystic in the heart of Istria taught me the understanding of this message. I made his acquaintance on a business trip. Having run short of time, I looked for a shortcut to Pula. The gain in time I had hoped for did not materialize, however. On a side-path I got into increasingly impassable terrain, and, finally, had to stop in front of a wooden hut. Before it two dogs dozed in the afternoon-sun, and some goats grassed the scanty, stony ground. In this remote area a hale and hearty old man led the life of a hermit. Until late at night I was allowed to be his guest. The skills and talents of this old man were manifold. He grew wine and pressed it. He produced bread and fresh goat cheese. For this he only used his hands and some wooden troughs and barrels. Besides he had his own cistern. The fresh wine and the spicy flat cake were a delicacy. The hermit had come to this solitude many years ago to seek self-communion and insight. In his whole appearance he seemed like a monk. He was dressed in a grey linen cowl. It showed clear traces of his daily work. On his chest



he wore a simple wooden cross. He was friendly, but taciturn, and did not talk about himself much. His eyes, however, were full of life. After some mugs of wine I asked him abruptly, what he knew of John the Baptist. He looked at me for a long time and did not answer. Now I asked him directly: *“Can you imagine that the spirit of John the Baptist has always remained on this earth, or even, that he will return to again fulfil his mission?”* The old man stood up without saying a word, took a wooden bowl and left the hut. I heard the sound of the cistern and the whimpering of the dogs. After a few minutes he returned and said:

*“The animals need water for the night. It is late.”* I was afraid to have hurt or even provoked him, and said with all my gentleness: *“I know, I do not look like it, and I do not appear so, but the question is very important to me. I also know that you have the answer.”* He put his hand on my shoulder and said: *“you are not thirsty, you are not hungry, nonetheless, you drink hastily as if you were in flight. Your eyes seek something in this cottage that is not. I therefore know that these and other questions are moving you. Being as hasty as you are, you hardly will find an answer.”* After a short while he continued: *“between Jesus and John there is a deep mystery. Both are connected by this mystery, and we can feel it or look for it in vain. Nobody can describe this, except for these two. For as long as this mystery will be on earth both are effective on earth. If a man senses the power of Jesus Christ, then John the Baptist was with him before to guide him to this power. Nonetheless, this Christ was before John.”* “Yes, yes,” I interjected hastily, *“I know.”* He looked at me smilingly and said: *“I do not know it, I am just parrot-fashioning what I learnt.”* I excused myself. “O”, he continued, *“nobody of us really knows it and understands it.”* He explained the figure of John the Baptist from his point of view to me, and I felt that he had deep knowledge. He perceived the predecessor of Christ to be a tool of God that had worked, and will work, with manifold names in all religions and cultures. This, however, always in mediate or immediate union with Jesus Christ. His activity is not only bound to the earth, however, but it rather has to be understood as a cosmic work. Additionally, he spoke of the large spiritual family of John the Baptist that is at home in all spheres of existence. These spheres of being, in the view of the hermit, correspond to the state of consciousness of the individual. They extend from the corporeal-terrestrial via multi-stage-mental ones to the spiritual-divine sphere of recognition. When, in certain cycles of the history of mankind, the work of John the Baptist (seen thus, merely the name of this Divine tool in Palestine in the 1st ct AD) is planned, a long and detailed preparatory work commences in all spheres at the same time. The spirit of John the Baptist percolates in like manner through all spheres of consciousness up to the corporeal-terrestrial plane, to man on earth. According to the words of the hermit, this oozing resembles a spiritual relay from sphere to sphere, whereby each of these spheres of consciousness encompasses a circle of intercessors (mediums). The seeping through of the spirit of John is perceived in

reversed order by man on earth, however, since the final mediator becomes discernible first. Once the members of all spheres are equally permeated by spirit and task, the work on earth begins. The spiritual energy of all planes of consciousness now concentrates on the terrestrial mission. The hermit allegorically spoke of seven spheres of (conscious) being. Before the John -energy becomes recognizable for man on earth, it is already anchored. So it is also explicable that many admonishers and preachers of reversion worked immediately before John the Baptist in Palestine. These, as it is, are to be assessed as forerunners of John the Baptist. According to the words of the hermit, the John -energy already is the Christ-energy, since it is born from it. Transferred to occurrence in nature, he made the comparison with bolt of lightning and thunder, which follow one another, but originate from one impulse. The old man used a further simile: *“this Divine love was prepared by a man, who then was the son of Zechariah, and expressed by a man, who was the son of Mary. They resemble vessels processed and purified by God. Their names will not repeat themselves, but no doubt their mission. May God grant that their fate will not repeat itself, otherwise the earth will remain blood-stained.”*

Now the old man appeared to be tired and thoughtful. Dawn changed to darkness. He lit an oil-lamp. He was concerned with the animals. He went in front of the hut, spoke to every animal and blessed it. Then he stepped to me, touched my arm, and said: *“I am almost as old as this century is, but nobody ever questioned me about John the Baptist. What is moving you? In your country there was a great woman, Hildegard of Bingen, who was seized by his spirit. Read what she wrote down.”*

I felt that the hermit now wanted to be alone. In my impatience I asked him, however, if I was still allowed to show him something. He lifted the oil -lamp up to my face and nodded wordlessly. I went to the car, looked hastily for the messages of Jonah in my working-case, and pressed them in the hands of the old man. We slowly returned to the hut. He put the paper on the table and poured out water for us. *“You have to read it to me, for my eyes are old”* he said. The oil-lamp gave little light, so that I had to read slowly. By doing so I dared not uplift my eyes, for I feared the reaction of the hermit. After about ten minutes I had read everything, and collectedly looked into the eyes of the old man. The expression on his face surprised me. There was joy and deep pensiveness in it at once. For about five long, unending minutes we silently sat opposite one another. Then he said apparently moved: *“yes, John will return to again give to the world the water of purification and recognition. How great must the misery of men be, how great must it still become, when the Lord is sending the warning voice to us.”* By this he raised his head to the ceiling, as if he wanted to look up to God and hear an answer. Then he spoke full of sadness of the torments and pains, the yelling blood of men and animals, afflicted upon his country.

*“Even once men are murdered, slaughtered, and slain, their hate and wrath remain*

*and lead to new curse” he silently spoke to himself. “Your brother from the spheres is a wise soul. He feels the waves, he perceives the powerful light. This light is the spirit of the Baptist”, he now spoke to me. “The burden of your brother is heavy, for only few will believe him. Also your burden will weigh he avily. If you are convinced, you also must not keep it to yourself”.* He asked me to daily pray with inner joy, and to connect myself with the spirit of John the Baptist. For the understanding of the messages of Jonah, he referred me to the scripts of the German-speaking prophetess Hildegard of Bingen and of Jakob Lorber.

I understood that everything had been said in the view of the hermit then. I could not expect further words. I got up, held out my hand, and thanked him. He guided me to the car with the oil-lamp. His step was slow and tired. It was about 11 o'clock at night. He carefully placed the lamp on the ground, took hold of my shoulders with both hands, and said: *“if your way should take you to Mejugorje, then ask the Mother of Christ for forgiveness for all those people who mocked her word. Everything that came over this country would not have happened, if we had accepted her warning and care. Pray to God that he may send John the Baptist to us before we are lost.”* Then he blessed me. I had never been especially open for such symbolic acts. However, I felt a great strength emanating from this blessing.

Completely lost in thoughts I drove aimlessly through the night, until I chanced upon a signpost to Pazin and Rovinj. I eventually drove to Rovinj, sat down by the sea, and gave myself up to my thoughts. It was a mild night in May with a clear sky and gentle waves. In the early hours of the next morning I drove on to Pula to belatedly appear at my business appointment. There was an urge within me, however, to learn more about the hermit. During the hours of the afternoon, I therefore drove back to Pazin, and questioned the local priest. He referred me to the priest of another town. I could finally learn that the hermit had been living there for many years already, and that he hardly had contact with people. Therefore the priest was somewhat amazed about my long conversation with the old man. He only knew that the hermit had spent his life in manifold countries, also in Germany. Many references lead to the surmise that the hermit is a member of the Order of St. John or the Maltese, or that he at least belonged to one of these brotherhoods. The priest told me that his original nationality was unknown, and that his sojourn in Croatia probably was due to the *mystery of Trogir*. This island-town in Dalmatia has a not yet revealed significance in the history of the Holy Grail. There are also scattered indications of the disciples of John the Baptist's having stayed there, the priest informed me.

Only three days later I had to go to Split. The talks there made a visit of Mostar necessary. The town had been completely destroyed by the Croat-Muslim battles a few months before. Despite the help of international organizations I could not fulfil my task at Mostar. The people remaining led a lethargic life without electricity, water,

and other supplies in the ruins. Despite all lethargy one energy remained unbroken, however, that of hate and swearing of revenge on the respective other ethnic group. Due to sudden road-blocks by the Muslims far detours were necessary for the return to Split. Since my vehicle had a Croat number plate I had to suffer extended controls and critical moments.

The drive through Muslim Bosnia was a journey through a destroyed land. Houses shot to pieces and burnt down, and carcasses of animals lay along the way. Blown up bridges made a renewed detour necessary. The sight of the devastated and plundered strip of land was desolate. Only here and there did people dwell in charred ruins. They lived on the few goats and sheep that had not become prey to the lust of murder. My route could not be planned any more, the map was worthless. The compulsorily aimless drive eventually led me to Mejugorje. This place of pilgrimage was completely unharmed. This alone seems like a miracle. Had Mary placed her guarding coat over this place of grace?

On account of the war the streams of pilgrims stayed away. So I sat alone in the church of Mejugorje and responded to the wish of the hermit. A German speaking father handed me the history of this place of pilgrimage, additionally the revelations by Mary that three children of the area had received years before. In a deserted pilgrim-café I read the words of Mary. I was affected deeply. The Mother of Christ had foretold through the mouths of the children everything that had happened, and that which was still to come, if men did not convert to love and brotherliness, to prayer, and to Jesus Christ. That moment the haughtiness and ignorance of mankind seized me painfully. At the same time I remembered conversations with people in Sarajevo or Titograd before the eruption of the fratricidal war. I had asked for their opinion concerning the revelations of Mary. Mostly these people shook with laughter, and did the whole incident away with as idle fancy of simple and insane children. I often heard the allusion: *"if Mary has to say something to us, she will not tell it to stupid goatherds in the stony mountains."* This sentence indeed only expresses the haughtiness and the stupidity of our world. It demonstrates how far away we are from the message of Jesus, and needs no further commentary.

In the beginning of June my professional tasks in Croatia and Bosnia -Herzegovina were fulfilled, for the time being. Due to scarcity of time I did not want to study the writings of Hildegard of Bingen and Jakob Lorber at home, but looked for persons with the respective knowledge. I was referred to a gentleman of medium age. I met a man with extensive general knowledge, strong will power, and discrete friendliness. With regard to my questions he was very reserved. Naturally he also did not know the background. I kept myself covered, and did not tell anything of the words of Jonah, or other occurrences. The conversation was cordial, but little effective for my interests. Incidentally I learnt of one of his hobbies, playing chess. I invited him to a

small chess tournament on the spot. Quickly a date was fixed for June 24. For me and my history with John the Baptist this date proved to be decisive. We met for a small chess tournament with two friends of mine at a small arcade -café in the town of Wasserburg. In the evening hours it became noisy and lively in the summertime Wasserburg, so that we decided for a night hike in the rural surroundings. None of my companions knew my story. In front of an image of Mary, by the side of the path, we had a short rest. One of my friends, a physicist, by the way, drew our attention to a special light behind us. It was approaching us noiselessly about two metres above the ground. My first thought turned to the extraordinariness of that day. It was the day of John and solstice. It was feasible for me that children from the village would walk over the fields with Chinese lanterns. The light, however, proved to be indefinable. It hovered directly above us, and had the approximate size of a medicine ball. Later on the distance from us was estimated differently by each one of us, varying from two to ten metres. This light stood two to three minutes above us. It seemed reduced in its intensity, and emitted great calm, so that nobody was afraid or panicked. Completely wordless all of us observed this ball of light. It eventually completely soundless and quickly ascended into the evening sky. Only at apparently the height of the stars the glow expired. The extraordinary with this was that the ball of light could be followed on its way upwards for about five minutes without becoming smaller. So all of our eyes perceived the much accelerated movement of the light - ball, the circumference remained unaltered, however. This fact also irritated our physicist, to whom, as he explained later, light phenomena were not unknown, in theory.

During the whole light-appearance we all remained mute, for each of us looked for a plausible explanation for himself. We stopped our nightly walk, and returned to the town. The first thing we found out was that our perceptions also were widely congruent in detail. Some explanations for this appearance of light were given a thought. Eventually I took courage and said: *“there will exist a natural explanation, to be sure. Yet, what we experienced certainly has to do with John the Baptist, but I cannot substantiate it now.”* It was clear to me that my statement could not suffice. It had the result, however, that my guest, when saying good -bye, somewhat stealthily asked me for the background of my words, and he admitted that also be believed this. This of course made renewed meeting necessary. I was open and described my experiences. I also did not hold back my conviction of a return of John the Baptist. Naturally, I had no concrete ideas about form or point of time of this return. The interest of my conversation partner in John the Baptist and my thoughts was great. It took weeks and months, however, until I could win his confidence. This, of course, had a decisive reason, as I was to learn. Namely, he himself had been receiving spiritual messages from the Essenes and John the Baptist for some time. When I was given an insight into these messages, I hardly had doubts in their authenticity

any more. Additionally, his “curriculum vitae”, character, and profession as well as his clear thinking excel my acquaintance. He is down-to-earth, and holds a high degree of responsibility. He is well -esteemed by those around him. The medial work rather counteracts his worldly-positive reputation. At this point in time, and in his surroundings it is not something easy for him to confess to his spiritual task.

In the following chapter I wish to reproduce all the spiritual messages of John the Baptist, and some selected messages from the Essenes my acquaintance received up to now.

## **SPIRITUAL MESSAGES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE ESSENES**

In 1993 I was allowed to study medial messages that had been accessible only to very few selected persons until then. The latter ones had the task to check the kind of spiritual contact and to evaluate the contents. The small circle receiving these messages guarded them like a secret. For this they had a good reason: the messages were from John the Baptist and the Essenes.

My friend Jonah had carefully guided me towards the “*great light*”. My experiences had shown me a part of the power held by the figure from the light: John the Baptist. That which I now was allowed to read was the confirmation of the Jonah words. The great light again has come forward on earth.

The power and the contents of the spiritual messages of the Baptist deeply moved me. But my first questions were: are they in unison with the character of the biblical and historical figure of once? Are the kind of expression and contents identical with the sermons of then? This applies even more for the so-called *inner voice*, by which John the Baptist comes forward concerning topics and problems of our time. (More information in the following chapter: *The Voice of John the Baptist in the Here and Now.*)

The answer to these questions seemed easy to me at first, since there were the gospels. Soon, however, I had to understand that the early -Christian authors report only little about the Baptist. I looked for other sources and a comprehensive research began. So the spiritual messages were the actual cause for rewriting the life and work of John the Baptist. I found parallels between the sermons of once and his words of today, like I would not have expected them.

The spiritual words of John the Baptist did not come suddenly and unexpectedly. It was a certain Emanuel who prepared the ways correspondingly. This Emanuel said of himself to have been an Essene at the time of Jesus and John. Additionally, he was a pupil of the charismatic preacher. I also looked for a bridge to the Essenism of that time in the spiritual messages of Emanuel. My researches on the mysterious brotherhood were successful. So I say with a clear conscience that the present -day messages of Emanuel show typically Essene traits. Some hidden references of this master soul to the circumstances of the time and personal experiences can be

substantiated historically.

Further the spiritual being Imanos came forward in certain situations. His words resemble those of an old wise man.

He is standing in direct contact with the Essenes and John the Baptist. He had been ordained a great task in the philosophy of salvation of the Essenes being teacher of Jesus and John the Baptist. From the contents of some spiritual messages an highly important question can be deduced: Is Imanos maybe the *True Teacher*, respectively *the Teacher of Rightfulness* of whom the Dead Sea Scrolls report? The spiritual message of November 16, 1991 points to this, and is commented by me correspondingly.

I had, by the way, already completed this manuscript for publication and handed over to the publisher, when I became aware of this possible connection. So I added this thought subsequently.

Following the discourse of the hermit from Istria, I place Emanuel and Jonah into the spiritual family of John the Baptist. In a not more closely definable sphere (of consciousness) they have to fulfil a well-aimed task within the renewed mission of John the Baptist. By working my way through the spiritual messages this task became clear to me. It encompasses the preparation and guidance of the terrestrial receiver to the spirit of John the Baptist. I, therefore, assigned some space for the messages of Emanuel to illustrate this guidance. It is not difficult to deduct the future task of the *terrestrial John* from these. It is still veiled, however, in which way and when this is to happen. The spiritual messages are, so to say, a way of spiritual instruction for the worldly recipient and have a personal character.

A discussion of several years, whether these messages should be published preceded. I eventually could succeed in having them published by using an argument that John the Baptist had given himself. His spiritual word several times contains the sentence: *"go forth and do not shrink from my word."*

Of course, I must lay the cloak of silence around the terrestrial recipient of the spiritual messages. It is not fear of exposing him to curiosity, criticism, and mockery, rather I am guided here by the already described prophesy of Bertha Dudde. The person addressed in the spiritual messages shows an identity with the figure in Bertha Dudde's prophesy. Furthermore his first name is John, like the she-visionary explicitly states.

The reader can be assured that the messages were sufficiently checked. I also give my word that neither lust for sensation nor self-importance urge me to publication. On the contrary, I hold high respect for these things, and know of the responsibility. I am also aware of the danger of being criticised and smiled upon. Yet, I cannot evaluate the factor time and continue waiting. All signs are speaking for



a publication. Not least the development of dangers that like an immense maelstrom of the negative are threatening the earth and mankind.

The spiritual messages unmistakably point to a renewed mission of John the Baptist on earth. They are in unison with the visions and predictions of not only a Hildegard of Bingen, a Bertha Dudde, or a Jakob Lorber. They are pointing to a turn of time, although the statements contain nothing threatening.

I purposely did not have the messages revised by a lector. I did this out of respect for the being communicating. Some statements seduce to interpretations, which I also wish to avoid. Only when the reader is in need of help concerning understanding, I am adding the respective comments.

These are the spiritual messages in their chronological sequence:

December 31, 1990:

*"I am calling your name!*

*Hope is my sign, love my commandment.*

*Will the tides change our existence?*

*Is the world willing to understand the message?*

*Where are they, the searching ones whom our Lord Jesus Christ wishes to guide?*

*It is not mine to rebuke, yet, it is mine to call.*

*Go forth to the light (you all).*

*O, you child of man, do feel the grace.*

*I am alien to (all of)you, and, yet, known.*

*Amen."*

Comment:

Due to the further course of the messages Emanuel can be assumed to be the speaker. It cannot be excluded, however, that this is already a message by John the Baptist.

March 28, 1991:

*"Upraise your hearts. The Light is nigh.  
I am greeting you, my brother John, in the name of Jesus Christ.  
My name is Emanuel. I am your helper in the spheres of the spirit.  
Praise the Lord.  
Great is your goal: to change the world to God's world.  
Strong is your wish: to never return on earth.  
If you wish to achieve this, this is the time to look for the light of the Omnispirit.  
Jesus Christ has come to guide you (all).  
His word can alter your senses; this I am unable to do.  
His word can soften the stone; this I am unable to do.  
But, also my hand will guide you on the way into the light.  
Christ united us for the welfare of those accompanying you.  
You will hear the words showing you what love is capable of doing.  
Take the way. Accept me, since it is God's wish.  
Yet, even if you leave the way His love is forever.  
I am Emanuel, a messenger of the Light.  
Be blessed. God's love has chosen you.  
Recognize the grace.  
I am not your warder, I am your shield.  
Amen."*

April 29, 1991:

*"Praised be the Lord and the Omnipotence of eternal existence.  
You are (all) greeted in the name of the Almighty.  
I am Emanuel. Do not be afraid.  
My commandment is love, my law the strife for unison of the unity.  
Behold the rose, blooming, and not shunning the storm.  
Being part of the loving light, and assured of the sublime of its existence.  
Not my will is happening, for I am but a minute existence.  
The word you will receive are words of the unity. I will teach you to bear the light of  
God, for this light cannot be accommodated by a body ever.  
You will learn to overcome your body."*

*Lay aside your fear of illness and pain. Your strength lies in the spirit.  
I am Emanuel. Who goes with me lives in struggle. In the fight against darkness –  
for the union of unity. Jesus Christ is the arrow piercing through darkness.  
His will is my truth. Jesus Christ chose us to continue his work.  
The universe has been existing for many aeons of light -years. How shall I be to  
please men? How many tides shall still pass, during which man misses his aim?  
Begin your work, for you are called in the name of perfection.  
I bless (all of) you  
in the name of the Father of Unity  
in the name of the Redeemer of Mankind  
in the name of the Spirit of God.  
Go forth in peace with yourself and those alike you. Amen.”*

May 7, 1991:

*“My name is Emanuel.  
Heaven is to the servants of the Lord.  
Your signs for recognition are from the spheres of the spirit.  
Your despairs are purifications. Take heed of the signs given to you by the universe.  
Your strength stems from the Divine light. The day of your outset is nigh. Call the  
angels of the light. They will be your companions.  
The time is at hand in which the words of the Lord will be fulfilled:  
“Those whom I will forgive their sins, their sins are forgiven.”  
Be prepared for your guilt is being forgiven.  
Your trials are strong. Only he, knowing the shadow can behold the light.  
Go with God, then you will not miss. You will experience the centre of existence.  
God’s love is in need of forces on earth.  
My words will receive substance, when the light sent by God will seize you.  
He, wishing to achieve the great, must accomplish the even greater.  
I am Emanuel, an angel of the Lord.  
The Light is nigh. Thank the Lord.  
God may bless the hour of your cosmic birth.  
His light will fill you, once you will fulfil his word:  
“Love your next like yourself”.  
Not scourge shall you be, but teacher of love.  
Amen.”*

May 28, 1991:

*"I am Emanuel.*

*Be my friend, John, you brother in the light.*

*It was not me, who has chosen you, but the radiant light you shall experience.*

*My being is of the stock of the Essenes.*

*My ways of purification led to truth via great deprivations.*

*High spiritual beings taught our people to overcome the power of ruin.*

*Our people was persecuted and disgraced. No Essene wished to evade this to deny God's laws. Recognition still lay in the dark, yet, we sensed the commandment of the time. Many messengers brought the announcement of the birth of a radiant light, and of the birth of the Almighty.*

*I was still young in years, when this happened:*

*An army of angels brought us the image of the Redeemer in the hour of his death.*

*There was the mandate to us the alleviate this dread.*

*No man can fathom what this Son of Man took upon himself.*

*Help could not come from terrestrial power, yet, was only possible through the spirit.*

*The moment of his birth was the hour of his death.*

*God's power was denied to him.*

*Now men had to uplift themselves to free his body.*

*Great was his spirit, but too weak his body.*

*To be of help we learnt the art of magic movement, the dissolution of body and spirit.*

*It became possible for us to reach unknown places, without leaving the homeland of our fathers.*

*This helped us to be by his side, when fear of destruction arose.*

*Jesus of Nazareth was born as a human being. His suffering was revealed to us. He was only just a man and Nazir. Never did he know of the effect of his birth.*

*He learnt to have mastery over his body, to arrange his thoughts. He himself was surprised by the wisdom originating from his words.*

*It was the time, when Herod lost his power.*

*Jesus came with his mother to the village Canaan to hear the consecrations of the high priests. His caste was low, and Jesus was refused admittance.*

*Darkness covered the day, and they found shelter in the house of Imanos, his teacher.*

*Mary went the way without him.*

*Days of eagerness and of despair in the heart of the child followed incessantly.*

*The misery was great. Strength increased from that hour onwards. He was not*

*conscious of anything.*

*Yet this was important: he came with the will to learn the words of the high priests, but, he learnt the words of the Lord.*

*Let us end for today. I am with you (all) in the name of the Lord.*

*God's blessing may be with you (all).*

*Amen."*

Comments:

The *high spiritual beings* teaching the people of the Essenes hint at medial contacts to heavenly angels. The Qumran -literature manifold cites this ability of the brotherhood. But the Essenes also considered their worldly teachers to be incarnations of high spiritual beings.

