



# The Mysteries of John the Baptist: His Legacy in Gnosticism, Paganism, and Freemasonry

By Tobias Churton

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## The Mysteries of John the Baptist: His Legacy in Gnosticism, Paganism, and Freemasonry By Tobias Churton

The search for the real historical person known as John the Baptist and the traditions that began with him

- Explores why John the Baptist is so crucially important to the Freemasons, who were originally known as “St. John’s Men”
- Reveals how John and Jesus were equal partners and shared a common spiritual vision to rebuild Israel and overcome corruption in the Temple of Jerusalem
- Explains the connections between John as lord of the summer solstice, his mysterious severed head, fertility rites, and ancient Jewish harvest festivals

Few Freemasons today understand why the most significant date in the Masonic calendar is June 24th--the Feast of the Birth of St. John the Baptist and the traditional date for appointing Grand Masters. Nor do many of them know that Masons used to be known as “St. John’s Men” or that John the Baptist was fundamental to the original Masonic philosophy of personal transformation.

Starting with the mystery of John in Freemasonry, Tobias Churton searches out the historical Baptist through the gospels and ancient histories, unearthing the real story behind the figure lauded by Jesus’s words “no greater man was ever born of woman.” He investigates John’s links with the Essenes and the Gnostics, links that flourish to this day. Exposing how the apostle Paul challenged John’s following, twisting his message and creating the image of John as “merely” a herald of Jesus, the author shows how Paul may have been behind the executions of both John and Jesus and reveals a precise date for the crucifixion and the astonishing meaning of the phrase “the third day.” He examines the significance of John’s severed head to holy knights, such as the Knights Templar, and of Leonardo’s famous painting of John. Churton also explains connections between John, the summer solstice, fertility rites, and ancient Jewish harvest festivals.

Revealing John as a courageous, revolutionary figure as vital to the origins of

Christianity as his cousin Jesus himself, Churton shows how John and Jesus, as equal partners, launched a covert spiritual operation to overcome corruption in the Temple of Jerusalem, re-initiate Israel, and resurrect Creation.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“In *The Mysteries of John the Baptist*, Tobias Churton has produced a remarkably fresh analysis of the “herald of the Messiah.” The great value of this book is that Churton provides not only a careful overview of the role of John, as handed down in Christian tradition, but gives us a unique and erudite reanalysis of the role of the Baptist using the lenses of Gnosticism, Freemasonry, and other esoteric traditions that have elevated John to a position equal to or superior to Jesus. This book is a truly invaluable addition to scholarly literature on John the Baptist.” (*The Reverend Jefferey Bütz, S.T.M., Instructor of Religious Studies Penn State University, auth*)

“*The Mysteries of John the Baptist* is a recommended coverage for any collection interested in the mystery of John in Freemasonry and the historical Baptist as presented in the gospels and early histories...a powerful spiritual and religious survey recommended for Christian and new age holdings alike.” (*Midwest Book Review, February 2013*)

“Mr. Churton has a deep understanding of the Gospels thanks in part to his desire to ask questions that go well beyond the accepted creed. Add to that his desire to place the Gospels in real historic and esoteric contexts, and the result is a work that deserves a spot among the most sophisticated interpretations of Jesus’s era.” (*Marc Star, New Dawn, July 2013*)

#### From the Back Cover

#### BIOGRAPHY / RELIGION

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--The Rev. Jeffrey J. Bütz, S.T.M., instructor of religious studies at Penn State University and author of *The Secret Legacy of Jesus*

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TOBIAS CHURTON is Honorary Fellow of Exeter University, where he is faculty lecturer in Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry. The founding editor of the magazine *Freemasonry Today*, he holds a master's degree in Theology from Brasenose College, Oxford, and is the author of several books, including *Gnostic Philosophy*, *The Magus of Freemasonry*, and *The Invisible History of the Rosicrucians*. He lives in England.

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