



## An Advent Poem

John the Baptist... and Isaiah

Beware of prophets with much to say  
you don't want to hear on judgment day.  
They call your bluff and cause you fear:  
the day of judgment is quite near.

John the Baptist was such a one  
Man of the desert and midday sun.  
He challenges people: repent of your sin  
if salvation is something you choose to win.

You people, he said, are vipers and snakes  
and, for good measure, hypocrites, fakes.  
You might keep the law in a half-hearted way  
but the law of love so quick to betray.

To change the world, first look at yourselves,  
straighten your paths to where the Lord dwells.  
Don't be fooled by power or greed:  
open your hearts, acknowledge your need.

Don't look to me, I'm not the one,  
whose coming is sure as the noonday sun  
To baptise you all with Spirit and fire  
and lead you beyond this earthly mire.

The time of waiting is near the end  
the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.  
God's justice will flourish for all to see  
in Christ alone is the victory.

John's message so strange to our human ears

repent and believe – raising our fears.  
Abraham's children though we may be,  
without repentance, Christ we won't see.

Not the message we wanted to hear  
preparing for Christmas this time of year.  
Is Christ's coming promise or curse?  
The answer is clear in Isaiah's verse.

The wolf and lamb together will lie  
with goanna and kangaroo nearby.  
Every tribe and people and nation will be  
places of peace and liberty.

Things will not change by human desire  
they're gifts of the Spirit from on high.  
This is the prayer of our advent song:  
Christ will show us where we went wrong

And lead us all to new ways of life  
where love and justice end all strife.  
These words of prophets strike a chord  
when we trust our heavenly Lord.

Advent time's a good place to start  
admitting our need for this change of heart.  
As John and Isaiah both attest:  
Jesus is coming to be our guest.

***Gerard Hall SM***

*[Originally written for Majellan Homily Series]*