The persecution and defilement mentioned as well as the decline of the Essene people can refer to the historically recorded blows of fortune *persecution by the sacrilegious priests, destruction of Qumran* as well as to the *battle of Masada* .

The sentence: *many messengers brought the annunciation of the birth*, shows that the Essenes knew of the birth of John the Baptist (radiant light) and Jesus (Almighty).

In the course of the description of the suffering and death of Jesus, Emanuel describes the mental and medial abilities of the Essenes. Profound experts of Essenism find their assumptions verified by these statements.

The term Nazir refers to the membership of the attitude of mind of that time, of the *safeguards* . In a more restrictive sense, the origin of Jesus from the circle of John the Baptist can also be referred to.

The reference to Herod coincides with the Aquarian Gospel, cited in part I of the book, according to which John the Baptist and Jesus returned from Egypt with their mothers after the death of King Herod. The boy John finds a teacher in the hermit Matheno, the Aquarian Gospel tells. According to Emanuel Imanos becomes the teacher of the boy Jesus. Imanos is described more closely in later spiritual messages.

June 10, 1991:

*"My name is Emanuel.*

*God's blessing be with you.*

*Surmount the fears of your body and the dangers of the terrestrial.*

*Christ has many helpers in the spiritual realm. The number of those in the terrestrial is small.*

*Hold onto your way. The wheat germ has urged the sprout towards the light.*

*Divine providence will protect it from injury and destruction.  
I am feeling your affliction and bitterness. Jesus Christ is your helper.  
His salvation will ease your sorrows. Eterna I will the days of peace be.  
Experience the spiritual wisdoms. Learn to separate your spirit from the body.  
Learn to overcome the terrestrial prisons with your spirit.  
Also John the Baptist and Jesus Christ underwent this schooling.  
Go forth in peace.  
Amen.”*

June 29, 1991:

*“My name is Emanuel.  
I am greeting (all of) you in the name of the Lord.  
You, my brother John, were already with us, when we still sojourned on earth being  
Essenes. This is the secret surrounding our and your work.  
You, my brother, sense a great light.  
Thank the being you so distinctly feel within you.  
I know your thoughts, and know that your humility still makes you hesitate.  
This light is sent by the greatest teacher of all times.  
Verily, this is Jochanan Ben Zechariah whom the world calls John the Baptist – the  
True Teacher.  
I am merely tool and mediator, yet, this I may say:  
You and all of you, hearing this message, once were students of the Great Teacher,  
and will always remain it; to the Glory of Jesus Christ.  
Praise the Lord. Go forth in love.  
Amen.”*

August 7, 1991:

*”My name is Emanuel.  
Be (all) greeted in the name of the Lord.  
Like you, my brother, I am a pupil of John the Baptist. Our work in his name serves  
the realm of God and the veneration of Jesus Christ.  
Much will have to happen; hard will the trials be. Take the way –  
there is but doom or redemption.  
Of what use will illusions be to you? John the Baptist and Jesus Christ suffered the*

great, and were without guilt. There is need of great beings to renew the realm of God.

*The strength lies within you all.*

*I am by your side, my brother, since I am a student of the Great Teacher, too.*

*I know of your experiences, but, this is the plan of God. It is John the Baptist, the Great and True Teacher who speaks through you as a tool.*

*This may appear to be a burden to you, but it is a great grace.*

*John the Baptist has never before come forward medially.*

*This is his renewed work for the adoration of his brother Jesus Christ.*

*The Great Teacher is with you all. Do seize this light leading the world towards Christ.*

*Amen.”*

July 7, 1991:

*“Emanuel is my name. My sign is the sun.*

*I am calling my brother, entrusted to me by the Great Teacher, John the Baptist.*

*His work shall be continued.*

*Your brother John is a being who was sent from my world to prepare this way. He chose the way over the earth to impart to men the works of the Great Teacher. This way often is painful and grievous.*

*Only spiritual beings ready for the great chose this way.*

*I was born, but at a time, when this way was ordered to many brothers.*

*We were many, and had great visionaries assisting us. You, my brother, and you my brothers and sisters are only few. Many wish to take the way to the light, but only few wish to truly redeem. Their aim is to free themselves. Truly great beings want more: to free mankind from the misery of being born. I hold great respect for your doing, and bow my head before you. I am an old being only returned to this planet to be by your side.*

*Wisdom and knowledge were bestowed on you for the way.*

*You have the Greatest Teacher by your side.*

*His might and his power can work more than mankind surmises.*

*Be confident in this strength, and take your way.*

*Be not angry with me – I am a servant to this power.*

*Remain on your way.*

*Amen.”*

Comment:

From the address: "Your brother John is a being ..." it becomes clear that he is indirectly addressed via a third person. The spiritual message to John was received in mirror-writing by a third person.

October 12, 1991:

*"The infinite Power of Christ elected you to be his tool.  
Do not doubt your deed.  
I am Imanos, and was allowed to be teacher and guide of your Lord.  
I came to you without order, merely to make my existence conscious to you..  
I behold, my work of light being taken up and continued. For this I thank.  
Every teacher is struggling with simplicity and stupidity until consciousness awakes.  
Be without fear and sorrow. Men may reject the light by their naivety,  
but the Lord will always erect it on earth by courageous ones."*

October 30, 1991:

*"Yes, I am Emanuel.  
I am calling the students of the True Teacher.  
A long time ago you and I started out on the way of the Great Teacher.  
They were great trials, you had to live through, my brother.  
I often worried about your maturing, but, you did grow strong.  
So John the Baptist chose you as his voice.  
It is yours now to fulfil the task of this radiant light.  
Be the voice in the wilderness – your words will not become attenuated unheard.  
The spirit of the Great Teacher John the Baptist, he was sent out to teach you all.  
Consider: Jesus Christ sought help from among his most loved brothers  
He called for help,  
since his work will be destroyed in the hands of men once again.  
John the Baptist was precursor of the Lord then.  
So this is his doing today, too.  
You all experienced the miraculous power of this radiant light,  
but for true miracles the recognition of the true existence is still missing.  
Do understand the meaning, why this happened, why these words were spoken.  
Do not worry about the words the True Teacher speaks through you, my brother.  
They are revelation and symbol of the all-encompassing love.  
Do not take offence at the people abusing these words,*



*since they are children wishing to instruct the wise ones.  
Do revert. The grace is great. John the Baptist has returned,  
to reinforce the words of the Redeemer. He will not allow,  
that will be crucified once more for love.  
Do understand the words, then you will also recognise your blemishes.  
Praised be the Lord. Remain in peace. Go forth in love.  
Amen “*

Comment:

In a large discussion group of about 40 persons a delicate worldly topic concerning personal and economic interests was discussed. The participants of the forum represented a certain line of the nourishment industry and of trade. My acquaintance John was present in this round for professional reasons. When a certain theme was dealt with, he received the *inner word* or the *inner voice* of John the Baptist. These words were not according to the economic interest of the participants, of course, and met with opposition and resistance. Emanuel expresses his view on this, and supports the words of the *terrestrial* John.

November 16, 1991:

*“Emanuel is my name.  
Peace to (all) your souls.  
You, my brother, sense the spheres before your spiritual eye.  
Your spiritual brothers know of your afflictions.  
The work of John the Baptist has commenced. Behold the signs in your hearts.  
Perceive the signs in your bodies. Feel the signs in your souls.  
I am greeting you, my brothers and sisters in the covenant of the True Teacher.  
My sign is the sun, my salvation is in Jesus Christ.  
Go forth in peace.”*

*“So take your way through the valley of lament. Keep your pride in your heart.  
Not humility shall you have before men, but wistfulness for the beaten ones.  
This shall be your work.  
You are the Michael of your tormented brothers.  
They will be millions, but, each single one of them will bring you salvation.  
We are calling your name.  
Do receive the light and the word of John the Baptist.  
Go forth in love.  
Imanos.”*

*"I, Emanuel, return to dissolve your questions:  
The being Imanos of Kaneas overcame his body still being a man.  
He went through tortures of hell in the consciousness of spiritual redemption.  
Hardly a man accomplished something so great. He was the Moses of our time, and  
taught the One Law. Imanos was an envoy of the Lord who prepared many people  
for the Redeemer at that time. His eyes were blinded, his consciousness was always  
connected with the spiritual.  
John and Jesus were young in years. Imanos taught them the Divine Law of Unity.  
John the Baptist was his friend. Imanos taught him to overcome the fear of affliction.  
"Strive for the healing of the soul, not for the healing of the body."  
Imanos was The Great Teacher in the eyes of my brotherhood.  
John the Baptist continued and completed his work.  
We had great reverence for this work. I, and many of my brothers, have transferred  
the name to John the Baptist.  
God's blessing be with you all, and those like you.  
Amen."*

Comment:

The assertion by Emanuel concerning Imanos can be of great historical weight. The reference: *"he was the Moses of our time ..."* and *"in the eyes of my brotherhood Imanos was The Great Teacher"*, can close a gap in Qumran research. Apparently the actual name of the *True Teacher* or *the Teacher of Justice* are mentioned in none of the scripts of the Dead Sea. The speculation that Imanos was this teacher is inviting. However, the scientific question of dispute regarding the date is nourished again by this. The majority of the Qumran scientists dated the existence of the *True Teacher* to about 150 to 100 B.C.. There is no final certainty. Imanos lived about 100 years later, however. How else could he have been the teacher of John and Jesus?

Apparently many Essenes transferred the name *Great Teacher* to John the Baptist. The Australian theologian and Qumran scientist Thiering is convinced that the *True Teacher* of the Essenes was nobody else than John the Baptist.

If the name *Great*, respectively *True Teacher* was transferred from Imanos to John the Baptist, then there existed at least two teachers with this designation within Essene terminology. In principle, I do not cling to this designation. Like spiritual messages show, the variation of this is too great. So John the Baptist is named the *Greatest Teacher of all Times*, *Great Teacher* and *True Teacher*. The *True Teacher* and founder of the Essene Union manifold cited in the Dead Sea Scrolls is not identical with John the Baptist, in my conviction. The determination of the historians to see only one person in the *True Teacher* leads to a dead end, however. The possibility of transfer of title from teacher to pupil must by no means be excluded.

Can Imanos have been the *True Teacher* and founder of the Essene brotherhood on the basis of the historical research up to now? The parallels are great:

He taught the *One Law*, and therefore stood in one spiritual line with Moses. Can the legislation for the Essene Union be deduced from this? A question of highest import.

He prepared the people for the Messiah. This preparation was not only reduced to the annunciation of the Redeemer, but also demanded conversion and new-orientation. The reference that John the Baptist continued and completed this work, shows up new perspectives. Only in this context can the word of October 12, 1991 be understood correctly: *"I behold my work of light is taken up and continued."*

Apparently Imanos had a large opposition persecuting him and striving for his life. In the spiritual message of April 14, this affliction is described. According to this he did not voluntarily go to exile (to Damascus), but was expelled to there.

The spiritual messages argue in favour that Imanos is identical with the *True Teacher* of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The work and the fate of the unknown teacher of the Essenes do show a distinct coincidence with the figure of Imanos of Kaneas.

A strong spiritual relationship between John the Baptist and Imanos becomes apparent from the spiritual messages. The parallels between the *True Teacher* of the Qumran scrolls and the Baptist also cannot be overlooked. They can be explained by the teacher-pupil relationship. Naturally, it has to be perceived in the context of all these deliberations that if Imanos is identical with the *True Teacher*, then the up to now assumed years are wrongly dated by about 100 years. Except for, if Imanos had reached the biblical age of about 150 years. To be sure, the master souls of the Essenes are also said to have become very old.

December 18, 1991:

*"I am greeting you, my brother in the Lord.  
The heavens are bending down to earth to free mankind.  
Holiness makes the stars quake, until the work of the Redeemer will be fulfilled.  
You, my brother, John are called upon to fulfil  
the work of our great master John the Baptist.  
Be strong in your faith.  
Emanuel is my name."*

December 27, 1991:

*I am greeting you, my brother John.  
My word is love which you are learning to understand.  
I am Emanuel and hear your calling.  
The call of your soul makes the spiritual realm shudder.  
Forgive us that we load you with trials, you brother of the Essenes.  
We spiritual beings often only know the fulfillment  
of the commandments of Jesus Christ,  
poverty marks our spirit concerning the knowledge of the soul.  
Your rebirth helps us to renew this knowledge.  
Jesus Christ is your Lord and master, John the Baptist your patron. He gave you  
your name, so that you may testify for the great brotherhood of the Lord.  
Your salvation is not of this world."*

Comment:

Immediately after these words an unusually strong energy started off. All participants of this medial conversation reported of a sudden and intensive brightness in the room. The first message of John the Baptist followed:

*"And thus spoke the Lord:  
Whoever takes the way with me, will not see darkness.  
I am calling you, John.  
Remember the ways you walked in my sign.  
Do not let not darkness win over the Word of Lord.*

*My fire will come down upon the powers  
intending to destroy my tool.  
This is not only your struggle.  
Also the spiritual realm is in battle against this force.  
The symbol of the birth of Jesus Christ, called Jesus of Nazareth,  
is the symbol of salvation from the power of darkness.  
These powers enter inside the souls of the most spiritual beings.  
Also you, my brother, are caught in the delusion of destruction.  
The power will reach you again,  
once you stand up against with all your faith. Yet, you r will is free.  
So I am asking you, my brother John,  
do not allow your labours to have been done in vain.*

*Your body is free of attack,  
but your spirit is tormented by yonder ruin.  
Praise the Lord, and uplift your heart against the injury of darkness.  
Jesus Christ is with you, and asks you to remain steadfast  
in your belief in your redemption.  
So I am pouring the waters of the river of Jordan over your head and baptize you  
in the name of the Father,  
in the name of the Redeemer Jesus Christ, and  
in the name of the Spirit of God.  
Go forth and spread my word.  
John the Baptist.”*

Comment:

As becomes clear from the text, the worldly receiver of this message, my acquaintance John, was in a great psychic and physical crisis. The causes were manifold. Physical symptoms indicating a severe illness gave rise to this, however. Immediately after the words of John the Baptist a spontaneous healing occurred. Whether the reason could be traced back to severe spiritual trials has to remain open, even when the words of Emanuel make this conclusion feasible.

Like all participants reported, it took many minutes until countenance was found again. The word of John the Baptist, and the field of energy connected with it aroused great astonishment.

About twenty minutes later a further message came:

*“Yes, Imanos is my name.  
Listen to the words of an old man.  
Only the eagle can reach the sun, for his power conquers the storm.  
You are the eagle, on your pinions the souls will reach the light.  
Rest in peace.”*

January 31, 1992:

*“Yes, Imanos is my name.  
The Lord be with you, my brother in the light.  
I am.  
Calm may enter your being.  
Let your thoughts drift and immerse in the fountain of magnificence.*

*This work is fulfilled.  
Now be free.  
Jesus Christ I thank you for your love.  
His is the word: I am the Light,  
                  I am the Salvation,  
                  I am the Divine within you.  
Jesus Christ's love, infinite love is within you.  
I am Imanos, your master from faraway times.  
I animated that part within you from that time,  
when you were ranking high in the spirit.  
This will from now on shine forth within you.  
You will feel the connection,  
for the light now comes from you.  
HALIMA MATEI – bring the salvation.”*

February 15, 1992:

*“Emanuel is my name – my sign is the sun.  
So also I am ready to give you the words of the Lord. I am greeting you in your house. My words to our brother John shall ring in loving kindness to him. The Lord has burnt his sign of redemption into our heart, and so it is inextinguishable for all times. Our way is difficult, and the load lies heavily on our shoulders. But, the grace of the Lord and his love are the comfort of redemption.  
So I am asking you, my brother, you my brothers, you took this way with us.  
We were one people, and we will remain a people of the Lord that will reconcile and reunite the realm of God with the realm of mammon.  
Not angels are fulfilling this; it is the people of the Lord that brings salvation unto this world. Just like our master John the Baptist went to this earth, just like our Redeemer came to this earth, sent by God, so also you are here to fulfil God's work. For the sins of the world can only be converted on earth. I know your hurt well, distressing you on earth, since the earth and the burden of being human is familiar to me. I was not always wise, I was not always great. Also I experienced affliction and felt deep grief, but I overcame the earthly injury, and God's love arose within me.  
The White Brotherhood of the Purified Ones could only originate because they had overcome the hurt and the anger. Be confident, my brother John, never will this salvation be taken from you. Be strong in your faith, for you are the pillar on which Christ will erect the roof of His Temple. Many columns will be added so that his work will become indestructible.*

*But much time on earth will still pass, before this will be fulfilled. Open your senses for the great within you, for the radiation of grace by God. Let His Work shine forth in the splendour of the new hope.*

*You have set out into this life. Call your brothers of the purified brotherhood, they are so close to you. They will fend off darkness from you, when you are in need of their help; but they cannot always win. Yet, when this cannot be, they will carry your misery with you.*

*You are not little. No, we are who fearfully chose heaven to escape the tormentors of darkness. It is not you who respectfully bows his head, no, we, your brothers, bow the head before your deed.*

*It is not us who graciously come to you. No, it is you (all) bestowing us with the grace to, nonetheless, partake in the work of redemption far from temptation. A high place will be assigned to your (all), when you will return to the realm of God!*

*So I will end now, my brothers in the Lord. Take in the help the spiritual realm is giving you.*

*Do consider the power of the holy waters, and do not contaminate your bodies with low nutrition. Let the commandment of fasting clean your bodies, so that the light may brighten your cells.*

*I thank you, my brother, for having listened to my word.*

*Go (all) forth in the name of the Lord and herald His Word, so that he may resurrect in the hearts of men who already once before took the way with him.*

*Amen, in the name of the Lord. Amen.”*

#### Comments:

This spiritual message came in mirror-writing. A close friend of John had unexpectedly received it one night. He was awakened by a shimmer of light in the room. Being still very drowsy, he felt urged to pen and paper, without understanding why. The awakening from sleep is an often-observed phenomenon, and easily explicable. The senses of the recipient are pure, i.e., not diverted by the daily sorrows and trivialities.

The mentioned *White Brotherhood of the Purified Ones* is the brotherhood of the Essenes. Also with the *People of the Lord* the Essenes are referred to.

The whole message has a very high power of assertion for the adept, since it allows deep insight into the correlations as well as into the spiritual bonds in the sphere.

April 14, 1992:

*“I feel your pain, I know your doubts, and, yet, your strength is growing and increasing.*

*You were chosen to be teacher on earth. Be without fear.*

*I am Imanos.*

*My words are only few, but they stem from the light.*

*I am coming from the light of the Lord. Also my way was bordered with affliction and pain.*

*They murdered my children, they burnt my house, they chased me and derided me, they blinded my eyes, and in return the light of Divine knowledge shone forth for me.*

*Do not be angry with your old master, do not be annoyed with the spiritual realm. Not the heavens created suffering, but the mammon.*

*Follow your master John the Baptist.*

*He will lead you back into the light.*

*From the spiritual realm comes this praise:*

*the words John the Baptist speaks through your mouth, are of unsurpassable beauty.*

*Nobody else but you, my brother, can render this so.*

*Praised be the Lord.”*

*“Beloved brothers in the Lord.*

*From worlds afar my call is reaching your senses.*

*Praised is the Lord.*

*Blessed is my tool, and those going with him.*

*Peace enter into your hearts.*

*Let my work shine forth to the glory and the honour of the Almighty.*

*From now on I will no longer call you tool, but tenant.*

*I tested you, and you fulfilled my work.*

*So I baptize you*

*In the name of the Highest Master,*

*In the name of His Immortal Son*

*In the name of the Spirit.*

*So take the way with me, and bring my word to the souls.*

*Amen, in all eternity, amen.*

*John the Baptist.”*

*“Emanuel is my name – my sign is the sun.*

*So I am greeting you, my beloved brothers of the Essenes.*

*You, my brother John, received the great baptism of our master to be tenant on earth.*



*High angels are placed at your side. Your strength is great.  
Your reward will be redemption from terrestrial existence, if this is your wish.  
Go in good cheer by the side of your master.  
Whoever takes the way with him, will overcome darkness.  
I thank you for having listened to my word, too.  
Amen.”*

Comments:

Imanos refers to his worldly fate with moving words. It does not become clear, who his opponents were. The assumption lies at hand that these came from the rows of the high priests, Pharisees, or Sadducees. If Imanos is identical with the *True Teacher* of the Essenes, then his decisive adversary was the *sacrilegious priest* as explicitly described in part II of the book.

