



# BOOK REVIEWS



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## THE MYSTERIES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST!

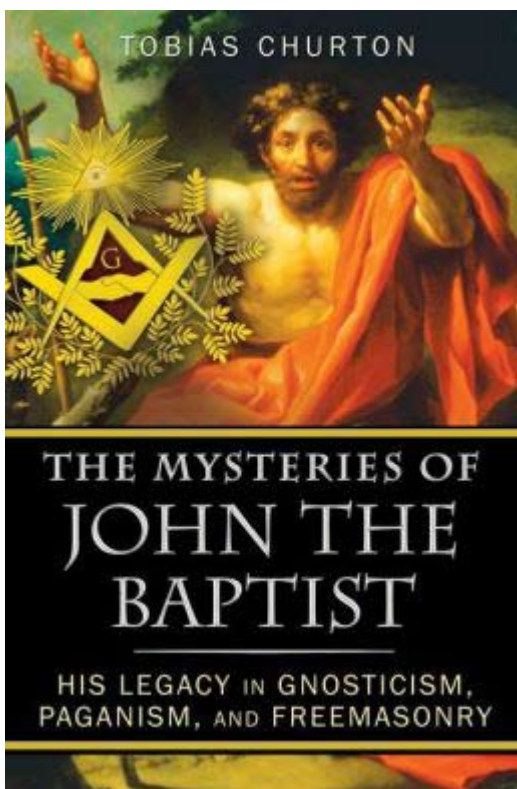
HIS LEGACY IN GNOSTICISM, PAGANISM AND FREEMASONRY

by Tobias Churton

Tobias Churton's *The Mysteries of John the Baptist: His Legacy in Gnosticism, Paganism and Freemasonry* is an examination of one of the two "saints John" and his place not only in Christianity and Freemasonry, but also his place in the history and mythology of the world. There's more to him than meets the eye and he's worth knowing more about.

The Bible has a cast of thousands but really only one star, Jesus. While the story centers around the messiah and his teachings, it does also mention his disciples. What Churton mentions is that only the Baptist really has significance within and without the book. Even someone who hasn't read the Bible can name a few of the other immediate followers of Christ, John the Baptist is one of the very, very few who have their own significance within the work.

Of course, in Masonry the date June 24 is significant as John the Baptist's day. Churton points out that this is also the accepted date of midsummer which is close to the solstice--the longest day of the year. This is where John intersects with a number of older mythological figures such as Tammuz, an ancient harvest god, as well as any other one could name from numerous cultures



around the world (Dionysis, Hermes, etc.). The time of harvest is important to every culture, and it has its connections to Christianity as well.

John the Baptist did his cleansing routine in the waters of ancient Israel, preparing them for their new lives post-cleansing. That's a pretty close approximation of a harvest. Remember, John baptized Jesus--not the other way around. The book goes into a fair examination into the process of how, and why, he stepped aside to allow Christ to supersede him in religious relevance.

The book puts the Baptist in the context not only of the Bible and his place in Freemasonry but also his place in the scholarly history of the region. It is very well researched and presents a picture of the saint that is novel and enlightening.

Finally, the book is highly readable and at times lighthearted. While it is properly footnoted and sourced it never gets stuffy, never loses the reader in needless verbiage and hackneyed phrases. It approaches the subject as a man as well as a legend in a way that is highly accessible to the average reader.

Reviewed by Alex Lundberg

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

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About Author:



Tobias Churton is a world authority on Freemasonry, Gnosticism, Hermeticism and Rosicrucianism. Holding a Masters degree in Theology from Brasenose College, Oxford, Tobias is an Honorary Fellow of Exeter University and Faculty Lecturer in Western Esotericism. An accomplished film-maker and composer with an award winning drama documentary series Gnostics for Channel 4 (UK), Tobias has also written a biography of Elias Ashmole (1617-92) and standard works on Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism,

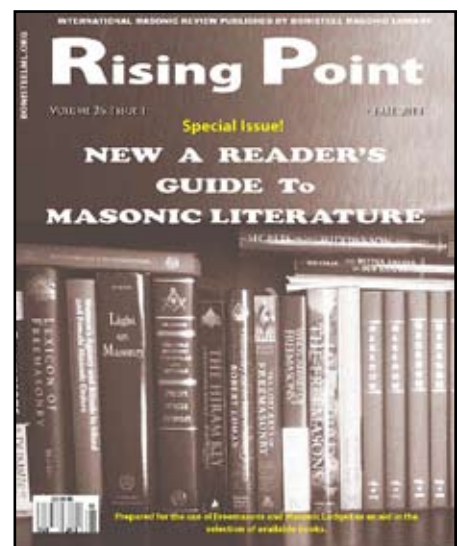
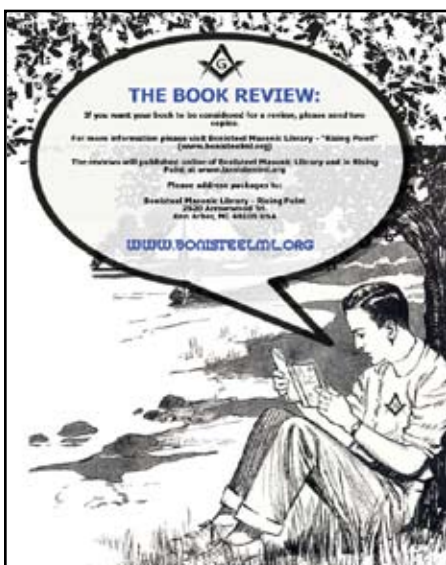
the Gnostic Gospels and Aleister Crowley, as well as a musical on the life of Nancy Cunard (1896-1965), a thriller (The Babylon Gene) and much poetry and song. He describes himself as a 'spiritual philosopher-artist'.

For more information about the author please visit website at <http://www.tobiaschurton.com>

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The purpose of this publication is to disseminate the writings of Freemasons and to provide contemporary information on Freemasonry.



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