

# ***Contemporary Mystic Christianity*** **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

## **Preparatory Years and Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus**

### **The Eighteen Years Between The Teaching In The Temple And The Baptism**

The Talmud states that during the interim between the Temple incident and the Baptism, Jesus studied in the temples of Egypt. In Persia traditions are still current of the wonderful young master, Issa, who was there for a time. India also has a story of the young master, an ascetic whom they call Josa, who is said to have come from Jerusalem and who carried on the double ministry of both teaching and healing. In China he was called the Friend of the Poor and was credited with teaching the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man and protesting against empty ceremonialism in worship.

While the Gospels are silent concerning these years, the esoteric Christian knows that these legends are founded on fact, as it was essential for Jesus to contact and work with the Race Spirits of various lands and nations and thus prepare them for receiving the message of Universal Spirit and the eternal truth which the Christ was to bring to all mankind.

Mark's Gospel may be called the Gospel of Deeds. His Gospel, which is the shortest of the four, is built not so much around the words as about the deeds of the Master. It was in the home of Mark's mother that the Last Supper was celebrated. Mark, who was a young lad at the time, was reared in the sacred atmosphere of the "upper room" where the Supper was held. His mother, Mary, was one of the devout neophytes of the early Christian days. Mark also witnessed the wonder and glory of the great day of Pentecost, and saw his close friends and companions transformed into veritable God-men through the powers of the Christ that were awakened within them. He himself made his complete dedication during the high and beautiful experiences of the Christians assembled in his mother's home at the time of the release of Peter from prison. After a period of probation he made his first public appearance in Jerusalem with Paul, about 45 A.D.

After the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, Mark founded the church in Alexandria which later became the greatest and most famous of all schools disseminating the deeper truths of the Christian religion. It was in Alexandria that he met his death by being dragged through the streets of the city over rough stones.

Mark was the foremost of the disciples of Peter. His Gospel containing an account of Peter's Initiation, was

written during the imprisonment of his teacher in Rome.

## **The Rite of the Baptism**

The Gospel of Mark opens with the Baptism, symbolizing a higher attainment than the Birth. It contains only three incidents not found in the other Gospels.

*Mark 1:6-11*

*And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;*

*And he preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.*

*And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.*

*And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him;*

*And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

A ceremonial of purification with water is common to all ancient Mystery rites. Thus the festival of the Eleusinian

Mysteries included baths; the Tabernacle in the Wilderness had its Laver of Purification. So in the life of Christ Jesus, water is symbolic of the great inner purification. The Baptism really represents that stage in the life of the neophyte when his heart has become awakened, when he is no longer content to think of himself first, when he cannot be happy and enjoy the beauties and luxuries of life while his brother is starving and dying for lack of the bare necessities of existence.

When one has had the real mystic experience of the Baptism, which is a spiritual awakening within, accompanied by a spiritual down-pouring from above, he can no longer say, "My country (or my family or my church) first," for he yearns to soothe, to comfort, to bring healing, peace, love, and understanding to the entire world.

He sorrows over the execution of the condemned criminal, the slaughter of his younger brothers of the animal kingdom, be it for sport or food; over the ruined reputation and character of any man or woman. He knows, or else he has never passed through this mystic rite of Baptism, that we are all parts of one great whole. And so he has come to realize that where another has failed, he has in part failed also; that he is in a certain measure responsible to God's great laws of Love and Truth and justice for the shortcomings of everyone else. Like the

Compassionate One, he, too, weeps for the sins of Jerusalem.

One thus truly baptized, understands the meaning of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. He goes forward in the light of a high and holy purpose. He lives only that he may give, not only of his worldly possessions, be they great or small, but his very self, in service to others. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," sang one of the spiritually awakened seers who had passed through this holy rite of Baptism.

Upon the head of such a one rests the dove of spiritual power, and where he goes the clouds of inharmony part and the voice of God is heard saying: "Thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

This represents the attainment which all mankind will have made at the time of the next or Sixth Epoch, when separateness will have yielded to unity, when all races will have merged into one, and when men will seek the good of others before self. This future condition of altruism and universality Christ referred to when He told Peter and John that they would find a man bearing a pitcher of water, the pictorial symbol of Aquarius (the sign of the New Age), the keywords of which are humanitarianism, brotherhood and internationalism. He who bears this pitcher of water always has an upper chamber (the head) furnished and prepared.