The strong field of energy of the spiritual message of John the Baptist as well as the inexplicable brightness in the room were again perceived by all participants. This phenomenon appeared, respectively appears, at all spiritual messages of the Baptist. The span of time during which the message is transferred is extremely short in comparison to other spiritual messages. It lasts, depending on its volume, two to five minutes. Regarding spiritual messages received in mirror-writing, the writer speaks of *“a flying of the pencil over the paper”*. The experienced feeling of happiness in the energy-field of John the Baptist is reported to be *“indescribable”*. At the same time, a high degree of respect is being felt. Occasionally a fear of failure develops. This, however, is unfounded. A scrutiny of all original manuscripts showed that John the Baptist exactly repeated unreadable characters (e.g., because of velocity or broken pencil tips), and directed the hand correspondingly more slowly, until pace and vibration were in harmony again.

July 13, 1992:

*“So be my intermediary in the name of the Lord, my brother in the spirit.  
I chose you from many billions.  
I tested you through the works of deed.  
Your word and my being are connected to the bond of the heralds.  
Do take, my brother, the way of self-communion and contemplation in the spirit.  
Never will my word be refused to you.  
I called for the angels of the light in the wilderness.  
Take the way of self-communion in my name and in my sign,  
so that you may return in the power of my words.*

*My word is written into your soul, and will be within you,  
until your foot flees the wilderness. Do set out, John, on the way of self -communion.  
I will return, once you are prepared to go out.  
Do take the way, my brother, and, yet, leave off  
until I will send you back in the name of the Lord.  
So address my word to those restless and full of sorrows.  
The day and the hour when our word will return is not far.  
Call me in the quiet, for my word will be strengthened within you.*

*My beloved brothers, my beloved sisters in Christ.  
Thus my word will now be taken from you,  
but my words will remain.  
Those setting out in my name carry great sorrows.  
And so I pour the Holy Waters of the river of Jordan  
over your heads and bless you  
in the name of the Almighty God,  
in the name of our brother Jesus Christ, and  
in the name of the Omnispirit.  
And the day will come,  
when you will hear my word through this my brother.  
So each of you do find your way, until we unite again  
to the Glory of the Father.  
John the Baptist.”*

Comments:

This spiritual message also came in mirror writing via a third person. The background needs explanation. My acquaintance whom I call the *terrestrial John* passed the word of John the Baptist on to large circle of fifty to seventy listeners at irregular intervals. This circle was composed of all segments of the population. They all shared a common interest: the will to enter upon the spiritual way. The words of John the Baptist did not correspond to the expectations of so many participants. The words were testing and critical, and asked for self-recognition and self-correction. Many a conception of Divine love was destroyed. The summon to action of one's own accord and the affirmation of irrevocable charity was experienced to be very distressing by some. The words of the Baptist unveiled human weaknesses like egotism, *letting oneself fall*, and *I want nothing more except to be loved*. The demanded self-criticism and self-discipline as the basis for the spiritual way were perceived to be loveless. The open words of John the Baptist were felt to be in contrast to the speeches of Jesus Christ.

A great part of these words of John were transcribed as well as recorded on tapes.

I listened to and read them several times. It may be a question of individual expectation, I, however, found great wisdom, guidance, and love in the words of John.

Reversion and renewal as well as deep self-contemplation and search for recognition are, of course, always the intent of the Baptist -messages. This certainly was also alike 2000 years ago.

Thus the words did not meet the liking of many listeners. They even met rejection.

My acquaintance, the *terrestrial John*, was invited to this circle precisely for Monday evening, July 13, 1992,. He was full of doubts, if he should go there and speak possible Baptist-words. But he did not wish to withdraw himself from the task. On the way to the car the phone rang. A friend had received the medial message of John in mirror-writing immediately before, and handed it on via telephone. As a consequence of the spiritual message, the word of the Baptist was withdrawn from this circle until further notice.

Only a few weeks later these spiritual Baptist-words were read to the circle. After a short silence, the participants concerned themselves with the agenda. For justice's sake it has to mentioned, however, that many have been regretting the absence of the spiritual word of John the Baptist since then.

October 4, 1992:

*"So the angels of the worlds are calling you. Be prepared for the salvation of the world.*

*My salvation is in this world, for the redemption and liberation of the world and of existence.*

*You were my student, John, and shall be teacher now.*

*But your way will be by my side.*

*Nobody shall be higher than his brother.*

*So be prepared, whoever heard the call within himself.*

*Amen, in eternity amen.*

*John the Baptist."*

October 25, 1992:

*"And so worlds formed from the Light of Existence.*

*And so heavens formed from the Light of Unity*

*And so love formed from the Light of the Lord.*

*So be (all) called to live this love.  
So be (all) called to give this love,  
and to apprehend this, and to teach this.*

*Not victims shall you be that darkness searches for,  
yet, your work shall be sacrifice in the fight against darkness.*

*I parted my light into the ray of love and into the beam of combat.  
I am the one spreading Christ's mercy with the sword, and, nonetheless, I am love.*

*Not without my wrath will the dark press my brothers.  
Not without my fire will the destruction torture your souls.  
Not without my love will their return be begun.*

*So I am giving you my word, John:  
I am baptizing you through the fires of renewal,  
through the waters of purification,  
through the oedema of change.*

*Do begin to continue our work.  
John the Baptist."*

December 30, 1992:

*"Yes, I am Emanuel.  
My beloved brother, much marking your path (of all of you)  
is given to you from the spiritual realm.*

*The loads afflicting you  
shall be instructions in patience for you.*

*The blows of the brothers  
shall be lectures in forgiving for you.*

*The fear in the eyes of the children  
shall be lessons in love for you.*

*The waiting for the revelations from the spiritual realm  
shall be an education in humility for you.*

*All this shall be support for you, not torment.  
I will end now, and listen to your thoughts.  
Go (all) forth in love.  
Amen.”*

December 30, 1992:

*“What should the darkness urge you, my John?  
What should the fire destroy you, you my brother?  
What should the suffering torment you, my brother?*

*What is it vexing you?  
They are the doubts in the power of the Lord.  
They the doubts in the impotency of darkness?*

*No, my John, your salvation is not of this world,  
for you did turn away.  
Yet, through you my salvation is returning into this world.  
The valley of darkness merely throws shadows upon your existence,  
but my light will always outlast it.  
And so the spheres of truth tumble down upon those  
afflicting you.  
Not misery shall be your way, but the recognition of affliction.*

*Stretch out your hand to me for the bond.  
No great hurt is your torment, for your body remains pure.  
John the Baptist “*

March, 18, 1993:

*“Hear my word.  
You are the light sent out by the Lord.  
You are the flame sent out by the grace of calling.  
You are the sword of love sent out in my name.*

*So you did receive my word and carried it afar.*

*So you did obtain my water and consecrated it.  
So do receive my sign now:*

*The rose of the night  
that blossomed the day Jesus was born.*

*It is the symbol of resistance.*

*It shall be the sign of our brotherhood.*

*John, John, lead your brothers out of the yoke of despair.*

*Yours is my power.  
Yours are my words.  
Yours is my fire.*

*The sign, let it be your sign( of all of you) -  
and the orifices of hell will not succumb you.  
Amen - in the name of the Lord - Amen.  
John the Baptist.”*

Comments:

Referring to the sentence “so you did obtain my water and consecrated it”:

My acquaintance, the *terrestrial John* had a memorable dream. He saw an orphaned, decayed village church. The image of John the Baptist was hovering above this church. Around the church building there were graves. A section of the whole ground was infringed by a stone wall. In front of the church and graveyard-complex, there flowed a narrow, sprightly creek with water as clear as glass, containing healing powers. John did not tell this dream to any body.

Three months later he was sent a clipping from a news paper, in which the planned restoration of the village church of Ensdorf (district Muehldorf, Upper Bavaria, Germany) was reported. The church to be restored was portrayed. Additionally it was mentioned that this church was consecrated to John the Baptist.

The photo corresponded to the dream-picture of John. He went to the church at Ensdorf, and also found the effervescing spring of water at the site he had dreamt of. The interior of the church was plain and Spartan. A sculpture of the baptism of Jesus decorated the chancel.

Naturally, my acquaintance was moved that his dream -image existed in reality. He thanked John the Baptist for this vision, and blessed the water spring. Only very few

people know of this. They use the water against their illnesses, and are convinced of its healing power.

The church has been renovated in the meantime. The sculpture of the Baptist had to give way. I cannot prevent the impression that John the Baptist would have preferred to stay in the old church.

Concerning the sign: *“The rose of the night that blossomed the day Jesus was born”*:

This statement still encloses a mystery. Up to now all research was inefficient. There is a legendary tradition that along the route of flight of the Holy Family to Egypt all roses bloom still even today. In my opinion, this assertion does not refer to this. As already described in part I of the book, I surmise a cosmic constellation of stars of that time to be behind it, or some other outward sign that pointed out the birth of Jesus to initiated ones. The Essenes must have been familiar with this image. It was in connection with the expectation of the Messiah. In the spiritual messages of Emanuel, *“the rose that blossomed the day Jesus was born”* is mentioned twice as the sign of a bond, that, despite resistances, stood for the Messiah and the spiritual salvation of mankind. It is probable that Imanos or another master soul of the Essenes saw this sign and interpreted it.

The whole message has a significance that still cannot be explained satisfyingly at present.

May 2, 1993:

*“My name is Emanuel – my sign is the sun.  
The hour is chosen to open your spirit.  
The great light of the sun has begun the day you all are spoken to.  
So I also greet the brothers of the Essenes.  
You heard the oedema of the earth enlivening the earth.  
But the oedema is heavy. The time will come,  
when it will be coming to an end, and no terrestrial life will burden the Omnirealm.  
So learn to be without the blemish of the body.  
No house will be yours, no space will limit you.*

*Leave off from the erection of worldly cisterns, once you take the way of the spirit.  
You are called upon to be a bulwark of the spirit.  
Do not allow to happen, what the priests exercised before you.  
Not temples of the bodies shall your work be, but storms of the spirit.*

*Where is the soul that ever owned a house?  
Where is the light that ever was bound to darkness?  
Nothing is for eternity that is being limited.*

*So begin your work in the sign of the sun, in the sign of the light that is without walls.  
Only this work can be without end.  
Leave off from the erroneous way of the masses and bodies, and awake in the spirit."*

Comments:

To the sentence: *"You heard the oedema of the earth ..."*: The woman who wrote this woke at five in the morning and was wide awake. After some time a clear breathing could be heard in a corner of the room. No human being could be the reason for this breathing. Over and again it could be heard distinctly. Despite of this strange occurrence, no feeling of fear had appeared.

The spiritual message followed in mirror-writing. The content seduced to manifold questions, since there was no clear reference. During the afternoon visitors came unexpectedly to the writer. The board of an esoteric circle described to her the detailed plans for the purchase and enlargement of a large building complex, including farming land. A closed, economically self-sufficient Ark Noah Project was intended.

The erection of an own cistern had already been begun with. With the word cistern, the writer found the connection to the spiritual message of the early morning hour.

The board was tendered the message. It indeed felt addressed, the large project was undertaken, nonetheless. Barely two years later it failed painfully. I have to add, however, that the planners and organizers of this project had acted with honorary motives.

Of course, the message also has general character, since it points to the doubtfulness of material strife.

June 24, 1993 (Day of John!):

*"Great is the Lord in His grace.  
...Singular the light,  
Great is the Lord in His grace.  
Singular the power.  
Great is the Lord in His grace.  
Singular His Realm,  
Pray for the Omnipotence. Pray for the Unity.*



*What is man without the life?  
What is the spirit without the power?  
What is the frenzy without the fear?  
What is redemption without you?*

*You are my guardian of life.  
Lead the brothers back into the light!  
Silama Betan.  
Verily, I am telling you: no terrestrial being will hear the words like you heard them.  
Your eye will see what my will is.  
John the Baptist.”*

*“My name is Emanuel, my sign is the sun.  
My brother Jochanan Ben Zechariah, I hearken to your words.  
The covenant of the Essenes can discern your power, and, yet, carries heavily under your word.  
So I will direct the brothers in the light.  
Grant that your word may rise in the bodies of the brothers.  
Almighty is your power,  
unlimited your might,  
infinite your wisdom.  
Not despondent is our faith, but painful the suffering.”*

*“My word is with you in flesh and blood.  
Never will my love be taken from you.  
Learn to see, and see to learn!  
I am with you in my brother, and am living your misery.  
John the Baptist.”*

*“My brother John,  
my word to the great master of the Essenes is a call for spiritual power.  
Hardly a being of the spirit can understand the worldly pains.  
For a long time I have been feeling with you, and have understood the hurt.  
Hard was my intention. The aim only was my way.  
I have learnt to see from you. Now I have to be mediator.  
Your life in the body is vocation to the bringing of salvation in the terrestrial realm.  
Never despair, for your way is the return in the bond with your brothers.*

*My battle is for Mirana - against the terrestrial realm.  
My battle is for you in the spiritual realm.  
The Great Master John the Baptist is power and love.  
His spirit will not be locked to the pleas.  
Emanuel.”*

*“Your word is my word, and it will stand on the firmament on the Day of Unity.  
You, John, must be my brother.  
How else can the soul be redeemed?  
John the Baptist.”*

*“Not mourning shall be your companion, since you are chosen  
to overcome the body, and to teach the brothers.  
The time will come, when you will be whole, and salvation will stream from you.  
Continue your way, and you will receive the grace of the master.  
Go forth in peace (all of you).  
Emanuel.”*

Comment:

This spiritual message contains an interesting dialogue between Emanuel and John the Baptist. Immediately after the first word of the Baptist to the *terrestrial John*, Emanuel addresses the great master Jochanan Ben Zechariah (Hebrew name for John the Baptist). He formally asks him for more power for the work and the protection of the worldly brothers. He appeals to the infinite power, the unlimited might, and the endless wisdom of John the Baptist.

The latter answers briefly, in four sentences, by addressing the small worldly circle around the *terrestrial John*. The reference: *“learn to see, and see to learn”*, is a distinct appeal for more recognition. At the same time, however, he assures his love and compassion with the worldly brothers. Now Emanuel addressed his word to the *terrestrial John*. He has pity on the small earthly circle that is kept away from its actual task by massive terrestrial oppositions and personal setbacks. He has seen that the chosen tools on earth have to struggle with sufficient suffering and pain, and in the end refers to the help of the great master, John the Baptist. This one demands the *terrestrial John* to act, and names the aim *“at the Day of Unity”*. Emanuel once more appeals to the *terrestrial John* to exercise patience, too. He also mentions the intermediate aim, the overcoming of the body, and the bringing of salvation.

In his message Emanuel speaks the sentence: *“My battle is for Mirana – against*

*the terrestrial realm*". My acquaintance could not interpret this statement, since the word Mirana was unknown to him. I elucidated him. Jonah mentioned Mirana (angel of the light) to be the spiritual name of the girl Tatiana. The high spiritual being Mirana took much suffering and pain upon herself for a certain mission on earth.

August 31, 1993:

*"So my being is.  
So my word is.  
So my spirit is*

*So I am returning from the sources of the spirit,  
for the hour of power has arrived.  
Not little and weak will you be,  
for my spiritual power is yours.*

*What is it that is tormenting you?  
What is it that is vexing you?  
What is it that is bending you?*

*So listen to my word, John.*

*Darkness and light these are the powers.  
Truth and delusion, the spirit,  
love and death the enemies.*

*Your being is love, your foe is death.  
Your being is truth, your foe is delusion.  
Your might is the light, your foe is darkness.*

*So I am calling you, John, stand up to the fight the power  
afflicting you. Your spirit is unbroken.*

*You have risen at my side, invulnerable in the spirit.  
Nothing can yet restrain our battle in the spirit.  
Pain hits but merely the body. So let the battle be begun.  
Darkness can only urge your corporeal existence.*

*Yet, again I am saying the words to you:*

*Not great is your suffering, for your body remains pure.*

*Do not worry about your hurt, for you are chosen.  
You will experience pain through my word  
and the hurt will torment your soul.*

*They will scoff at you on account of my words.  
They will chase you away on account of my words.  
They will damn you on account of my words,*

*and your soul will mourn and suffer.*

*Only this is the battle you will have to fight alone -  
and they will love you because of my words.*

*Receive the spirit of my being.  
I bless you(all) in the name of the Father,  
in the name of the Son, and  
in the name of the Omnispirit.*

*Go forth, and do not shun my word.  
Amen  
John the Baptist.”*

Comment:

In the course of my researches I read many prophesies, visions, and medial messages of the last three millenniums. These words of John the Baptist are unique in their poetry, expression, and clarity.

The sentence: “*so I am returning from the sources of the spirit, for the hour of power has arrived*”, is of great impact. I am daring an interpretation: John the Baptist is purposefully preparing his renewed mission on earth. He now is laying the foundation stone on earth. His spirit is beginning to an chor in the terrestrial.

Here also a connection to the word of Jonas is given: “*Here we sense, how the light is amassing its forces. It is as if the light were sucked off from the heavens, to return lighter and brighter than ever.*” (see the chapter: The Helpers From the Spiritual Realm).

In the further course of the message, John the Baptist enters upon the worldly affliction of his terrestrial tenant, and gives him strength and hope. The painful process of schooling and purification of the *terrestrial John* becomes vaguely discernable here. Being chosen has its human price. John the Baptist unmistakably

points out the coming to his chosen one. He will be exposed to the derision and persecution in this world, but also loving and understanding men will surround him.

The words of John the Baptist remind movingly of the prophesies of Hildegard von Bingen and Bertha Dudde.

December 19, 1993:

*“My name is Emanuel –  
my sign is the sun.  
So I am calling from the worlds of the spirit  
the brother in the country of the fathers of Abraham.  
Your foot will tread upon the paths of the master.  
But the ways are marked by hate and violence.  
Flee the place of men,  
and expect his word in the wilderness of the thoughts.  
Not that country shall be the land of your work,  
where sacrilege and mammon defiles the word.  
Look for the wilderness in the exterior,  
and you will find the desert in the spirit.  
And his word will seize your heart,  
and guide you up to the spheres of the Great Teacher.”*

Comment:

This message is based on a special occurrence. In December 1993, I was on my first travel of research to Palestine. I was accompanied by my family and the *terrestrial John*. Our location was Eilat. From there we roved through the Negev - Desert and the bordering Sinai. A further journey for research to the region of the Dead Sea was only planned for March. During an early morning walk, I rented a car on the spot, and surprised my companions with the decision of a journey of several days to Qumran, Jericho, and Jerusalem. When we were driving away, the receptionist ran behind us gesticulating. She had just received a fax for my acquaintance. It contained the spiritual message by Emanuel. The (she -)writer had received it during the night, and faxed it to Israel. Of course, we were surprised. Did Emanuel already know before us, whereto the journey would lead on December 1993?

We then actually followed the trails of the Master and Great Teacher, John the Baptist. Emanuel's reference to *hate and violence* proved true, especially in the areas of Jericho and Jerusalem.

We could only shortly and stealthily approach the baptism -site at the Jordan River. The area was in a military zone and was strictly guarded. Any entry was interdicted.

January 29, 1994:

*“My name is Emanuel, my sign is the sun of renewal.  
New the community of the Essenes must come to be.  
New the teaching of the Essenes must come to be.  
New the aim of the Essenes must come to be.  
New the unity in the battle against darkness must come to be.  
New is the assignment of our Lord.  
Do save the good from the clutches of death.  
His fight is for every brother, every sister,  
willing to take his way.  
Not recklessly may this way be entered upon,  
for the opposing power is great.  
My brother John, you have been suffering for many weeks,  
and your thinking is as if you were deserted and alone.  
Since worlds are separating us, your sensation must be so delusive.  
Yet, I spoke to John the Baptist about your suffering.  
How could I do this, if I were not always united with you.  
No affliction that isn't weakened by the good,  
no assault, that isn't softened by the good is reaching you, John.  
You are only alone in the terrestrial body, but not in the spiritual existence.  
The radiant light will be your power.  
Amen”.*

*“How can I give you my sign and my fief  
- and leave you?  
How can I give you my word and my name  
- and forget you?  
How can I give you my assignment and my diligence  
and betray you in the face of the foe?*

*Never is my love taken from you.  
Never is my hand away from your doing.  
Never is my foot away from your path.  
My John, you are learning to behold the magnificence and fear the darkness.*

*As the sign of my covenant, I am laying the cloak of fire,  
of my fire over your body. No being can win power over you.  
This is my legacy.  
Part this coat, but avoid thoughtlessness.  
Yours be my word, but examine your being.  
John the Baptist.”*

*“In peace there is strength.  
God’s flock is passing boulders and stone,  
and unerringly taking the rock’s paths.  
Their sight but perceives the shepherd’s step,  
and is blind to any danger.  
So become the lamb,  
unflinchingly taking the shepherd’s paths.  
John,  
you are not a lamb,  
you are His lamb.  
Greeted be the Great Teacher.  
Imanos.”*

Comments:

Emanuel movingly appeals for the renewal of Essene thinking. He does not withhold the resistances expecting those entering upon the way of the Essenes. Then Emanuel considers carefully the sufferings of the terrestrial *John*. The latter was struck by strong bodily tribulation. Due this, he increasingly doubted the correctness of his actions. He actually felt deserted by John the Baptist.

