

Advent Reflection

John the Baptist (and Isaiah)

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

John the Baptist was one of these
desert wild man eating locusts and leaves.
He challenges people: repent of your sin
lest salvation be something you'll never win.

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

To change the world, look first at yourselves,
straighten your paths for 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.
All tribes, people and nations will be
places of peace and harmony.

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 will end all strife.
These words of the prophet strike a chord
when we trust our heavenly Lord.

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

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