The Master Jesus built for himself the purest and the most perfect body that has yet been produced by the human race. This body He left at the Baptism when Christ took possession of it for the three year period of His glorious Ministry. The beautiful body of Jesus was Christ's means of ingress into our planet. The plan of redemption was made possible through the combination of Christ and Jesus. In the very highest and most literal sense, Paul writes truly when he declares: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (I Timothy 2:5)

The following is an ancient hymn quoted by Hippolytus:

*The Christ said; Father behold,  
A war of evil has arisen upon the earth,  
Man strives to shun this bitter chaos,  
But knows not how to pass through it;  
Therefore, do Thou, Oh Father, send me;  
Bearing Thy seals I will descend to earth,  
Ill Mysteries I will unfold,  
Ill forms of Godhead I will reveal,  
All secrets of the holy path  
I will reveal to man.*

Astrologically, John the Baptist represents the Summer Solstice and Christ Jesus the Winter Solstice. In the northern hemisphere, whence have sprung all the great

world religions of the present day, the Sun increases in light and heat from January to June and decreases in light and heat from July to December. Hence the statement made by John, who was born just six months before Jesus: "I must decrease and He must increase."

The annunciation of John occurred at the Autumnal Equinox and the birth at the Summer Solstice; the Annunciation of Jesus occurred at the Spring Equinox and the Birth at the Winter Solstice.

In its deepest esotericism, the Baptism represents the perfect blending of Fire and Water, the first of the Greater Christian Mysteries. By the law of compensation Jesus' sacrifice of his vehicles to the Christ earned for him this great Initiation at the time of the Baptism. He then realized the highest attainment yet achieved by man and became, in the words of Paul, "the first fruit of them that slept." Justyn Martyr states that at the Baptism balls of fire appeared on the waters of the Jordan.

The Master Jesus has never again taken upon himself the limitation of a physical body. His work is done entirely from the inner planes. He is working with all group movements that are truly spiritual and which have for their purpose the awakening of the Christ within. The impulses making for such an awakening are at their maximum during the celebrations of the holy and sublime Mysteries observed at

the sacred seasons of the Equinoxes and Solstices. During these seasonal festivals special preparatory work is done with all those who are qualifying to receive the deeper Christian Mysteries which are destined to constitute the heart of the religion of the New Age, when the Son of Man will be revealed under Aquarius and when love will become a manifested power under Leo.

It is significant that in connection with the Baptism Luke traces the genealogy of the man Jesus by that of his father, Joseph. Matthew and Luke alone deal with this aspect of the life of the human Jesus and both of them count his lineage to Joseph. Mark and John consider primarily the life and works of the great Christ Spirit.

*Luke 3:23*

*And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.*

The son of Heli refers also to Jesus' lineage through Mary. In the oldest text of Matthew now extant, the Mt. Sinai, A.D. 350-400, we read in Chap. 4, verse 21: "The Angel told Joseph that Mary should bear thee a son." Also in verse 25: "He, Joseph, married his wife and she bore him a son and he called his name Jesus."



After the translation of Joseph, Jesus and Mary left Nazareth and went to live in a house near Capernaem on the north shore of the Lake of Galilee. Here the ministry of Jesus rapidly expanded. He was teaching, healing and preparing all who would listen for the coming of the promised Messiah. Mary worked with Him always, her labors concentrating principally upon the healing of children and enlightenment of their mothers. The day's work done, Jesus and His mother would often spend the night in prayer in the hills under the stars or beside the waters of Lake Galilee.

The first work of the Lord Christ after Baptism was the endowing of the blessed Lady with the powers of this magic Rite. The early Church legends beautifully describe this high ceremonial as Mary, surrounded by hosts of chanting angels, is baptized by her Lord. The holy mother is invested with the threefold powers of the Trinity, the Will, Wisdom and Activity Principles of Spirit. The Father or Will Principle intones: "This is my beloved Daughter in whom I delight." The Word or Christ declares: "This is my beloved Mother who will assist me in all my works." The Holy Ghost who blends and unites the two before mentioned adds: "This is my Bride chosen among thousands."

— ***Corinne Heline***