The message of John the Baptist also enters upon these human afflictions of doubting and being deserted. He gives a forcible word of testimony with his words, however. This needs no comment.

Imanos reinforces the speech of John the Baptist with his words. They are allegorical and full of wisdom.

It is perceivable that several spiritual messages deal with the sufferings and tribulations of the *terrestrial John*. They were distresses of manifold kind. So in his worldly actions oppositions rose, contradicting any human logic. He also had to accept strong bodily obstructions. I could witness many of these situations of need. How are they explicable? One answer may lie in the required overcoming of the earthly-human goals and wishes, yes, even in that of the body. The spiritual world calls this process purification. The *surmounting of the self* apparently is the

undisputable prerequisite for a spiritual work. It can be found in the biography of all mystics and adepts. Strictly speaking, every life is a way of purification, leading to the overcoming of the self, and the world, and thus back into unity. In the struggle with the daily small and great sorrows we hardly become aware of this. We, therefore, are easily endangered to thrust aside the real aim of our existence.

Isn't it a great grace, therefore, that ever and again spiritual beings and terrestrial men appear to give us this awareness?

March 6, 1994:

*“Jerusalem, Jerusalem,  
over how many cities did you cast your shadow.  
Discord and hate are your countenance, vanity and pride your intent.*

*You abused the words of your prophets.  
You closed your heart to the Light of the Lord,  
showed his commandment the door.*

*Despise did you your Son, disown and deride.  
Even through the cross you did not recognize your sin.  
Whereto is your haughtiness leading you?*

*When the Lord will speak: “go into this town again”,  
the walls will resound with my word.  
My rebuke will ring in your ears, for I fear you not.  
But do be afraid, Jerusalem,  
for the trumpets of Jericho can be with you already today.*

*This is the new word of the prophets:*

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem,  
do not show your countenance in Rome. Because if you sow discord, and  
hate and murder enter this city, the Lord will destroy your visage.*

*Cast off your haughtiness, repent, and make even the ways for the Lord,  
so that you may be pardoned.*

*O, you proud Rome, take off your purple garments.  
Take in the word of Christ.*



*You are to lay His salvation over your lambs,  
yet, you are driving them into a net of commandments.*

*The high priests and Pharisees of Jerusalem, they are reborn in your palaces.*

*How shall the Lord guide you, when you banish him into laws and rituals.  
Leave off, so that you will not become the new Jerusalem.*

*Be prepared when the Son of Man will return.  
John the Baptist.”*

Comments:

The purport of these words of John reminds of the words of Jesus Lk.13:34 -35: *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you.”* Jer. 22:5: *“But if you will not heed these words, I swear by myself, says the Lord, that this house shall become a desolation.”*

In unison with the Jerusalem also the Vatican is reproved. Also here I see a parallel to the words of Jesus in Lk. 11:42 -43; 46: *“But woe to you, Pharisees! For you tithe the mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practised, without neglecting the others. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love to have the seat of honour in the synagogues and to be greeted with respect in the market-places. – Woe also to you lawyers! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not lift a finger to ease them.”*

Warning and appeal to Rome for reversion can in their whole impact on ly be understood, when one consults the prophesies of the past centuries on the fate of the Vatican and the office of pontiff. Many are maintaining the destruction of the Church and the expulsion of the pope. This occurrence, which will chime in the time of the antichrist, will be connected with the death of many people.

The warning: *“Leave off, so that you will not become the new Jerusalem”*, may refer to the destruction in 70 AD, but also to the divided Jerusalem of today. An interpretation is close at hand, also if it can only be superficial and cursory. The words of John express something, however, that gives cause to deep consideration and interpretation. Why else should they have been spoken?

In this context the prophesy of Nostradamus century I, verse 52, is most interesting: *“The sickness of the Church, caused by the new king is the reason for the downfall of Northern and Southern Europe.”* With this a crisis of the Catholic Church and all of Christianity is referred to that will even deteriorate according to verse 53: *“Through*

*other laws everything will become un-Christian.”*

In century II, verse 8, Nostradamus describes how the dogmas of the Catholic Church will be rejected. A time of renewal will ensue that will lead the Vatican back to the origins of Christianity. In verse 36, the French visionary talks of a great prophet whose letters and writings will be confiscated by a tyrant (antichrist). The Nostradamus expert M. Dimde analyses this statement in that way that this great prophet will continually warn the Church to convert, and will achieve the renewal with his sermons and actions.

May 8, 1994:

*“Emanuel is my name – my sign is the sun.  
You will hear the voice of your teacher.  
You will see the word of your master.  
I am sending love to you. Love that will outlast the worlds.  
Blessed be the day. You are blessed.  
Let your brothers of the covenant of the Essenes be of help to you.”  
“We have come, we brothers from the valley of truth.  
Be greeted, Jochanaan.  
Let us bring you our thanks. Let us bring forth our glorification to you.  
Praised be your name, praised be your existence.*

*We have come to bring you the gift of liberation.  
From now on you will be free from the torments of hell. From now on the bond of the  
Essenes will be by your side. As a man you will learn all our magic wisdoms. We  
received the power from God’s hand, and now we will direct it to you.  
Shun neither demons nor devils. Shrink neither from fire nor storm.  
Become master of the elements.  
But do this only in the name of the Great Teacher John the Baptist.  
Do not let haughtiness threaten your doing. Continue in humility and patience.  
God bless your way.  
Your brothers in the Lord.”*

*“My world is the Realm of the Lord.  
My recognition is the knowledge about the might .  
My power is the pure light.*

*My hope rests in you.*

*You, my John, are within me on this way.  
I shall be comfort and cheer to you.  
John, my brother, hear my word:*

*What would my work be without your birth?  
How could my words resound without your existence?  
How could the souls be guided without your way?*

*Praise the day on which you came to be my tenant.  
Peace to you.  
Fulfil my word, Yours is my word through you, and to you.  
John the Baptist."*

Comments:

Emanuel announces the word of the teacher and master John the Baptist. At the same time he points to the help of the Essene brothers.

These greet the *terrestrial John* with the name Jochanaan. It is written here with a double-a, and thereby corresponds to an old Hebrew, respectively Aramaic form that often is also written Jokanaan. The spiritual brothers of the Essenes herald the handing-on of their magic knowledge to the *terrestrial John*, their bother in the bodily cloak. The reference to only use these powers in the name of the Great Teacher John, and not to become victim to haughtiness has its significance. For every adept disposes of a certain measure of magic powers. These can also be used for egotistic ends. This initiation of the *terrestrial John* strongly reminds of the historically proved rites and cycles of instruction of the Essenes. After the periods of probation, teaching, and preparation, a seven-year period of maturing and solidification followed. Only then prerequisites for the initiations into the magic wisdoms were attained. A misuse of these abilities led to the expulsion from the brotherhood. Presumably such transgressions did not occur, however.

The ensuing words of John the Baptist speak for themselves in their clarity and expressiveness. They exemplify that the *terrestrial John* is seized by the spirit of the Baptist, and that he is to fulfil a certain task through his bodily life on earth.

With the message of May 8, 1994, I wish to end the chapter of the spiritual messages of John the Baptist and the Essenes. Of course, the *terrestrial John* and his small circle have also been reached by further words from the spiritual realm after May 8, 1994. Such will probably also follow in future.

However, they no longer are so personal in character, since instruction and preparation for the up-coming seem vastly completed. The spiritual messages of the Baptist now rather deal with the wrong ways of men and the causes thereof. In very

many cases the contents are congruent with the themes that were referred to by the *inner voice*. To prevent repetitions I am not reproducing these spiritual messages of John the Baptist here, but refer to the chapter following: *The Voice of John the Baptist in the Here and Now*.

I also, on purpose, will not reproduce spiritual messages of the Baptist probably referring to his coming to avoid misinterpretations, speculations, or even hysteric panicking. Basically, these messages have nothing threatening, let alone, apocalyptic traits.

One thing, however, I do not wish to conceal: John the Baptist points the finger to the wounds of the many small and great offences, drawing us into chaos like a devilish spiral. This applies to the individual human being in daily life, to institutions, and to rulers of mankind. Also haughtiness and false ways of our sciences are not exempted. His message addresses also those, who, as if they were spectators, consider themselves safe, ascertain their innocence, and have no idea of the dangers threatening them. His allusions to the signs of the time (Lk. 12:54-57) are distinct, his reproof of human weaknesses like vanity, hate, and unkindness are striking. The pointer to impending calamity as the consequence of human haughtiness, yet, is not alarming news for tomorrow, but message of salvation for today. We also have to understand the words of the Baptist in this way. Messages drawing attention to threatening dangers and showing up a way of rescue are proof of the caring love for mankind.

Frankly, much invites me to voice a personal interpretation, but my respect for these things is too great. Further I know from the study of the several thousand year - old history of prophesy and revelation that these are subject to their own fundamental rules. They occurred and will occur, yet, correlations, measure, and point in time are rarely exactly recognizable in the here and today. Even the wise and chosen brotherhood of the Essenes had to experience this. Their visionaries and prophets had a profound knowledge about the coming of the redeemer. All their work served the basic preparation and solidification of the realm of the Messiah on earth. The originally fixed date for the appearance of the Messiah needed a correction, however. This also applies to the so-called Messiah-labours(pains), by which the affliction of the light through the terrestrial powers of darkness are meant. While, at first, the sacrilegious rule of the Seleucids and the sacrilegious priests was judged to be the time of purification, one considered this to be the tyranny of Rome only shortly afterwards.

The Messiah-labours(pains) were to occur during the corporeal existence of the Redeemer. At least we interpret the respective Qumran scripts (e.g., the war -scroll) in this way today. In our historic-scientific view we then reasonably establish that John the Baptist caused a strong movement in Palestine indeed, Jesus Christ, however, was not even registered by the historians of his time. Nevertheless, we

know today that nobody influenced the world like Jesus, and that his words are the most-read in the world. The fulfilment of a prophesy therefore can mostly only be recognized in its totality afterwards.

The prophetic knowledge of the Essenes is confirmed by the course of history. If one literally assesses their scripts known up to now, there, of course, from the point of view of today, a slight timely and – with regard to the contents – short deviation occurred. But also our present view, be it ever so much historic -scientifically cemented, is limited. Maybe we see a timely fixing of the Essene-message that is not extant. Who tells us that their Messiah-vision exclusively refers to a certain time? Who is telling us that the Messiah-labours(pains) are not still to come?

With all the discussion about the Essenes, one thing remains undisputed, however: The brotherhood saw its task to prepare themselves and the world for the Messiah. All energy, all knowledge, all actions were aimed at this. This is, at least, what their preserved scripts convey to us.

The few spiritual messages of the Essenes I am reproducing here convey the same. It seems as if the Essene bond and its task has never expired. I maintain: they certainly did not! The Brotherhood of the Essenes continues to exist in its full size in the spheres of the spirit. Their will to assist mankind concerning recognition is unbroken. Their goal to save the souls from doom is unaltered. Their task to reconcile the world with God is inextinguishable. They are the teachers and intermediaries of the One Law, and guardians of Divine Unity.

The Essenes considered their adepts to be high master souls who had incarnated on earth. Their life in the physical body was service to men who had become prey to the power of delusion and wrong ways. Their work was the guiding back of these sheep gone astray to the word of God.

Do we have to speak of the Essenes in the past tense? The spiritual messages instruct us for the better. Once time requires it, and the dangers for mankind are great, they always send chosen brothers from their rows to earth, to renew their message of salvation and to herald of the Messiah. They did so in a most impressive and self-sacrificing way 2000 years ago. No less a person than John the Baptist was bonded with them, and fulfilled their work. If the historic writings of a Josephus Flavius, for example, or the fortuitous finds of the Dead Sea Scrolls did not exist, our science would refer all this to the field of superstition and fable.

In this book I reproduced spiritual messages heralding a renewed mission of the Essenes and John the Baptist at the end of the second millennium. The scientific power of proof of these messages from the spiritual realm is little. Nonetheless, they carry weight for him wishing to see.

Many experts of Essene philosophy are convinced that the brotherhood is deeply rooted in the religious history of man, and that their beginnings already can be found in the biblical figures of Enoch, Abraham, and Moses. They also are convinced that

the Essenes not only are a historical fact, but that they continue working. Dr. E. Bordeaux Székely<sup>50</sup> is one of most renown of these exegetics, and shall be honoured here.

With a spiritual word by Imanos I wish to bring this chapter to an end:

*“Praise the Lord, you tools of the Light.  
Great grace and Divine truth  
Have come to earth through these words.  
Yet, the fulfilment of the grace lies in the dissolution  
of being and return into unity.  
This is the goal, this is the way. Your way,  
you terrestrial brother of the Essenes, and the way of all.  
May God grant that your work will be fulfilled.  
Are you prepared?  
Love may come to all of you, love may come through you.  
Imanos, your helper in the Lord.”*

## THE VOICE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THE HERE AND NOW

In the previous chapter it became clear: the spiritual messages of John the Baptist and the Essenes are, for the most part, directly addressed to a certain person. I call this man the *terrestrial John*.

Reading the messages carefully, it attracts notice that this *terrestrial John* was a member of the Essene brotherhood himself about 2000 years ago. This is referred to seven times altogether. Additionally, he was in the student -, respectively disciple-circle of John the Baptist. This is revealed by the spiritual words of John the Baptist of Oct.4, 1992 and August 31, 1993. He is reborn into our time to renew the work of the Essenes and the message of John the Baptist.

The mandate is great. But the opposition of the world will be even greater. The messages of August 31 unmistakably point to this. But John the Baptist has "*chosen among many billions*" and "*tested by the works of action*" his worldly tool, his terrestrial "tenant" (spiritual messages of April 14, 1992 and July 13, 1992). These tests are ways of purification and overcoming of the self, for, "*who wishes to attain the great, must fulfil the even greater*". He never is denied the love and care of the Baptist, however, for "*the valley of darkness throws but shadows on your existence, yet, my light will always outlast it.*" (Spiritual message of January 16, 1993). In the message of January 29, 1994, John the Baptist expresses his special love. However, he also expects the testimony of the *terrestrial John* to the great work. The summons: "*Go forth and do not shun my word*" and "*yours be my word to you and through you*" point to this.

Manifold the task becomes clear, also in the message of June 24, 1993; "*you are my guardian of life. Lead your brothers back into the light!*" John the Baptist even underlines the being chosen of his earthly tenant with the words: "*verily, I am telling you: No terrestrial being will hear the words like you heard them Your eye will see what is my will.*"

All spiritual messages point out his task in the work of salvati on of the Baptist and the Essenes to the *terrestrial John*. A considerable part of this task is the heralding of the word by the order of John the Baptist. The testimony of John the Baptist to his tool on earth is great. He says: "*your word is my word, and it will be standing on the firmament on the Day of Unity*".

His message to men is full of love. For words of flattery one waits in vain, however. In the spiritual message of Oct. 25, 1992, John the Baptist defines his being himself: "*I parted my light into the ray of love and the beam of combat. I am the one spreading the grace of Christ with the sword, and, still, I am love.*"

So he also says to his chosen one: “*you are the sword of love, sent out in my name*“ (Spiritual message of March 18, 1993).

The words the *terrestrial John* is speaking in the name of the Baptist thereby correspond to the speech of the Great Teacher. They are shaking up and critical. They admonish self-communion and conversion. Prejudices and rigid schemes of thought are rejected. Unmistakable, however, are the infinite love and loving kindness. The help offered by John the Baptist often guides towards a painful self-recognition, advising a readjusting-of-the-self. Also the poetry of what is being said does not alter this. The words of the *terrestrial John* are a medial speech. This process is called the *inner word* or *inner voice*. This phenomenon is by no means new nor an occurrence of our time. It has been handed on to us from all cultures. From the Old Testament we know of prophets who heralded God's word in this way.

The inner word does not at all occur in a state of trance. Also no rituals or outer forms are required. Rather the speech occurs in a state of full consciousness. There also is no coercion experienced, since the will always remains free. Therefore not every intuition must be verbally expressed. Of course, the speaking of the inner word demands utmost concentration. Nevertheless, the surroundings are experienced more intensively than commonly. Especially the emotions of men, like deep fears or inner afflictions become almost touchable. Small and great wrong ways of individuals become visible.

How, now, does the inner word occur? As a rule the speaking medium sees a sequence of clear pictures that again consist of many mosaic-pebbles. There merely exists the necessity of transforming these pictures into words. In the choice of words itself the assistance from the spiritual realm is of course recognizable. The comprehension of the theme often occurs as swift as lightning, that is, the pictures and the corresponding words come like out of the blue. The medium speaking is mostly unprepared. Nonetheless, the words come clearly and calmly. The tone is always gentle. Yet, occasionally, the pictures are absent, and the word becomes directly perceivable. It is always the free decision of the medium, if he retains the intuition for himself, or if he speaks. This I wish to emphasize once again.

I can only describe with few words, and quite unclear, how the *terrestrial John* receives, feels, and hands on the inner word of the Baptist. The whole process can also be expressed more simply: the spiritual energy of John the Baptist is apprehended increasingly with the inner word. The sensation of being cloaked in this centre of power is experienced spiritually as well as bodily. The whole self gently rocks within the security of a radiant ball of light and commences to fuse with it. The rest happens as if self-engineered.

The descriptions of the *terrestrial John* for the major part correspond with the experiences and sentiments of the already-mentioned adepts Maria and Barbara. These, however, receive the Jesus, respectively the Christ-energy. Naturally,



concerning this, one has to keep in mind the words of the hermit in Istria who holds that both energies spring from one single impulse that is: are indivisible. Nonetheless, they are experienced by many people to be parallel or even differing energies. This sensation is not so very deceiving, for the energy of John mostly lays the finger quite unexpectedly on the wounds of human needs and errors. The self-naming of John the Baptist as the *sword of love* also finds its confirmation in the inner word. Lastly this also fits better into the general picture of John the Baptist.

The *terrestrial John* experiences the inner word as a grace and a burden at once. According to his words, he does not do justice to the demands of the great teacher. Considering his thoughts, human desires, and actions, he does not feel dignified to speak in the name of this great figure of the light. Further he knows of the responsibility connected with the inner word.

Many people come to see the *terrestrial John*. Their attitude of expectation is great. They hope for a helping word and dissolution of their personal sorrows. A great part of those looking for help have lost the centre of existence. Psychic needs, and increased loneliness are the consequences. Help, for the most part, is expected to take place through changes in the outer world. Thus, the word of John the Baptist occasionally remains misunderstood, for it in general refers to an internal re-orientation. Also it demands something from man: e.g. the recognition of his personal deficiencies, or to have will, love, and understanding for others. There often is the reference to the words of Jesus: *"lay aside everything that is old, and become new in my spirit"*. The individual disclosure about all the things the person addressed should do away with and the naming of them is striking. What is being said resembles a re-guidance to painful experiences and actions that were not resolved. The words used hereby radiate understanding and gentleness. Often people begin to sob for happiness, for they never before experienced such love. This opening of the soul causes a visible liberation of those affected. They are free for the message of salvation. This is also true for bodily afflictions.

Mostly those seeking help record the spoken word via cassette. In the course of my research I was permitted to listen to many tapes. It is astonishing that the inner word hardly formulates generalities. It rather is individualistic in character. I therefore ask for your understanding that I do not describe or reproduce an individual case here. I would consider this an offence against the personal dignity of the persons concerned.

Furthermore, the proportion of the inner word to individual persons is very small with regard to the complete message of John the Baptist. Therefore I wish to dedicate by far more attention to topics of common interest. The choice was difficult on me. It certainly is subjective. Additionally, I let myself be lead by the poetry of the messages.

The ensuing protocols of the inner word stem from the period of 1991 to 1994. They undoubtedly have the character of sermons. I am not commenting on them, since contents and statements are clearly understandable. I added to each inner word the heading, referring to the respective theme.

I wish to begin with an exception, however. This is the inner word to the small terrestrial group of disciples. It consists of a few persons only. They excel by strong power of will. Until now fortune pressed them hard. Their lives are imprinted by oppositions and back-lashes. Nonetheless, they always stood up again. In their love and charity they are examples. They hold responsible positions of leadership in their respective professions and are standing "with both their legs" in their lives. That they had to suffer hard blows of fortune can also be understood from the spiritual message from June 24, 1993. For the neutral observer it is difficult to understand, why the course of their life is so difficult. Maybe the following Baptist -word to them is an answer:

*"Bitterness and pain are stones man rejects. But those stones rejected, shall be the foundation stones of the columns upon which the temple of God will be erected. Be assured you entered this world to become pillars. And nobody becomes a column of the light, whose foundation is not tested, for the column is to have continuance in eternity. It shall be indestructible like the Light of Christ. A pillar of light in eternity. And it cannot be extinguished by anything or anybody. It will never decay. Great strength you must gather, for great strength shall stream from you."*

Here now the reproduction of the inner word to the small circle of disciples. It expresses love and care:

Behold the tender word,  
it is full of fire.  
Shun the word of flattery,  
it gives evidence of your plight.  
Do not speak words of anger,  
they reveal your wounds.

Wisdom solely is in few words of the Divine love.  
Yet, who is so wise?  
Divine love measures not and weighs not.  
Words of human love are groping their way and seeking.  
Once they do not return, they are extinct by the pride of the hearts.  
The words of men resemble thorns and daggers,

and once again the long since scarred becomes sore.

Truth and love are like light,  
abandoned in the midst of darkness and persecution.  
True is: Whatever you do, you are doing through him.  
Whatever he does, he does through you.  
Whatever you all do, you are doing through me.

Darkness and persecution will neither efface my name nor you all.  
Even within your bodies my name shines forth like a writing in fire.  
Letter by letter. Without beginning and end.

One day your bodies will be erased,  
never, however, the light of my name within you.

Your ear may be deaf and your heart locked.  
Grief and bitterness appear to you to be companions on the way.  
Do you think the cloak of your existence is woven from this cloth?  
Then throw it into the fire, for even the hem shall not touch you.

You will neither wander through space nor time,  
without feeling my steps.  
Even the interwoven paths of error I will change to straight paths of light.  
But then be not hesitant any longer.

This is my covenant to you:  
Do leave off in the roaring of the night. Tarry but for the twinkle of an eye:  
It will be the resounding of my steps.  
Stop your voice and harken:  
It will be my word.  
Close your eyes and see:  
It will be the glow of my fire.

And His word will become mine:  
Verily I will rake it until it will burn.

I am blessing you with the love of the Lord. Amen.”

## THE SIGNS OF TIME

“You beloved beings in Christ,  
with the holy waters of the river of Jordan I am washing the sin from your souls.  
I am coming to take the shades off your eyes.  
I am sent to lead you back to the One Law.  
I am giving my word to bring back to you the Will of the Omnipotence.

What have you come for? Do you want to rest a little in my word, or are you here to verily hear it?  
Truly, I am giving my word. But it will not please the haughty ones of the world. Their heads do not have the philosopher's stone, instead their hearts are stones of vanity. These they will throw after me, and nobody will be able to count them.

Haughtiness and vanity have numerous costumes. They even reside in the cloak of science and in the robe of the priests. In the costume of the presumed mighty ones they have erected their altars.

You will not be able to judge the blasphemers by their garments. They will be their words and deeds that will betray them.

Look, how they have lost the measure of all things.

Hark, how delusion is gushing forth from them.

Listen to what each one of them voices.

Do you still take careful note of the words of sacrilege, when they tell you what God is, what is true and what is false, what earth and men need?

Do you really want, what the putative mighty and wise ones of this world are giving to you?

They straightened rivers, creeks, and streamlets.

Where remains the creation in the name of God?

They flattened for you path after path, street by street.

Where is the path of the light?

They built for you school after school, temple by temple.

Where is the true spirit of knowledge?

Look, how they want to explore and use each atom, each cell.

But delusion leads them ways of darkness, and the price is high. Life on earth is submitted to infirmity and destruction. They clothe the curse of their action in words of false wisdom. Their spiritual disorder resembles the confusion of tongues at the building of the Tower of Babel. So this one will once again become the symbol of

their doing.

What is the impact of all their intelligent chatter, when illness and epidemics assail you like locusts do the fields, when your bodies are flayed, and your souls broken?

Your cities are full of life and bustle. Yet, what is the desolation of man in the desert compared to the loneliness and solitude of your towns?

Your days seem well-guarded and cared-for, nonetheless, each day for you is merely plight and sorrow.

One hand gives to you, another takes from you. They give you the mammon and in return take your souls.

When the vain and self-righteous ones are at their wit's end with the sagacity of the day, they give you their new wisdom. They changed the Law of Unity into a labyrinth of wrong ways.

For how long do you still wish to remain blind and follow the prophets of the abyss?

Many of you even follow when they are sending your brothers to the devils.

So you are led into raging battles of thoughts and bodies.

Your price in blood makes them heroes of darkness. Yet, you pay not only with the pain of your flesh, you are also paying with your soul.

For what or against what do you fight in this world?

You struggle for love and have hate.

You fight for purity and have filth.

You contend for peace and have war.

Your fight is futile, for you will receive everything on the outside that is within you. This is part of the One Law.

So the vain and mighty ones of this world will do with you what they wish and to you, and through yourselves will happen what strikes your souls.

They will disguise everything in words of seduction which they will call knowledge and progress. But their actions will bring calamity over this world, for they lack love. Wisdom and love are one.

If they had love, they would also be wise to recognize:

All life on earth is upheld by the purity of the elements.

Your bodies and souls are merely a minute mirror-image of the planet. So the great cleansing force of the oceans resembles your organs of purifying. The plants and trees are equivalent to your lungs.

The rivers and brooks revive the earth like the veins do in your body. The crust of the earth corresponds to the skin of man.

So you have to recognize that every disease of the planet also leads to suffering of your bodies that any plight of the earth redounds unto man and creature.

You beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,  
do not become tools of delusion, do not let yourselves be guided by haughtiness, do not allow yourselves to be directed by sacrilege.  
Look into this world:

There is no blinking of an eye during which man does not inflict unspeakable injury upon his brothers.

There is no breath taken during which man does not disregard and torture the creature.

There is no heart-beat during which man does not sin against the elements.

Yet, every deed of man is committed unto himself. All pain and any injury a brother afflicts unto the world has to be redeemed by his own soul. This is the Law of the Omnipotence.

Do you not see, how the pain of all lives is swelling out to a typhoon of suffering, how the earth is writhing with pain under your blows, how the waters are foaming from the poisons of your doing?

And you want to know the signs of time. Are you foolish or vain? Do you not know the words of the prophets? Do you not know the word of my brother Jesus Christ of the end of the dreads?

Is my voice not a last sign against delusion!

Therefore do not let my word be like water that runs off.

Do not let it be like sound that dies away.

Do not let it be like light that extinguishes.

I do not wish to frighten you, having come to preach to you to leave off. I cannot be angry with you, since I am sent for the sake of those who are just. Even in the roaring of the world they will not be without the Light of the Lord.

O, God, have mercy on this world.

Amen. Amen. Amen.“

## THE SIMILE OF THE STREAM

“You beloved brothers, you beloved sisters in Christ.

So behold, in your mind, a stream from its source, its visible birth, up to its mouth, its seeming death.

How lightly and free and easy seems its source, yet, what strong will of the spirit is directing the matter.

How free and unconstrained seems its course, and, yet, its route is determined, even once it leaves its banks.

How many rills, brooks, and rivers flow into it, and urge its ego.

Nevertheless, it becomes stronger and mightier with every influx.

How does it urge through narrows, and how does it stream over cliffs.

It knows but one end. Unperturbed by all hindrances on its way it finds the ocean. Here, finally, it is connected with all rivers and streams flowing into this ocean. Yes, it has become part of a greater and higher existence. And this higher existence has become with it.

Whoever of you says the stream ends to exist at its mouth, to him I answer: go back, and you will discern it is.

Yet, wherever you are standing at the stream do also recognize this:

not for the blinking of an eye it remains the same, for creation knows no inertness.

Neither in your world nor on the planets of the universe uncounted by man. Just like all life resembles one another, the stream also resembles man. Let this allegory enter within, and the affliction of the day will no longer touch you.

But allow also this word to penetrate you: Creation knows no inertness .

Check your existence and doing, where you are tempted to persist. Screen yourselves, where you are entangled in forms. In forms preventing you from finding the One Aim.

So I am pouring the spirit of the holy waters of the river of Jordan over the head of each one of you. Your souls shall become free and pure, your senses shall open for the salvation of Jesus Christ.

I bless you

in the name of the Father and Creator,

in the name of the Immortal Son

in the name of the All-Spirit.

Let the peace be within you. AMEN.”

## THE MOTHER OF JESUS, THE SYMBOL OF LOVE AND LOVING CARE

“Not the dead word of dead men is coming to you, but the living word from the Spirit of Divine Unity is flowing through living men into your hearts.

You beloved beings in Christ,

God’s Spirit may come over you. I baptize you with the holy waters of the river of Jordan, for your souls shall be opened for the salvation of Christ.

Do become living temples of the light and of the love in the name of Jesus Christ.

How often do you ask yourselves: Who is Jesus, who is Christ? Where is the difference?

Do not ask me, since I know none!

Your question misleads you into many forms of thinking and weighing.

And you utter the simple and cold, for the question is serving your vanity.

I am not angry with anyone, for this question was also within the bodily mother of the Redeemer. Yet, her question was born by misery and pain.

What great mission did this man fulfil. The fruit of her body, of her spirit was mocked and crucified by men. What torment did this mother suffer. And, nonetheless, she loves these men like God does himself.

Verily I am telling you:

All the love of the earthly mothers does not equal her love.

All the pleas of the terrestrial mothers are merely a part of her intercessions.

All the tears of the worldly mothers are but a rivulet compared to the sea of her tears.

Can’t you feel, how she is laying her coat of love around you?

Don’t you perceive, how she is holding her hand shelteringly over you?

Do you not recognize the grace-radiance of her existence?

Did you hear the words of the Mother of Christ that she gave to you through those chosen by her heart?

Why are you doubting, when these chosen ones are children? Are you not all of you children of the Mother of Christ?

Do understand it: A being of purity can only speak through the pure.

Where on earth is there more purity than in the children of the light?

I am asking you to understand the grace and love from her words and signs. Do screen her words from the mouth of the children, and recognize: nobody from the heavens is as close to you as the Mother of Christ. She alone is the symbol of the



Mother of the Earth, the embodied sign of eternal love and grace.  
Listen to her words! Ask for her signs! Thank for her works!

Be assured, the blessing and the intercessions of the Mother of Christ will be with you  
until the end of all days, until the beginning of the timeless unity with her Son.

I bless you in the name of the Mother of God.

Amen.”

### THE MOURNING OF MAN, AND THE HOPE FOR CHRIST

“I am with you in the name and to the honour of Christ.  
By this you shall recognize me: I am pouring the holy waters of the river of Jordan  
over your being.  
You beloved brothers, you beloved sisters, I will give you a speech in metaphors.

So speaks man in his affliction:

Into the rooms of pain and despair,  
through the withering in mourning alleys  
my way is taking me.  
At dark waters my heart bursts,  
returning in the days of the fogs and the fears of the night.  
So I am sore, and my existence is but scar.

And this:  
I am a game of all winds,  
drifting in the spray of the oceans,  
and burning in all fires.

So I speak to you:  
Your fears are hanging on you like stones.  
Pain and affliction are like dark gates,  
obstructing from you the sight of magnificence.  
Your way does not end in dark putrefaction,

not in grief and bitterness.  
It will guide you beyond affliction and misery,  
like bridges over torrent waters.  
Be assured,  
the path is directing your steps into the light.  
It will empty into the Ocean of the Love of Christ,  
where all sadness of the hearts will change to joy.  
This is the destiny of your existence.

Who is telling you that this will only be in faraway days?  
Open the dark gates of your thoughts and senses,  
for the magnificence of Divine existence is with you.

Do be certain of these words,  
day by day,  
hour by hour,  
breath by breath,  
and the sadness in you will be transformed into yearning to Divine Unity.

So you are blessing the waters and airs. Bless all the elements of this earth. Bless all those people believing to be embedded in misery like you. Bless all that is, for also your blessing is a ray of the light.

Open the dark gates in front of the hearts of men. Make even the ways of the Lord.  
To do this for the world is my existence.

Amen, in the name of the Omnipotence, Amen.”

## THE HEALING POWER OF THE OLIVE TREE

"I am blessing you, you beings of the light.

All that exists is created from the light of the Omnipotence. The Divine light gives life even to the densest matter. The latter decays only, when the light within it extinguishes.

So your body is formed of light and your soul is the carrier of the Divine spark of light. Yes, it is a part of the omnipotent light, and knows only one aim: the return and the fusion with the Only Source of Light. Only man himself has the power to rouse this spark to a blazing fire of God on earth. This does not occur on the outside, merely the inner strength can work this. But you have experienced yourselves that this strength is exposed to the storms of life and constant testing. So you are afraid that your strength will break like straws in the wind. Do continuous plights and sorrows weaken you on your worldly way to the light? Do you have sickness and pain? Do you go into the quiet, turn inwards, and inflame the Divine spark. Expand it to a sun of your bodies and of your spirit.

So I will give you an allegory:

How many trees do not measure up to the storms and urgings of this world? How many break and die untimely?

Yet, there is a tree capable of surmounting this that encompasses much healing for man. I will name the tree to you:

It is the oil tree, the olive tree.

I am asking you to look closely at the old olive trees. They have the age of several generations of man. Look at them for a long time, and you will discern, how much pain and affliction these trees have overcome.

The trunk oftentimes is covered with cancers and excrescences. The crown is burst, the trunk split or broken, nonetheless, there is always a twig that bears fruit again and will become a new branch. Over and again this tree assimilates the power of the Creator. And ever and again the trunk believed dead renews for new life. And again and again it finds the light of life within itself and expresses the might of creation.

But, just like not all trees have the same strength and the same will, this also applies to men. Therefore I am asking you, not to whitewash your weak sides and fears. Rather screen yourselves and find out the truth about yourselves. Do not pretend to be vigorous, where you are not strong yet. Only men consider this to be weakness. For God no shortcomings exist. For Jesus Christ no failings exist. And even for every master, who sojourned or is sojourning on earth, there exist no infirmity in the person desiring to take the path to the light.

Go into the quiet, search your hearts. Do inflame the light of the Omnipotence within you and become whole.

Amen.”

## THE MYSTERY OF EASTER - WORDS ON GOOD FRIDAY

“With the holy waters of the river of Jordan  
I am sprinkling your heads,  
purifying your souls and  
opening your spirit  
for the all-healing power of the Resurrected Christ.

The wine I am sharing with you, for it is His blood.  
The bread I am breaking with you, for it is His body.  
I am doing this in memory of Him on earth,  
as the sign of our covenant.

“Eli, eli, lema sabachtani.”

O, my brother, forever the world will carry the scar of your cry.  
Never will your word “it is finished” be blotted out  
Forever will be your voice “O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”  
Evermore is your light. When the world will decay, so your love will remain.  
Yet, what is my word able to do? Nobody’s mouth does you justice.  
O, my brother. So I do know of the essence of your being. So I incessantly hear your voice calling:

“I overcame death.  
I won over darkness for the sake of you all.  
Whoever will hear my word and will believe in me, he shall live.”

Constantly your message for the brothers and sisters in this world is:

“Not the suffering of my flesh shall seize you and guide you,  
for the body has no significance.  
Comprehend my being; it is the salvation of the resurrection.

Take in my love and my light, and the orifices of hell will not succumb you.”

My beloved brothers and sisters, thus the word fulfilled itself:

“The light shineth in darkness,  
and the darkness comprehended it not.”

This world did not accept the Son, but the world did not pardon itself for this.  
The wound of his death weighs heavily upon this earth and on those who struck it.  
So the word of the prophets fulfilled itself on my people. The word my brother laid  
over Jerusalem fulfilled itself. And the word of the Lord will fulfil itself to the jot.

O, ye children of man.

so I behold the squabble and bawling of mankind swelling up, how the sins of  
mankind break down upon this world, like the tide does on the beaches of the  
oceans.

My God, let me intercede for grace. Let me contend for this world .  
Let me guide the brothers and sisters of Your Son.  
Grant that sin and misery may burn up in the light of understanding.  
Let them mock of me, and deride my word, but let them become healed.  
Harken to my calling, o Lord, and forgive this world, like you forgave Nineveh.

You beloved beings in Christ,  
so you are commemorating during the hours of this day the way of the cross, the  
sufferings of our brother Jesus.  
I perceive how these pictures are moving you. But do not push aside his word of the  
eternal salvation of the resurrection in the process.

I am using this hour to stir deeply in your emotion, to move your hearts. I am asking  
you to not be part of this world of noising and quarrelling. Become aware of the  
significance of this day. Find your healing in the light of the Resurrected Christ. Not  
only lip-say it, but comprehend it with every fibre of your existence.

So I am guiding each one of you into the world of treading -down, of destroying, and of  
murdering. Behold the brother next to you in his misery, see the sister by your side in  
her pain. And then look into yourselves. What are you doing, when the frenzy and  
the haughtiness of this world destroy your brothers and sisters, when they are being  
humiliated and mortified, when they are being persecuted and murdered for reasons  
of hate and delusion?

In each one of them there is the cry: "Eli. eli, lema sabachtani."  
In each one of them there is Christ.  
I am asking you, do recognize this, and do not take it off like your clothes.

I thank you for having listened to my word.  
I am blessing you with the healing of the Resurrected Christ, the Comforter of this World.  
Do hand on this salvation, this comfort to those despondent and beaten.  
Christ shall resurrect in you. Do remain in his strength.

Amen."

### AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

"O Lord, do kindle the fire of your love in the hearts of men. Open the senses of the world to your light. Grant wisdom to the generations of the earth.

You beloved souls in Christ,  
how many generations must still pass, before mankind will understand?  
How many generations will still be rejected, before the world will see?  
How many realms and powers shall still come and pass, before man will comprehend his true being?

Where is the power of the great house<sup>51</sup> of Memphis and Thebes?  
Where are the riches of Saida and Tyre<sup>52</sup>?  
Where is the pride of Assur<sup>53</sup>?

They rose and decayed like Babylon. From sweat and blood of the peoples they erected their realms. In their haughtiness they considered themselves the rulers of the world. In their vanity they uplifted themselves to gods and despised the Law of the Omnipotence. They burnt those upright and visionary of their time in the fire of their wrong.

Behold the fortune of those once so proud realms and rulers, and do understand that they always return.  
How often did Babylon rise through force and fall by force!  
The names of the peoples and rulers erecting their Babylon over and again anew

change like the tides.

Which names has Babylon today?

Which mighty ones of this world are of the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar<sup>54</sup>?

Which peoples of this earth laid the corner -stone of their destruction themselves?

Lay off your pride, reject the faith in your cold wisdom.

Open your eyes instead. I am disclosing to you only a little of the sins in the Babylon of your existence.

How many souls are ensnared in the greed for possession and security? They have become the idols of your acting. Do you not know that the earth allows for no permanent possession, and grants no security?

You are travelling over the earth without support and binding. You climb every mountain and populate the beaches of the seas in your restlessness. In the rapture of your senses you are looking for the profusion of existence in the exterior, for your interior is void and burnt.

The flesh of the sexes has become the commodity of sensual pleasure. Even the plight and innocence of the children is misused by wretched ones for the satisfaction of their fleshly greed. How many souls are trodden upon, how many hearts broken? The fruit of the body has become the wrangling between selfishness and selfadulation. The unborn is trampled underfoot like vermin. Yet, no man and no law of this world upraises you to be judge and ruler over souls. Nobody can take the sins from you. Also the spirit of the age cannot do this.

May God forgive you, for I know of many an affliction having led you to this deed. Thus also those are not without sin kindling this misery and nursing it. They are an evil of all times and generations.

Your sick and aged ones are orphaned in houses and walls. Only bitterness, painfulness, and loneliness are their companions. You are talking of taking care and being charitable. I am telling you: You are administrating a wrapping of flesh, since you have trampled underfoot the souls of so many in the ecstasy of your cold love and wisdom.

Your eyes and ears are deafened by filth and works of decay. You readily open them day by day; for you sacrificed your inner voice, your internal vision to the spirit of the age.

The spirit of the age wraps soulless and worthless things in many vain words and sparkling gleam.

You doll up your possessions and display them like courtship -playing cocks show off their plumage, yet, your souls waste away in filth.

In your cities the victims of your morale and works bodily are lying in the streets. Who is counting those expelled and the lepers in the Babylon of now?

How many are striving and urging to rule and administrate men. Who administers the plight of the people and peoples? Who is guiding those lost and rejected? Yet those self-adulating know but one thing: they refer to the guilt of those helpless and lost.

What do the self-righteous ones still esteem highly, except for themselves and their possession? How many selfrighteous ones are there among you? The word of our brother Jesus Christ: *"love your neighbour like yourself"* has become an empty word among the peoples of Babylon. They are dancing around the Golden Calf without intermission. Sin, greed, and sacrilege fill up the world even in its utmost extremity.

What is the sacrilege of Sodom in comparison with the vices of this time? For how long will the Lord still be holding his hand over the sea of sins?

My beloved brothers and sisters,  
not he is righteous, who washes his hands in innocence, for guilt knows many degrees.

My word will not win your hearts. If I wished to win your favour, I would say what you wish to hear. If I desired your veneration I would upraise you above the vices of your time.

I came to speak against the spirit of the age, for it is without measure and without steadiness. It is bringing you death and damnation.

To those understanding my word I shall be support and strength.  
But you too, do be support and strength to those rejected and lost.  
To all those understanding and awaking I am handing the holy waters of the river of Jordan and purify their souls in the name of the Lord.  
Reverse, for the paths of the light have been made even for you.  
Go forth into the light.

Amen."



## ON FASTING AND ON NUTRITION

"I am pouring out the spirit of the holy waters of the river of Jordan over you. My beloved beings in Christ, many among you are desiring the light, but not searching for it. And there are many suffering, but not finding the way of salvation. It is the agony of the soul, it is the pain of the body. Jesus Christ healed lepers and men of the palsy. He made blind ones see and those despondent hopeful. They became healed, for they believed in the Divine power. Do you also know that Jesus healed many, who did not believe in his power? He taught them to use the healing power of fasting.

I wish to upraise all those among you, who have been afflicted by infirmities of the body, by melancholy of the soul for years. Free yourselves from this misery by the commandment of fasting.

This commandment neither is service to God nor homage before the heavens. It shall be service and marked attention for yourselves. When you are fasting all the refuse in your body is burnt up, all loads of the soul. The poisons in your body are used up and washed out, the blood is cleansed.

Fasting does not mean to eat less, but to eat nothing. Be without fears, you will not suffer hunger, for the feeling of hunger is extinct after three days. Drink pure water, as much as you can drink, for in this there are healing angels. Clean your body daily with the angels of the water, for the inner poisons of the blood and the flesh permeate through your skin to the exterior.

But do consider, also the soul wishes to rid itself from its burden. Do not be perturbed, when these shadows leave you through dark dreams and fears. Spend the days in the shelter of the angels of the airs. Do connect yourselves with the divine light of the sun.

They will only be few hours and days on which you will be dejected and disheartened. But they will be many days on which you will be free and will perceive the Divine strength of the healing fasting.

There will be moments when you will feel tired. But be comforted: the strength of the body will increase, the joy of the soul will awake, the liberty of the spirit will let you understand the unity with God's love. The quiet prayer, the delivery of your bodily existence into the hand of God will support you. When fasting in the company of the angels of the light, the angels of the water, and in divine confidence you will lack nothing.

Do unto yourselves the service of fasting. If fears are holding you back from this healing commandment, so seek the advice and company of an experienced brother, a knowing sister.

Fasting is a healing source of the body, a gentle stream of peace, and a raging storm of enlightenment.

Only after many days of abstinence you will in truly experience the sweet smell of bread, the energy of the corn and the fruits.

I am asking you not to take in food hastily and hurriedly. If you do so over an extended period of time, then there will be nothing which you will not do in haste and a hurry. Do eat in peace and recognize the grain of seed as the basis of all nutrition. Comprehend the power of the earth, the vigour of the sun, the air, and the water in every piece of bread. These elements are born of the Divine energy and donate their strengths to the plants and fruits again. It is without import, if the part of the plant above or below the earth appears to be of more value to you. The power of the root from the earth is directed to the leaves and fruits. The strength of the leaves from the sun is directed to the root.

But now I will speak to you about fleshly nutrition.

So you will say: there must be a Divine plan to nourish all those human beings. And you think it is necessary for this to kill animals.

I am telling you: there is no need. Do comprehend it with your human thinking. Let your intelligence rule, for this not even a sensitive heart is necessary.

How much valuable nutrition do you have to feed an animal, to achieve a lesser quality nourishment from it? It is a manifold of valuable and Divine nutriment that the animals of your breeding take up, so that you can consume valueless meat. Do examine this, and you will recognize it is not an empty word. Yet, this is not the reason, why I am urging you so much. The animals you are breeding for your consumption of meat are loaded with fear and terror, yes, senseless existence has incarnated. This is the exact word: fear and terror and senseless existence are embodied. You are taking up plights, sickness, and the spirit of these tormented animals into yourself with every piece of meat.

How would you judge, if you had created these poor animal souls, had inhaled them with the oedema of life? How would you feel, if you had given life to these animals through your creative love to then see how other beings torment, tear apart, and hack to pieces, let bleed to death this creation only to become saturated once?

Do you shudder at the thought, how God sees you, when you carelessly murder his creation, to heedlessly eat?

Does the thought depress you, how often you eat the flesh of the animals without

being hungry? How often do you throw away meat indifferently?  
You are throwing away the creation of God, the life of the animals.

The way in which mankind behaves towards these animals it is a by far greater sin than all the sins held against you.

What is the thief in comparison to a murderer? What is the liar compared with the one, who kills? What is the one who mocks to him, who murders? Yes, what even is he who insults God compared with him who by the hour tramples underfoot His creatures; who painfully hunts them, who imprisons them, leaves them without light, without air, without earth, without space, yes, without all which is Divine?

This I am telling you: if you could fathom what misery will come over this world as a consequence of the torture and pain of the animals, you could no longer sit still even for a moment.

But you long since cast this off in your delusion. You are without pain for this affliction of the animals. How then will you recognize the plight of the plants, you are creating in your haughtiness?

I thank you for having listened to my earnest words. They will not please the vanity and the delusion of this world.  
Nevertheless my words will not wither.

I am blessing you with the Light of Christ.

Amen.”

#### A PART OF THE WAY IN THE LIFE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

“My beloved beings in Christ,  
the spirit of the holy waters of the river of Jordan may open your hearts for the light of redemption.

I up-grew at the sites of the temples. I saw the anger and hate of men, their sacrilege and usury.

I saw how they heightened themselves by humiliating their brothers and sisters.  
I heard the priests and those high in Israel using the word of Moses for their zeal.  
My words did not change them, they threw stones at my body.

So I turned away from the towns and went into the countries.  
Here I saw men full of plights and sickness. How their eye was blind and their spirit.  
How their ear was deaf and their heart.  
How their body was crippled and their hope.  
My words of salvation did not find their souls. They neither shared bread nor water  
with me.

So I turned away from men, and immersed my spirit in the waters of the oceans.  
Here I saw pain and death. Those killing, and those being killed. I saw the beings,  
how they are intent on hunting and devouring. And their multiplication is but an  
increase in killing. I saw the beings that are being murdered. And their procreation is  
merely an augmentation of becoming murdered.  
My prayers did not reduce the blood of the seas.

So I turned away from the waters of the seas, and I absorbed my spirit in the airs.  
Here I heard the chant of the birds. Yet, I saw the resounding of their songs only  
filled the airs, when they did not hunt and kill for themselves and those who were  
theirs.  
They heedlessly flew away over my blessing.

So I turned away and looked at the earth.  
I saw at my feet how the scorpion driven on the deadly hunt for its victim, and I  
heard the horror-cry of death.  
The pain of my soul did not make anything undone.

So I again turned away, and asked the Father:  
“Why, Creator of all that is, did you create this thus?”

Then the voice of the Lord answered me:  
“I created all that is in love. But I did not prevent anyone and anything from being like  
he/it wishes to be. Whatever is created by love is free and unbound.  
Hear also this:  
I have chosen you, but my spirit must rise within yourself. Only he is able to give my  
salvation who discerns the havoc on earth. I have sent you to return my law into this  
world. I sent you to enlighten the spirit of the world, so that the calamity will be  
eased. Point men to my love, refer them to my son who reveals my love.  
But my word shall also be this answer to you:  
Together man and creature are in my spirit. Is not every good shepherd with the  
lambs in my name?  
Do get absorbed in the flowers, plants, and trees. They grow upwards in my light,

radiating and full of vigour, and they do not kill. Yes, they give nourishment without taking. Through them life flourishes manifold. Do not concentrate your spirit only on that which gives fruit and lives above the earth. Also look at the root -system below the earth, and you will understand that also this is in my spirit.”

I did like the Lord had told me, and recognized the truth of his word.

My beloved brothers and sisters,

thus I was blind for the love of the Father, deaf for the vigour of the spirit.

Yet, I saw and learnt, Do also discern the infinite power of God. Let your work be a radiant light permeating darkness and perceive: your love can alleviate the affliction and illness of your brothers and sisters, yes, even extinguish it. The Lord chose each one of you, to give his love.

I am also giving you a small something:

When you are despondent and full of mourning, sink your spirit into a high and strong-grown tree. Connect yourselves with its being, its healing. Yes, lean against it, and embrace it, for the tree verily is in the spirit of the creator. Feel, how it selflessly gives to you its vigour and its healing.

Do remain in the love of the Lord.

Amen, in eternity, Amen.”

## THE RETURN OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

“You beloved beings in Christ, the Spirit of God may come down on you.

I baptize you with the holy waters of the river of Jordan.

Again I am giving testimony of the Comforter of this World.

So my brother Jesus Christ discloses to me:

“You will give many words. But you will recognize they are broken in the wind.

Yet, you do not say: What is the might of the words against the wind?

For you know, the wind will blow them like clouds over the earth and they will fall upon thirsting ground, like clouds emptying on the desert.

Consider: How much rain needs the soil to become fertile?

How many words need the hearts of men to find to me?

Never again will I say: Shout from the roofs what your ear is hearing!  
The world would again tread down my children of the light.  
But not again will I expose my children of the light to the darkness.

The time is nigh, when you, my brother, will say:  
I will return to this earth. My voice will contest for you in the cities,  
yes, even in the desert I will shout your word.

Again you will be the thorn in the flesh of darkness.  
Again you will be the sword of the light in the delusion.  
Again you will round up the herd of the just ones with your call.  
Again, however, the impious and unjust ones will seek your life.

Then will be the time when I will follow you, and will return in the Splendour of God.  
Then your word will beam on the firmament, written from the fire of the earth.  
And my word will be beside it, written from the spray of the oceans.  
And they will flow into one another to one word.  
And we will form a new element from fire and water,  
and it will be indestructible, like you and me.

And the word will be fulfilled:

I will round up the flock.  
And you, my brother, will be by my side.  
For I am one with you, like I am one with the Father.”

“Amen”

## PROSPECT

The words of John the Baptist in the time being are admonishing and arousing. Even the small cutting from the spiritual messages from the texts of the inner voice points out distinctly the wrongs and errors of our time. They are the medially received words and speeches in the name of John the Baptist, flowing through the mouth of an earthly medium. So I cannot ask from anyone or expect that he acknowledges these words as the new message of the forerunner of Christ. The deep truth, however, transparent through the speeches is something everybody has to examine and recognize for himself.

Striking is the strong correlation in expression and contents of the spiritual words of John with the sermons of the Baptist of almost 2000 years ago. This is therefore remarkable, because the *terrestrial John* had no conscious knowledge of the topics of the sermons of the Baptist from that time. Only through my investigations within the framework of this book, the parallels of once and now became apparent.

The critical reader of the spiritual words of John is, of course, exposed to a multitude of questions. The central question is how the renewed message of John the Baptist is to be evaluated, interpreted, and filed. The reference to the unison of the speeches of today with the warnings of the *voice in the wilderness* will barely satisfy the one who doubts.

Why does the spirit of a biblical figure return after approximately 2000 years? On the surface the answer seems easy: mankind did move on in science and technical development, yet not in its morale. Even the appearance of the Messiah, the worldwide spreading of his message of salvation and his crucifixion have not improved the bearing of men. The warning words of the Baptist and the message of Jesus reached the utmost corners of the earth, but they are not being lived. The course of the history of mankind underlines this emphatically. Those nations and peoples denominated Christian can by no means be excluded from this. Is this ethical standstill of mankind, are the wrongs and sins of the generation of men the reason for the coming world-catastrophes or even apocalyptic changes?

Geology teaches us better. It names processes and powers causing constant changes of the earth. From composition and build-up of the minerals it conveys to us the process of the earth-body in the course of its up to seven billion year-old existence. Many apocalyptic changes of the earth are known, like the drifting-apart of the land masses into the individual continents, the Flood, the glacial period, devastating volcanic eruptions, impacts of meteors as well as immense tensions of the earth crust causing our mountain ranges. For these strong changes *sinful* man

hardly was responsible, rather cosmic factors of great scale were effective here.

Yet, exactly here, we find the point of departure and the explication for Biblical Prophecy as well as for the appearance of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth. The Old and the New Testament give manifold references to the end of the *Old World* and the beginning of a *new, Messianic Age*. The Revelation of John describes this process in detail. The study of, for example, the prophetic words of Daniel and Ezekiel<sup>55</sup> (chapters 37-38) as well as the records of the Evangelists Matthew (chapter 24,25) and Luke (chapter 21) lead to a better understanding of the biblical prophesy.

According to experts also the Cheops Pyramid from the 3rd millennium B.C. encloses a multitude of knowledge of the fate of man and world. It therefore is also called the *bible of stone*. The decisive question therefore is, if the perceptions and signs of the present are pointing to the end of the *Old World*. On the one hand they are astronomic, galactic, and planetary aspects that will work hardly describable changes, also for the Planet Earth. On the other hand it is man himself who is threatening the whole basis of life by environmental destruction and atomic frenzy. So to speak the earth is within a pair of pliers. Alone the irresponsible conduct of man during this century has led us into a blind alley from which we will not be able to escape on our own. There is not much help in declaring our irresponsible conduct in many sections of the technical field, development, economy, and science as an achievement. Also when many people find their personal satisfaction and fulfilment in the world of today, this does not alter anything concerning the precarious situation of the earth. The personal state of being content of some people oftentimes merely is based on an egotistic principle of blinkers.

We inhabitants of the earth apparently dispose not yet of the moral maturity and love to use our own knowledge prospectively and wise. Yet, side by side with the devastating effects of our cold-blooded actions stand the results of our hot-blooded doing, like the wars and brother-disputes, for example, as well as the consequences of selfishness and egotism. Only a clearing thunderstorm will be able to save the Planet Earth and mankind from final devastation and disorder. One neither has to be a warning voice nor a prophet to already envision the sheet-lightning today. All that is required is a clear mind, a knowledge of the constantly returning changes of the conditions of life on earth as well as a healthy distance to the belief in the progress of the sciences of modern man.

Will the coming process of purification on earth be caused by cosmic changes? F. W. Sumner quotes concerning this: *“Our complete solar system will advance into a new cosmic region, this will change our complete planet and all life on it. We have just now entered one of the most important periods of this cosmic cycle, and great*



*changes are ahead of us.”*

The American scientist describes the impending changes in a way equally deep as easily comprehensible. In the book *The Coming Golden Age* his theories are condensed in a popular-scientific way.

We actually know that our solar system is right now leaving the Constellation of the Pisces and entering that of Aquarius. Just like the earth and his brother -planets circle around the sun, our solar system is circling on a by far greater course around the central sun. This course is an ellipse, that is, the intensity of radiation of the central sun varies according to our getting closer or farther away from it. According to our terrestrial time-measure, a circle around the central sun takes about 25.857 years, and is subdivided into the twelve periods of the zodiac like Aries, Taurus, Gemini etc.. Every sign of the zodiac corresponds to an age of the world, and takes about 2.155 years, whereby not all constellations have the same extent. This great cycle can also be found in the small circle of the year of the earth. Within 365  $\frac{1}{4}$  days it circles in an elliptic course around our sun. Also the Planet Earth is hereby exposed to a varying intensity of radiation of our sun, corresponding to the twelve signs of the zodiac (see Hermes Trismegistus: *“That which is above, equals that which is below.”*).

Astrologically our solar system is in the phase of transgression from the Age of Pisces to the Age of Aquarius. If we compare it with the face of a clock, we are standing at the twelve, respectively at midnight, and the new day of creation is breaking. To every age a specific characteristic and frequency of vibration is assigned. The Age of Pisces is dominated by the lowest frequencies. They are said to correspond to those of the infra-red with 15 trillions per second, while the oscillations of the coming Age of Aquarius are said to correspond to those of the ultraviolet with 75 trillions per second. Once we comprehend the esoteric as well as the natural-scientific significance of the basic characteristics of these processes, we also understand the negative occurrences of the Age of Pisces better. It need not astound us that more refined feelings of the human hearts and souls as well as higher spiritual recognitions of the masses were inhibited by the inert vibrations of the Age of Pisces. The earth was - so to speak - surrounded by a reduced light, a fog that encouraged the flourishing of low elements. So it also need not surprise us that wars and conflicts of all kind, materialism and egotism increased continuously during this time. An increased impoverishment of the soul, lacking morale, and spiritual inactivity are merely symptoms of this development. That the dark powers gradually gained power over mankind and increasingly control led the fates of the world is the result of this development.

Contrary to this, the five-fold increased oscillation of the light of the coming Age of Aquarius will result in a liberation and development of light, pure powers.

Of course, the transition from one age to the next does not happen abruptly. Rather it is gently transient, like also our seasons of the year in nature gently merge one into the other. Only by the year 2030 this zodiacal period of transition shall be ended. Yet, until then the frequency of the light in our solar system will increase continuously. It is disputed when this transition period started. Mostly the middle of the 20th century is quoted. In this context the scientific discovery of the cosmic rays in 1932 is interesting. It was proved that these permeated a 2.5 metres thick lead plate (in comparison: x-rays do not even permeate lead that is 3 millimetres thick). During the decades the intensity of cosmic radiance has increased continuously. In addition to the Aquarius-constellation, the increased radiation of the central sun will be effective, since we will approach it as close as never before during the coming age. As a consequence of this tremendous two-fold caused increase in the oscillation of the light, a positive change of the spiritual powers, and those of the soul is expected. Unrefined material, and clumsy-materialist and dark forces will be dissolved, respectively *burnt up* by the manifold increased light, and more refined, susceptible senses will take their place. This is the deeper reason, why the impending age is also called the *Age of Light*, *the Messianic Age*, the *Golden Age*, or in modern colloquial language *the New Age*. The Revelation of John expresses the same state with the following words: *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away; and the sea was no more.”* (Rev. 21:1).

Of course, the division of the spirits, the separation of the powers of darkness and the powers of the light will occur during the phase of transition. But this parting will be preceded by an immense collision of the powers of Lucifer and Christ, accompanied by catastrophes, and cosmic changes. Especially this phase of history of world and mankind is intensively referred to in Biblical Prophecy. During the times of the New Testament John the Baptist is the first one to point to these terrible events. His words are distinct: *“Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”* (Mt. 3:10). *“His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”* (Mt.3:12). But, at the same time they reveal who will win this battle. Already in the 2nd ct BC the Essenes took down the impending battle between the forces of the light and of darkness, between good and the evil, in heaven as well as on earth. Of greatest expressive impact, however, are the words of Jesus on this, as written down in Mt. 24-25 and Lk. 21. His reference: *“People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.”* (Lk.21:26) explains the incomprehensible extent of this collision and cosmic changes. That, which today should especially shake us human beings awake is the certainty that during this fateful phase a process of elimination will automatically take place

within all of mankind. This will concern peoples and nations, but also every individual. Every single person, consciously or unconsciously, sides either with the light or with darkness. So he is either “gathered as wheat” or “burnt as chaff”. There will not be an adoptable middle course for lukewarm ones.

This process of elimination is described by Jesus in Mt. 24:37 -41 with the words: *“For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away; so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left.”*

Jesus with his own words hereby ascertains the words of the Baptist. They are milder, yet, equally clear.

The dividing-line is drawn between those standing in the spirit of Christ, and those paying homage to the ideology of the antichrist. The crew of those standing in the spirit of Christ, will also experience temporary affliction. So the prophecies describe, how those faithful to Christ will be chased and persecuted by the myrmidons of the antichrist. The Essenes also report of this. Also Jesus does not exempt this point. In Mt. 24:9-14 he says about this: *“then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because my name. Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But anyone who endures to the end will be saved. And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.”*

The term *the end* oftentimes is equalled with the end of the world (comp. Mt. 13:39), and results from a flaw in translation of Luther and also of King James. The correct translation of the Greek text is: *“end of the age”*.

The antichrist and his ideology will have an easy game for a short while. In the face of a destroyed human order and a ravaged world he will find many followers. He will address men: *“what God is this, bringing affliction and misery unto you men, who treads down your efforts and works, even your bodies, like vermin?”*

In the face of the great misery and helplessness a majority of men will be expecting help from the antichrist and will eagerly subject themselves to his guidance. Only he recognizing the guiding star Jesus, free from all theological trimming, in his truth and beauty, will be able to withstand the temptations of the antichrist. Are they those who will be baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire?

This assumption lies at hand, for only in this context the following words of the Baptist become a clear meaning: *“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one*

*who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”* (Mt. 3:11). These words have to be brought into context with the allegory of the Baptist of the fan and the separation of wheat and chaff. Accordingly we have to become familiar with the thought that this mysterious message of the Baptist refers to the future. In this, in my opinion, is embedded the deeper mystery of his prophesy and apocalyptic sermons. John the Baptist appeared at the outset of the Age of Pisces. He rejected those offerings or sacrifices for the purification of sins of the previous ages, and replaced them through the baptism with water. That is, he replaced lower cults, for example, the burnt offerings of bulls and rams, the killing of a lamb at Passover, and established higher values. We further have to consider his reference to the coming baptism through the Holy Spirit and fire under the aspect of absolute purification and liberation in the commencing Age of Aquarius.

At the beginning of the Age of Pisces the Brotherhood of the Essenes appeared on earth's plan, but, above all God came onto our earth in the person of Jesus Christ, and revealed to us the idol of the true way of being, according to which we can mould our lives.

At the end of the Age of Pisces the Essenes came forward again. Are the finds of their Dead Sea Scrolls an archaeological coincidence or divine guidance? Are their spiritual messages in the time being auto-suggestive occurrences or mission? Are the spiritual messages and the inner voice of John the Baptist the conviction of a few or a last warning sign for all?

I am convinced that John the Baptist once more is the voice in the wilderness of our thoughts and actions. It remains to hope that his voice will become ever louder, and that it will also be heeded to. The time verily has come, when we have to stop short and arrange our existence anew. Further, we have to learn to correctly interpret and understand the occurrences on earth and the signs of the time. Aside from the increase of earth-quakes, flood catastrophes, and other natural forces, in addition to the increased number of wars, the economic and social declines, the illnesses and epidemics, we also have to pay increased attention to other phenomena and occurrences. We have to stop to raise the limited horizon of our so-called analytic-exact knowledge to our ideal and substitute-God. We additionally have to define many existing and developing problems anew and free from all old context.

The current problem of the ozone-layer may be an example for this. From all we by now know about the cosmic changes, the increasing intensity of radiance and light in the time now and impending, a reduction of the protecting but also light-reducing atmosphere of the earth is explicable. Is the grave destruction of the ozone-layer not already a clear sign for the impending essential changes of all conditions of life on our

planet earth? Is an increased light not, at the same time, precondition for higher forms of life and the spirit? Is the ozone -layer merely a protective wrapping for forms and kinds of life that could not exist in the unfiltered light? Does this atmospheric *sunshade* ultimately prevent a new world for higher and more spiritual forms of life, which we cannot comprehend with our present material framework of thought?

Are these way-out or even absurd thoughts? Certainly not, once we become aware that the whole universe is involved in a process of development and creation that is guided by the Omnipotent, a central higher intelligence (God). This creation points at continuous development of love and light, aims at a spiritualization of all there is. In their roots all the true religions discerned this. All founders of religion emphasized this in their teachings more or less distinctly. The infinite process of development of the whole universe does not make allowances for the spirit of an age, the pride, and the interests of mankind on the planet earth, *“this compassion-arousing spot of dust with the golden sun in the utmost corner of the spirit of God.”* (Ramtha)<sup>56</sup>. Whoever manoeuvres himself through his character and his deeds outside of the Divine principles, will *“be burnt by inextinguishable fire”* on the new day of creation (evolutionary lapse), like John the Baptist says, or like Jesus maintains *“shall be rejected.”*

Both figures of speech are hard and clear, since they point to the uncompromising of Divine action at the hour “x” (Judgement Day). Whoever will not conform to the norms will be excluded from the evolutionary process.

In manifold ways we men add to it that the hour “x”, the days of horror approach ever closer. Our technical and economic achievements, our insatiable strife for material satisfaction have presented us with a no longer graspable amount of problems. Our soils are polluted, our water is soiled, our air is poisoned. We ourselves add to the destruction of the ozone-layer. Our actions have highly disturbed the basic elements of terrestrial life. Even though we do not endanger the existence of the planet earth with this, we do destroy our basis of life and the innocent fauna and flora. Do we not by this verily ask the Omnipotence to let the cleansing thunderstorm come over us? What great problems and dangers may be hiding behind those dangers already discernible today?

Our unfortunate urge for ever more progress, however, has presented the Planet Earth with an immediate threat to its existence: the negative use of atomic energy. Not only men, but also spiritual beings point in vain to the extreme danger connected with it. I well remember the medial message of the already cited Ramtha. In simple words he describes the basic structure of the planet earth and points out the known and still unknown sources of dangers to us men. Ramtha speaks especially clear of the increased risk our planet is exposed to by subterranean atomic tests. If, for example, nuclear warheads are being detonated in the earth crust below the surface

of the ocean, a cleavage can result, through which the sea water can enter the up to 4000 degrees Celsius hot interior of the earth. The consequence would be a steam explosion that could verily tear the planet to pieces. The danger still is latently present after the world-wide moratorium of nuclear tests, since respective sites of fractures and fissures have already been caused through the previous tests, and threaten to break open during strong sea and earth quakes.

In the face of this extreme danger we have to ask ourselves three decisive questions: First: Are we allowed to endanger God's creation at large as well as at small or even to destroy it? Second: Would the universe miss us, if we were to extinguish *"this spot arousing compassion with the golden sun in the utmost corner of the spirit of God?"* together with ourselves? Third: Have we already alienated ourselves that much from God by haughtiness and delusion that he can no longer be of help us, and that he will leave men together with their planet to themselves and their own destruction?

With all our careless and strongly irresponsible actions unto ourselves and earth, we still are bestowed with something warning us constantly. It is our inner voice, the conscience. The Divine spark within us, connecting us with the all-comprising unity. Once we agree to it that this Divine spark guides our thoughts and actions, these questions can be answered easily and clearly. If this spark of light is extinct within us, then we are egotistic and unscrupulous. Our intelligence is misguided, our working becomes destructive. We erect tower by tower of Babylon, leave behind chaos and destruction, and pay homage to our own soulless achievements.

Why should we still make excuses by camouflaging arguments? Terrestrial life and the earth itself have long since become seized by the renewed contractors of the *Babylonian Towers*. The hiding behind seemingly necessary systems, the references to the supposedly economically and technically indispensable, merely prove our hopelessness in the labyrinth of materialism.

*"The generation of man has turned the earth into a wound that now is beginning to cause pain in the body of the universe,"* says the master soul Emanuel in a spiritual message. *"Just like man gives all his attention and healing power to an ill and painful place of his body, so the Divine forces are giving all their care to you. It is not fear, not misery, not anger that move God's omnipotence to do so, it only is love. Many teachers and noble souls are sent in this time. Heaven is pouring out much light over you that you may learn to become healed, that you may recognize that salvation can only be found in harmony with the laws of the Omnipotence.*

*See and learn, for the grace of the Lord is not infinite. When the great light will shine forth on earth again (comment: John the Baptist is referred to), the final period of the great grace and conversion will have begun.*

*Be prepared, you generation of man, when the Herald of the Lord will appear to heal the painful wound in the universe-body.*

*Woe to those, whose only intent is to deepen the wound, for they will have to discover that they themselves are the wound. They will be done unto according to the words of the great light.*" (presumably a reference to the words of the Baptist of the *burning of the chaff* as stated in Mt. 3:12).

When we regard the prophecies of the Old Testament, the words of John and Jesus, but also the visions of mystics and visionaries of the last millennium concerning the Final Judgement, the message is unequivocal: Earth and mankind are standing before a decisive process of renewal. Not only heaven and earth will start swaying, also among men a separation of the spirits will occur. The prophecies speak of the *days of suffering* regarding this. Yet, these days shall, according to the words of Jesus, be shortened for the sake of the righteous ones (see Mt. 24:22). Following this, the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and the chosen ones will be assembled (see Mt. 24:30-31).

Jesus at the same time heralds a new, messianic world. The Revelation of John describes the happy state for the chosen ones as follows: *"and God will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away. And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true."* (Rev. 21:4-5).

There are many people among us who expect the prophesied process of change and renewal within the near future. The previous indications for this are manifold for the one who is able and willing to see. The beginning Age of Aquarius is correlated with the characteristics that correspond to the described conflicts between darkness and light and the ensuing time of salvation. The life limited in matter of the Age of Pisces shall be substituted by a spiritualised form of life in the coming age. This, of course, will lead to a renunciation, yes, to a rejection of our previous systems, ways of actions, and schemes of thought in almost all areas.

That this will lead to a separation of the spirits already in the perimeters, is naturally understandable for everyone, considering how difficult it will be for many *"to cast aside the old, and to become new in the spirit of Christ"*. To cast off the old also does mean to endanger esteem, power, veneration, yes, even one's material existence, and does not only imply the scrutiny of one's thinking and acting.

Once we objectively and value-free contemplate our time at the end of the 20th century, we understand that the coming age already is casting its shadows ahead. How do the spirits part already now! Here are those defending their old systems and recognitions, showing their teeth and claws. As of yet, they are still hiding their teeth and claws behind haughty, despising, and despotic words. There are those looking for new, spiritual solutions, and taking another way according to their inner feeling.

Suddenly many people are beginning to think, act, and feel, the like would have been considered impossible decades ago.

This being-different is manifold. It stems from a common root, however: The wish for harmony of spirit, body, and soul - the search for the true and infinite existence. The desire to again be reconciled and united with God - a God, free from all religious trimming.

This is the deep reason, why so many people are leaving the hitherto way of thinking and acting – the old trodden paths – and searching for immaterial values as well as a new state of consciousness on other ways. Also these ways are manifold. Meditation, return to the esoteric roots of the religions, revival of the old wisdoms of Tibet and India as well as the spiritual teachings of former high cultures are some of them. A great part of these people is experiencing an internal renewal, a spiritual consciousness. Some few ones develop medial abilities. They communicate with spiritual beings from another sphere. Others again attain the power of clairvoyance or dispose of healing powers.

This development increased during recent years. It often meets with scepticism, refusal, and opposition. A majority of the critics considers this development to be a wrong creed, and blames the social surroundings of the industrial man for it. I consider this view to be very limited, although many a criticism has to be given attention to, since there are also many vain, capital - and power-oriented currents within the spiritual movement.

One thing we always have to bear in mind considering all these aspects: we are standing at the dividing-line between the two Ages Pisces and Aquarius, at which the old and the new encounter one another. The old hereby predominantly is the material way of thinking, the new is prevalingly the spiritual approach. The division - line will still be flowing for some time. During this time also the discussions and contrasts and *the separation of the spirits* will increase. The rigid advocates of the former systems, structures, and recognitions, the concrete -analytical (left half of the brain!) thinking men will not succeed in prevailing on themselves to accept the new and coming. But also the adherents of the analogous and spiritual (right half of the brain!) world will reject the old knowledge.

Yet, the surmounting of the differences seems quite simple. Once we are wise and respect the recognitions of our next like we esteem our own, both can be connected easily and quickly. Our venerable sciences, our thousands of years -old experiences are encompassing so much noble and valuable in their kernel that they could build a stable bridge into the new and approaching age of the world. If we are waiting for the harmonious cooperation of men with one another, however, we will be waiting in vain. So the Omnipotence will solve this problem for us, by making come true what was announced in the Revelation “*for the first things have passed away. “See, I am making all things new.”*”



The visions and prophecies have attained a no longer graspable extent at the end of the 2nd millennium. Also the appearances of Mary were and are of a density and intensity like never was reported before. During the last decade the medial abilities of telepathy, clairvoyance, and clear-hearing as well as the channelled messages have increased by leaps and bounds.

Even when we part the chaff from the wheat, a disproportionately high number of unexplainable phenomena remains. All these visions, prophecies, and spiritual messages are of apocalyptic imprint.

We are well advised, when we turn our critical attention to these statements. We are wise, when we understand the signs of the time, and we have to know that already the Prophet Joel of the Old Testament referred to this time of inexplicable phenomena: *“then afterwards I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves in those days will I pour out my spirit. I will show portents in the heavens and on earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.”* (Joel 2:28-31).

## CONCLUSION

John the Baptist is a biblical figure fitting no scheme. There are also no parallels to him in the thousands of years-old history of the Jewish and Christian religions.

In the eyes of the beholder John the Baptist has many faces and figures. So he at once is an ascetic, a prophetic admonisher, a voice in the desert, a herald of God, forerunner of the Messiah, a preacher of conversion and judgement, however, occasionally also herald and precursor of the Final Judge. Nevertheless, he remains a fascinating puzzle to the observer. A veil of the mysterious is laid around this Jochanan Ben Zechariah.

Only after having permeated this veil layer by layer, one discovers the contours of this charismatic figure: John the Baptist stood at the point of intersection of promise and fulfilment, he was the herald of God *between the times*. He rejected traditions and burst laws. He only knew one end: the guidance of men to the true values and eternal laws. He subjected everything to this aim, even his life.

John the Baptist was by far more than merely a prophet and warning voice, forerunner and precursor, he was a teacher for all of mankind sent by God. This, of course, only becomes discernible, once we have freed him from the by far too closely knit frame of the Gospels and the Christian Churches.

His symbolic acts and sermons freed men from their interior and exterior constraints. These coercions were rites, rules, laws, and schemes of thought preventing the recognition of the True Law. His criticism was not directed at the small sinners, it met those mighty and self-righteous, the self-raised guardians of wisdom, law, and morale. They had been these self-righteous ones who had led God's people astray and into ruin, therefore John the Baptist, came, as the returned Elijah *to restore all things*. (Mt. 17:11).

John the Baptist came as a teacher and warning voice. He pointed to the only way possible: renunciation of the spirit of the age, and re-alignment towards Divine salvation. Only the love to men could induce this Great Light, hiding behind his name to take the step into an extraordinary terrestrial life.

This Great Light will always return when great disaster is threatening mankind. We must not view this Light as a herald of judgement or a forerunner of the final judge, rather we have to understand it to be the herald of salvation and the message of rescue. This message of healing is honey to the upright, is wormwood to the self-righteous ones.

There is no better ending for this book than the following spiritual words by John the Baptist, since they do point to a return of this Great Light:

*“Thus the Covenant is sealed,  
so that my word may return into this world.  
I shall gather the lambs  
from one end of the world to the other.  
I shall lead them over boulders and stones  
and shall guide them right through the wolves.  
And, wherever my word will be,  
there will be the message of Christ’s salvation with the lambs,  
yet, at the wolves’ there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

*John the Baptist.”*

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a mirror-image of the original text. The text is written on a page with a faint header and a horizontal line. The handwriting is dense and fills most of the page.

medial mirror-writing May 2, 1993

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations for the biblical books:

### Old Testament

Dan.	Daniel	II Ks.	II Kings
Dtn.	Deuteronomy	Lev.	Leviticus
Ezr.	Ezra	I Macc.	I Maccabees
Esth.	Esther	II Macc.	II Maccabees
Ex.	Exodus	Mal.	Malachi
Ez.	Ezekiel	Mic.	Micah
Gen.	Genesis	Neh.	Nehemiah
En.	Enoch	Ps.	Psalms
Hos.	Hosea	Ju.	Judges
Jer.	Jeremiah	Zech.	Zechariah
Is.	Isaiah	I Sam.	I Samuel
Jos.	Joshua	II Sam.	II Samuel
Lmt.	Lamentations	Prv.	Proverbs (of Solomon)
I Ks.	I Kings	Ju.	Judges

### New Testament

I Cor.	I Corinthians	Hebr.	Hebrews
Lk.	Gospel of Luke	Mk.	Gospel of Mark
Mt.	Gospel of Matthew	Rev.	Revelation of John
Rom.	Romans		

### General abbreviations

AD	after Christ	BC	before Christ
comp.	compare	ct	century
i.e.	that is	resp.	respectively
etc.	and so on		

## COMMENTS

1. The word anthroposophy refers to the Greek anthropos = man and Sophia = wisdom, and is the collective name for humanities in all its expressions. The term anthroposophy thereby is preponderantly associated with the scientific - philosophic insights and works of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), although we already meet the term itself in the philosophical writings of I.P.V. Troxler and Immanuel Hermann Fichte.
2. John the Baptist's and Jesus' birth fell under the period of administration (23 -5 BC) of the High Priest Simon Boethus. Historians and religious scientists date the births of both to 8-6 BC. The decapitation of John the Baptist and the crucifixion of Jesus took place in the years 31-33 AD. This means both had an age of approximately 40 years.
3. Settlement east of the Dead Sea, at the southern border of Perea. The settlement was expanded to a castle by Alexander Jannaeus, and destroyed by Pompejus in 63 BC. Herod the Great erected a fortress on the ruins. The remnants of this offensive stronghold are called El Mukawer in Arabic today.
4. Picture of a prayer of intercession. The déesis shows the enthroned and elevated standing Christ between Mary and John the Baptist. From the point of view of the spectator, Mary is on left and John the Baptist on the right-hand side. Both bodies assume an interceding posture. The déesis-picture has its origin in the Eastern Church, and still today is a common way of portrayal. In the Roman Church the most important déesis - pictures are in the Church of the Lateran, Rome, and Santi Quattro Loronati, Rome in Italy, and the Johanniskirche Bad-Zwischenahn, City Hall of Lueneburg; and the altar-tableau of Merseburg in the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, Germany.
5. The Pharisees were a religious group in Judaism. Their origin was in the era of the Second Temple. Fuller details were already given by the Jewish historiographer Josephus Flavius. In the Gospels the term Pharisee is mainly used for Caiaphas as the head of the party of the Pharisees. The name Pharisee (Hebrew Per uschim) means *those detached*, in reference to a relatively strict interpretation of the Law.

The Pharisees stem from the movement of the Chassidim, separated however, since they did not share their near-messianic-apocalyptic expectation. By the end of the 2nd ct BC, they fought the Hellenist influence on Judaism, and the politics of the Hasmoneans.

By the end of the dynasty the Pharisees had great influence on the High Council and the people.

They were the spiritual and religious elite of Israel. After the destruction of Jerusalem they were the only effective religious party. Their spiritual point of view became decisive for Judaism.

The doctrine of the Pharisees on the one hand relies on an exact fulfilment of the law, on the other hand the law had to be adapted to the respective situation, and therefore allowed for an individual interpretation by the scholar.

A high merit of the Pharisees was that they did not necessarily exclude non-Jews and sinners from salvation.

The New Testament describes the Pharisees as the opponents of John the Baptist and Jesus. The opposition was based on a different attitude towards the law. For John the Baptist and Jesus the Torah was no absolute necessity for salvation. The other reason for conflict was the rejection of all impending messianic-eschatological expectations by the Pharisees.

6. Next to the Pharisees and the Essenes, the Sadducees were the most significant religious group in Judaism. The Sadducees were predominantly interested in political influence, and were not unfavourably disposed towards Hellenistic thought.

For the first time the Sadducees gave rise to comment under the Hasmonean Jonathan (160-144 BC).

They discarded the oral teaching (Halacha), which the Pharisees referred to. Despite their arch-conservative religious attitude, they proved open to political currents and renewals, and always acquired good relations with the respective dynasty. On the religious life of the Jews they had little influence, however.

In the New Testament the Sadducees appear as deniers of the resurrection (see Mk.12:18-27) and as opponents of the Pharisees. The later rabbis call the Sadducees heretics.

7. Elijah (= my God is JAHWE).

Elijah stems from Tisbe in the region Gilead (between desert, Arnon River, Jordan River, and Yarmuk River), and was the greatest prophet in the Northern Realm of the 9th ct BC.

The reports on Elijah are in the history books of the Old Testament (I Ks 17 -19, 21; II Ks 1). Elijah, sent by God for a special mission, preached and fought for the

monotheism of Israel and was a decided opponent of the cult of Baal. The reports of the Bible decorate his work with miracles. He overcame draught and hardship, and was venerated as teacher, comforter, and guardian of those poor and afflicted.

The late Judaism is expecting Elijah as the precursor of the Messiah. Also the New Testament knows Elijah as helper in time of need (see Mk 15:35 ...). Even in the present time he is venerated, just as in the Islam.

8. Isaiah (= God is rescue) was acclaimed prophet in the Temple at Jerusalem in 742 BC. He prophesied under the Kings Ahaziah, Jotham, Ahab and Hezekiah. The Babylonian Talmud reports the legend of his death as a martyr under Menasse.

Isaiah (Deutero-Isaiah) gave hope for a saviour to his people that had been banned to Babylon.

His verse 40:3 is an allusion to the even grand road in Babylon, and the power required to establish an even way in a mountainous region.

9. Malachi (= my herald) is no actual first name.

Presumably the word Malach, of Mal 3:1, got into the heading (1:1) and thus came to be understood to be the name of the unknown author of the Book Malachi.

The Book Malachi is the final, originally anonymous writing in the Twelve Prophets Book, and belongs in the beginning of the 5th ct BC.

10. The Hebrew word peshet, resp. pesharim can be found in some scrolls of the Dead Sea, and more or less has the meaning of key.

According to this, the so-called peshet-method is a means of deciphering, respectively a completely new approach to the texts of the Old and the New Testament.

The work of Barbara Thiering *Jesus of Qumran* is partially based on the peshet-method.

11. Brother of Moses, from the tribe of Levi. Aaron assists Moses during the flight of his people from Egypt, so to speak as man and as a prophet. After the Sinai-bond the office of priesthood is conferred to Aaron and his male descendants. Further only he can be priest in Israel, who is of Aaron's descent.

12. Third son of Jacob and Lea (Gen 29:34).

The Israeli tribe tracing back to Levi was cursed by Jacob on account of a raid on Sichem. (49:5-7).



13. Name of a Gnostic sect living in Iraq. Originally the Mandaeans called themselves Nazirim.

Their writings contain valuable Jewish-Christian traditional treasures, by now slightly mixed with Iraqi elements. The Mandaeans are descendants of a sect of Baptists from the area of the Jordan River.

With high probability they are rooting themselves directly to John the Baptist, also the *Book of John of the Mandaeans* would point to this. John the Baptist held the designation Nazir, too.

14. Title of the English edition: *Jesus the Man*.

German translation in the "Guetersloher Verlagshaus Mohn", 1993.

In her work Barbara Thiering holds the thesis that the frequently mentioned *Teacher of Righteousness* of the Qumran texts is John the Baptist. The opponent of the *teacher of righteousness*, called *liar-man* or *sacrilegious priest* in the Qumran scripts is nobody else than Jesus himself.

Of course, this thesis only becomes possible, when one dates the respective Qumran texts mentioning the *Teacher of Righteousness* and the *sacrilegious priest* 100-150 years later, than palaeography and the carbon-14-method allow for. But, even then it remains questionable, since this would mean that John the Baptist and Jesus were bitter enemies, since the *sacrilegious priest* sought for the life of the *teacher of righteousness*.

Barbara Thiering further assumes that Jesus was crucified at Qumran and not at Jerusalem. According to the book, Jesus survived crucifixion and lived for 30 years together with Mary Magdalene and their three children. Later she maintains, he lived with Lydia, the dealer of purple known from Acts ( Acts 16:14 -15 and 16:40) and died of a natural cause at Rome.

Not taking these statements into account, which no longer have anything in common with even half-way serious science, the voluminous research of Barbara Thiering on other themes has to be marked.

15. Josephus Flavius (37/38 AC – after 100), Jewish historian.

Josephus at first took actively part in the war against Rome, and in 67 AD changed to the Romans under Vespasian.

From 70 AD onwards, Josephus drew up the history of the Jewish people in Rome, beginning with the creation up to his time.

Josephus relied especially in the description of the 1st ct before and after Christ on numerous sources and documents lost by now.

In his historiography, the *Jewish Antiquities* (Antiquitates) Josephus also mentions John the Baptist at several passages.

As a contemporary he, furthermore, paints a more or less neutral picture of the

Essenes.

16. Herod (Greek: offspring of a hero) the Great, son of Antipater.

Herod the Great took the place of the Hasmodean dynasty, and with the approval of the Romans became king of the Jews in 40 BC. He was officially crowned only in 37 BC, however, and ruled until 4 BC. His regency was preceded by severe combats with the Hasmodeans.

Herod the Great founded several cities and fortresses (e.g. Caesarea, Machaerus) and built the Herodian Temple in Jerusalem, the King's Palace, and renewed the Fortress Antonia. Furthermore, he became the co-re-newer of a missionary movement in the Diaspora that was to unite the Jews of the whole world in a community with considerable political and financial potential.

From his way of thinking Herod the Great was a Hellenist, but did respect the religious views and practices of his people.

His main political merit probably is in his friendliness towards the Romans on the one hand and in the unification of the Jewish people on the other hand.

Already his father Antipater, an Idumean and a favourite of the Roman General Pompejus renewed the Jewish-Roman pact of friendship together with Numenius, and also sought to enter into friendly relations with Sparta (I Macc. 12:1 -23).

In the years preceding his death, Herod the Great increasingly suffered from persecution mania. Thus he disinherited or liquidated most of his children from altogether nine marriages.

17. Jewish chronology is based on AM = Anna Mundi (world -years since creation). Due to differing opinions and interpretations the ensuing small differentiations in the fixing of the measurement of time developed:

NS = north-solar

NLS = north-luni-solar

Inters = solar intermediate year

SS = south-solar

SLS = south-luni-solar

Additionally there existed the so-called generation-year.

For those calculating with a generation of 40 years an additional conflict resulted: did a new generation begin the year 0 or in the year 1?

For the adherents to the solar calendar the generation began with the year 0, for the Herodian luni solarists it commenced with the year 1, however.

This meant that the luni-solar year 3940 AM began one year after the solar 3940 AM.

Thus the Herodian generation-year 3940 began two years later than the solar

generation-year 3940 AM.

Let us consider the Gospel of Matthew 2:7 -16 under this aspect:

The wise men from the Orient not only deceived Herod the Great concerning the place of birth, but also concerning the date.

To his question “*when* (chronos, that is, in which generation year) *shall the heir of David be born*”, the Magis answered to him: “*in the generation year of the south party.*” In the understanding of the Magis, who adhered to the solar calendar, this was the year SS 3930, that is 7 BC.

For Herod the statement meant the year 5 BC, since the year SLS 3930 fell on the year 6 BC, and the year 3931, his generation year, on the year 5 BC.

This probably is the reason that Herod reckoned that the births would happen only two years later.

But Herod the Great must have recognized this sophism. Therefore he searched for all children that were two years old.

18. *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* is published in its German translation in the publishing house Heinrich Hungendubel Verlag, Munich, 1980.

The complete title of the book is: *Das Evangelium des Wassermann-Zeitalters über Jesus den Christus Vom Fische-Zeitalter*. The title of the American original is: *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*. The author calls himself Levi. Only little is told about himself.

Levi was an American citizen, and from childhood onwards inclined towards the world religions. Already as a boy he was highly impressed by the sensitive refinement of the upper planes. Zealously he engaged in studies of the vibrations of ether and of the secrets of the heavens. He spent forty years with studies and silent meditation, until he was in a state of higher spiritual awareness.

Levi drew the book up from the point of view of the Aquarian Age. During the taking down of the gospel he functioned as a medium, an intermediary between God and man.

It is decisive that the Aquarian Gospel by Levi does not differ from the Gospels of the New Testament in its essential statements. However, it enters more deeply, correlations become clearer. It is more detailed in many passages and is structured more logically than the Gospels of the New Testament.

19. Indeed there are many circumstantial proofs speaking for a working of Jesus in India. During recent time historians have been looking for evidences, according to which Jesus at least visited a part of the dispersed ten Jewish tribes in Afghanistan and Kashmir and taught them.

The historian and author Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian collected testimonies to this topic in his Work *Masih Hindustan Mein* at the end of the 19th

ct. The book was published with the English title *Jesus in India* . According to the work, Jesus died in Srinagar at the age of 125. The grave in Kashmir, in which Yus Asaph is buried, in truth would be the grave of Jesus.

20. Herod Antipas had separated from his wife, the daughter of the influential sovereign of the Nabateans Aretas IV (9 BC – 39 AD) because of Herodias, and therefore had been forced into a war with Aretas.

The result was devastating for Herod Antipas.

Public Jewish opinion considered the defeat, and the loss of power connected with it to be a punishment by God for the execution of John the Baptist whom they held in high esteem.

21. The Gospels are based on the so-called theory of two sources. It is presumed that Matthew and Luke used, aside from the Gospel of Mark as second source a collection of *words of the Lord* , the so-called Logies (Sigel:2). The different structuring of the Mt./Lk. common material beyond Mk, makes the respective knowledge of Mt./Lk. improbable.

This independence allows the inference to the Logia as source of the two evangelists.

It is not decided, if the Logia source was accessible to the two evangelists in the same form.

22. Those books missing in the Biblica Hebraica and that exclusively were entered into the bible through the Septuaginta and Vulgata are called the Apocrypha. The Catholic bible contains them still today. The Protestant bibles do not, since Martin Luther did not equate them with the holy scriptures, and banned them to be a mere supplement to the Old Testament.

Two of the Apocrypha originated in the 2nd ct BC. Of these, interestingly, there also exist manuscripts among the Qumran finds.

23. James (in Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3. named the *brother of the Lord* ) later received the designation *the Just One*.

James only became a believer after the resurrection, and played a decisive part in the early parish of Jerusalem.

His voice was decisive at the council of the apostles (approx. 50 AD) and in the formulating of the apostle decree . Thereby James sided, together with Peter, for the access of heathens to the Church.

With utmost probability James is the author of the so-called Letter of James.

James is mentioned last in Acts 21:18 ... . James was born 1 AD. Thus he was eight years younger than Jesus, and born legitimately, in contrast to the latter.

Therefore James was considered the legitimate descendant of David by the eastern wing of the movement *a descendant of David to the royal throne*.

There existed strong disagreements between James and Paul in many regards concerning the views and interpretations of the message of the Messiah and how they should be spread. In 62 AD James died as a martyr. He was stoned to death by the order of the High Priest Ananus the Younger.

24. Hillel, who also holds the designation *the Great* in Jewish tradition, lived at the time of Herod the Great.

He was a Pharisee and scholar of the scripture and founder of a school of Rabbis. Hillel represented a moderate line within the Pharisees and created the basis of rabbinic exegesis and Hermeneutics.

25. Term for the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, showing a similar, in parts literal, concurrence of the Gospels.

This identity of the synoptic writers can be explained by the acceptance of using one another's writing, or by the evaluation of the same sources.

26. Hartmut Stegemann, born 1933, Dr. theol., Dr. phil., is ordinary for Sciences of the New Testament at the theological faculty of the University of Goettingen, Germany, director in the Institute for Antique Judaism and head of the Qumran research there. Since 1954 Stegemann has been involved in the sorting and interpretation of the Qumran finds, and belongs to that small circle of scientists, who always had free access to all original manuscripts of the Qumran finds.

The book *Die Essener, Qumran, Johannes der Täufer und Jesus* was edited in the publishing-house Herder in Freiburg/Breisgau, Germany in 1993.

27. Philo of Alexandria was a Jewish religious philosopher. He lived from 15/10 BC to 40 AD. In his records he combines Jewish theology with Greek philosophy, especially of the Stoic and Platonic alignment. His work exercised great influence on the theology of the early fathers of the Church.

28. Mar Saba is one of the most spectacular buildings in Israel. Today the famous cloister is the home of Greek Orthodox monks. The cloister was founded in the 5th ct AD. However, in earlier times the site was visited by ascetics and used as quarters by pilgrims.

The Gospel of Luke 4:16-30 describes, how Jesus should be thrust down the slope of a mountain *"upon which their city was built."* The description of the site comes surprisingly close to Mar Saba.

29. Enoch is mentioned in Gen 4:12 as son of Cain. It is reported of him that he led a life pleasing God, and that he was prematurely caught up to God. A voluminous apocalyptic literature, the so-called Books of Enoch, are connected with Enoch. There has to be made a distinction between the Ethiopian Book of Enoch (I En.), the Slavonic Book of Enoch (II En.) as well as the collection of Enoch-traditions written in Hebrew.

I En. became only known as a manuscript in the 18th ct AD. The book describes, after the prologue, the fall of the angels. Noah, the last of the ten early fathers and the one rescued from the Flood announces the penalty. Enoch wishes to intercede as an intermediary, yet to no purpose. Great apocalyptic similes follow, the *Apocalypse of the Ten Weeks* up to the judgement by the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. The script has its origin in Essene circles. II En. and III En. are independent of I En. concerning their contents.

30. Pontius Pilate, 26-36 AD, viceroy of Judea. He decided the trial of Jesus, and ordered the crucifixion (Mk. 15:15). His true attitude towards Jesus is not clearly retraceable. In Jewish sources he is described as rigorous, unjust, and cruel. The so-called Letter of Pilate, describing the miracles of Jesus and his resurrection is a made-up letter of the 2nd ct to Emperor Claudius (erroneously instead of Tiberius).

31. Agrippa I (Julius A.), 10 BC – 44 AD, was the grand-son of Herod the Great. He was brought up and educated in Rome. Through his friendship with the imperial mother Antonia, he gained influence at the Roman court, and attempted to reinstall the Herod dynasty in Judea. Due to his irreproachable way of life he incurred great financial needs, however, had to leave Rome, and fled to Judea. After severe personal crises (attempted suicide) he showed a keen interest for John the Baptist and Jesus.

In his political view he stood in contrast with the priestly parties of Judea. About 36 AD Agrippa I was in Rome again, and was sentenced to imprisonment because of a conspiracy against Emperor Tiberius.

Gaius Caligula was the chief initiator of the plot. When he ascended to the throne after the death of Tiberius, he pardoned Agrippa I and conferred on him the title King of the Jews. He found strong support from the ascetic movement in Judea. After having removed Matthew, Hannas as high priest in 43 AD, and having proclaimed himself the highest priest, he was murdered by his opponents.

32. Cajaphas is the designation of the Jewish High Priest Joseph. He held office during the time of the appearance of John the Baptist (Lk. 3:2) and Jesus. Cajaphas is especially known through the trial of Jesus.(Mt.26:3; 57).

In Luke 3:2 Annas is titled high priest aside him. The background: Annas held the office from 6-15 AD.

All of his five sons served as high priest at times; Cajaphas was his son-in-law. After his time of service Annas retained the title and furthermore exercised much influence, for example under Cajaphas.

33. Apart from the Zealots, there was a large number of groups and bonds of nationalist intent. Many attempted to win John the Baptist for their ideas and plans. He, however, could move many to a reorientation and reversion concerning the question of a military revolt against the Roman force of occupation.

If the words recorded in the Damascus Document: "*They resembled blind ones and like those groping for their way, until the teacher appeared, and showed a new way to them.*", are to be attributed to the Baptist or to the Teacher of Righteousness is still disputed.

The possibility that The Teacher of Righteousness and John the Baptist are identical cannot be excluded completely at the present state of the Qumran research.

34. Originally the Torah is merely an oral order the priest gave in the name of God at the sanctum. The words and directives of the prophets as well as the teachings of wisdoms of the Old Testament are, so to speak, already a Torah (Jes. 8:16 and Prv. 13:14). The publication of the Torah is the essential task of the priest, however, (Dtn. 33:10), and especially regulates the questions of cult, purity and impurity, and differentiates between holy and profane. Furthermore, all decisions in the area of law and moral order fall into its lot.

The Torah is given to the complete Jewish people, when is assembled for pilgrimage at the sanctum.

When the Torah was laid down in writing, this had been preceded by a significant change of the term.

The professional knowledge of the priests no longer was destined for the layman with this. The interpretation of the Torah by the priests was met with criticism by those, like John the Baptist and Jesus, who still saw in it rather the word of God and its deeper meaning, than the letter-knowledge of the scholars of the scripture.

35. Hosea (YHWH rescued) appeared as prophet in the time from 750 -725 BC. It was a phase of political disorder and religious-moral decay in the North Realm. Presumably Hosea stemmed from the North Realm, for as shown in Hos. 5:8 ..., 6:8 ... , he had a profound knowledge of the country and according to Hos. 9:15; 12 of its places of worship. The Book Hosea tells of the work of the prophet.

36. Jeremiah, from the tribe of Benjamin, was born around 650 BC. For 40 years he gave his word as a prophet in Jerusalem. The life of the prophet can be recorded well with the aid of the Letter of Jeremiah and the Book of Jeremiah. His last words handed on to us were spoken in the time after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah is a loud warning voice and speaks against King Jehoiakim. He is interdicted entry to the Temple. So he dictates his prophetic words heralding ruin to the people of Israel. to his companion Baruch.

Yet, also the surrender of Jerusalem to Babylon has no consequence in the politics of Jehoiakim, who continues to rely on his court - and salvation-prophets. During the siege of Jerusalem Jeremiah is confined, but liberated by the Babylonians, and Gedaljah, a friend of the prophet is proclaimed governor, but soon is murdered. Jeremiah is deported to Egypt by his opponents.

Jewish tradition holds, that he was stoned to death by his own people (Hebr. 11:36-37).

37. Contrary to the Gospels of the New Testament, the Aquarian Gospel does not report of sermons of John the Baptist in the desert, but, analogously describes the stay in the wilderness for self-communion and contemplation and does name a certain site.

38. Jerusalem has been settled since the 4th millennium BC. During pre-Israelite times Jerusalem was inhabited by groups of people of Palestine, the Jebusites, and therefore held the name Jebus or Town of the Jebusites. (Ju. 19:11).

Jerusalem only attained importance through the conquest by David, around 1000 BC. He made Jerusalem the capital of the rivaling northern and southern tribes. Along with the transfer of the Ark of the Covenant, Jerusalem also became the religious centre of Israel and Judea. The son of David, Solomon built the Temple and the palace around 960-950 BC, and consolidated by this the central significance of Jerusalem, which even continued to exist after the death of Solomon in 926 BC and the division of the realm. In 597 Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians, ten years later it was destroyed and its inhabitants were deported. Even during the captivity the city continued to be the religious centre (Jer. 40-55). After the return from Babylonian captivity the destroyed Temple was re-erected between 520-515 BC, and in 70 AD it was completely devastated by Titus.

Jerusalem has(had), aside from its terrestrial and religious importance, also an additional heavenly significance, however. Texts of the Old Testament report that YHWH himself will one day move into Jerusalem. After the destruction of all averted peoples he will gather the peoples faithful to God in Jerusalem (Micah 4:1 -



3; Is 2:2). Along with this, Jerusalem (Zion) will become the residence of YHWH, respectively of the Messiah-King (Ps. 26; 110:2). Inferring from this the conception develops that Jerusalem, in addition to its worldly existence also is a reality already existing in heaven, the so-called New Jerusalem. This becomes apparent in the Revelation, where John, the Evangelist, saw the *“holy city, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.”* (Rev. 21:2).

39. Haggai (= child of the feast) is the tenth of the so-called small prophets. With the support of the Prophet Zechariah (Ezra 5:1 ...) he enforced the reconstruction of the Temple after the exile.

The Book Haggai contains four exactly dated prophetic speeches of the year 520 BC. In the first speech he calls to the reconstruction of the Temple (1:1 -11). In the second he idealizes the Temple to be built (2:1-9). The third one proclaims the immaturity of the Israel of then, including its offerings to YHWH (2:10 -14). The fourth and final one promises Serubbabel, the descendant of David, the messianic kingship.

Like his prophetic precursors, also Haggai increasingly exhorts confidence in Divine grace and help, and heralds of the eschatological salvation.

40. Joel (= JAHWE is God) was prophet of the time after the exile, and probably worked in Jerusalem. The Book Joel is the second scripture of the twelve-prophet-book, and taken down after 455 BC. So, exactly spoken, Joel is the last prophet who appeared before John the Baptist. However, the prophesy of Joel rather is the exhibiting of an apocalyptic vision of the future that will be succeeded by the salvation of Israel. The public renown of Joel was rather small compared with other prophets.

41. Apollos is a Jew from Alexandria and comes from the movement of John the Baptist. At Ephesus he becomes acquainted with the views of the Christian parish, and conceives his further speeches and sermons at Corinth in accordance with Paul.

42 Esau (= coarse, hairy) is the son of Isaac and Rebecca, and brother to Jacob. Hereby Esau and Jacob represent two cultures: hunters and shepherds – and two peoples: Edom and Israel (Gen. 25:23; 27).

Esau lost, respectively left to his brother Jacob the right of primogeniture (25.31 ...) and thus the pre-eminence. Analogously, the younger State Israel surpassed the State Edom identified with Esau.

The verses of Esau (Gen. 25:23; 27-39) are oracles about the future of the State Edom.

43. The Gospel of Thomas is a collection of 114 scripts (logia) in a Coptic translation that was found in 1947.

It contains the most comprehensive reproduction of words of Jesus outside the canonized tradition. In it the words of Jesus are ranged side by side without a narrative frame.

44. The Files of Thomas is the term for a Christian -Gnostic apostle-novel telling of Tom and his miraculous deeds in India. In the end the apostle dies as a martyr.

Research has not yet come to a conclusion concerning the truthfulness of the Files of Thomas. The by now famous grave in Kashmir seems to point to Thomas and his mission in India.

45. Herod of Chalkis was proclaimed ruler after the violent death of his brother Agrippa I. He probably had a share in the assault on his brother.

After the ban of Herod Antipas, Herod of Chalkis took over the latter's duties as the head of the circumcised heathens. He died in 48 AD.

46. The Nabateans are a Semite people of nomads living in the Arab desert. They became settled in the 5th and 4th ct BC and dislodged the Edomites. In the further course they laid hold upon the whole East Jordan Land and established a considerable realm from the 1st century BC to the 1st century AD with the capital Petra. The Nabateans controlled the most important caravan routes between India, South- Arabia, Ethiopia, and Europe. The Nabateans were close friends with the Herod family up to the repudiation of his first wife and Nabatean princess by Herod Antipas.

The Nabatean realm was destroyed by Rome (Emperor Trajan) in the years 105/106 AD.

47. Zealots is the designation for a radical grouping fulfilled by politically coloured messiahship of the 1st ct AD. The revolts of the Maccabees against Rome had model character for them. The goal of the Zealots was liberation from the rule of the Romans by armed force.

In Galilee the Zealot movement found strong approval (comp. Acts 3:37).

In the closer circle of disciples, the "twelve", there also was "Simon the Zealot" (Lk. 6:15).

According to Lk. 13:1-3, Jesus distinctly dissociated himself from the interests of the Zealots, respectively from the stirring up Galileans.

48. The Sumerians (inhabitants of the country Sumer) migrated into Mesopotamia

around 3300 BC. Their origin is uncertain. They were neither Semites nor Indo-Germans. On the basis of agriculture and stock-farming the Sumerians established a culture with a highly developed engineering (architecture, metal smelting), the greatest achievement of which was the discovery of the cuneiform characters. The Sumerian realm was structured into individual city-states, at the head of which a king or a prince stood as the representative of the deity.

The voluminous literature of the Sumerians was mostly handed on to us by later copies. Aside from lists and laws especially hymns, myths, and epics are preserved, in which we also meet the figure of Gilgamesh for the first time.

The Sumerians had to defend themselves against intruders. The immigration of the Amorites eventually led to the decomposition of the political system in 1950 BC; during the subsequent time the Sumerians were integrated into the Babylonian realm.

49. Michel de Nostredame, called Nostradamus (1503-66), studied medicine at Montpellier, fought bravely and successfully against the plague in various cities and became famous for his remedies. From 1550 onwards, he edited almanacs with prognoses and advice that were very much in demand.

During the last years of his life, at Salon, he drew up his Centuries in gloomy Quatrains (strophes) with prophesies up to the year 3000. The, with stunning details, predicted death of King Henry II caused them to be a sensation. Nostradamus stemmed from a Jewish family that brought forth remarkable scholars in several generations.

50. The philologist Dr. Edmund Bordeaux Székely was professor of philosophy and experimental psychology. He translated old scripts and records from the Sanskrit, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin into ten modern languages. Among his most important translations are chosen texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Gospels of the Essenes as well as texts of the Zend Avesta and the writings of the old Mexico.

Dr. Székely died in 1979.

51. Probably the Pharaohs are referred to by the term *great house*. Pharaoh is the biblical name for the kings of Egypt, and means *great house*. In the beginning the palace of the king was referred to, however, from the 15th ct onwards also the king himself. Memphis and Thebes were the centres of the realm of the Pharaoh.

52. In the times of the Old Testament Sidon was the most important and richest harbour and merchant-town of Phoenicia, which is why the Phoenicians were also

called Sidonians (I Ks. 5:20; 16:31). From Sidon the Phoenicians traded with all countries of the Mediterranean area, and erected many agencies. Later Sidon lost its supremacy to Tyre, and only regained it for a short period under the Persians. In the New Testament Sidon and Tyre are mentioned in Mt. 15:21 and Lk. 6:17. Acts 27:3 mentions Paul at Sidon.

53. Assur was the capital of the Assyrian realm. At the height of its power (911 - 605 BC) the Assyrians ruled over all of Mesopotamia including Babylon, Syria, and parts of Asia Minor. During this time they also became hateful for Israel and Judea. The two Jewish states were attacked, and had to pay tribute. Later they were completely subjugated by the great power, many Jews were deported. In 721 BC Israel was effaced from history by the Assyrian King Sargon II, Judea became the vassal of Assyria. In the 7th ct BC the huge realm decayed, and from 605 BC onwards completely disappeared from history. Assur, however, also was the name of the main god of the Assyrians as well as that of their progenitor.

54. Nebuchadnezzar II was the Babylonian king (604 -562 BC). Already as a crown prince he waged war against the peoples in the west of the realm. After his enthronement he made several campaigns. In 597 BC he conquered Jerusalem, in 587 Nebuchadnezzar II destroyed the city and deported a majority of the population (II Ks. 25:1 ...). The Prophet Jeremiah calls Nebuchadnezzar II the servant of YHWH, fulfilling the judgement on Israel and the peoples (Jer. 25:9).

55. Ezekiel (God is or makes strong) worked among the Israeli exiled at Babylon in the years 594-571 BC. Ezekiel was priest, prophet, and author of the Book Ezekiel. He was called to be a prophet at the River Kebar, outside of the Promised Land. He received the word of God in visions. Ezekiel appeared as a preacher of penitence and ruin, but also was installed as comforter and *guardian*, to hearten those desperate. Much attention was given to the chapters 40 -48 during recent times, in which the prophet beholds the vision of the future temple and the new order for his people. The description of Ezekiel in which way he obtained the site, the measurements, and the furnishings of the future temple cause some scientists to assume that the prophet had a contact with an inter-planetary being.

56. Ramtha has been channelling since 1977. According to his own words, he lived on earth 35 000 years ago, and was a wild conqueror for most of the time, until he was wounded in a battle. He retreated to the top of a mountain to think life over. He spent seven years on the barren rock, and occupied himself with sun,

moon, life after death, and those things that never seem to change. When he left the mountain again, he returned to the world as an enlightened being, for he had seen through the illusion of life. Ramtha taught his people for many years, before he "*ascended to the universe*". He is the *Ram*, upon whom the Hindu people erected its religion.

The medial messages of Ramtha have been edited in 12 books by now, and find much attention in the US. Meanwhile there also exists a large public for the Ramtha-Books in Germany.

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The author was born in the upper-Bavarian Wasserburg in 1944. As Executive VP of an internationally operating company he has been responsible for the setting up of production sites and their operations in many countries since the opening of the European East.