

Jordan's Water Is Exported To Places All Over World

Christ's Baptism Took Place Here

Editor's Note: By American definition, the River Jordan is no river at all—in most parts of this country it would be called a creek. Yet in the Jordan's muddy water occurred one of the major events of Christ's life. His baptism by John. Here's a report on how the baptismal site looks today.

By WILTON WYNN
JERICHO, Jordan (P)—Water is exported to the ends of the earth from a muddy creek near here where John baptized Christ.

Vendors display small flasks of the water for sale to visitors on the banks of the stream. Regularly huge shipments for use in baptisms go by air and sea to the United States, Europe, and the Far East.

The water comes from the point on the Jordan River known as the site of the sacred baptism—which occurred at the start of Christ's three years of public life and teaching.

The site is close to the lowest place on the face of the earth. Within sight is the Dead Sea, 1,000 feet below sea level.

Jesus Arrived From North
Jesus probably came to this spot through the Jordan Valley from Galilee in the north. The modern traveler visits the area from Jerusalem. This means he drives in half an hour from Jerusalem's elevation 2,600 feet above sea level to the Jordan at 1,000 feet below.

The road branches off after leaving Jericho and takes the traveler across a flat desert plain, ending at the banks of the Jordan. In winter this low area is comfortably warm; in summer it is suffocatingly hot.

The baptismal site is away from villages or other normal human habitation. Nearby is the Convent of St. John the Baptist, first built 1,500 years ago. On the bank of the river stands a Franciscan chapel and a small altar. A stone staircase leads to the water, and nearby two or three vendors sit quietly beside their flasks of water waiting for visiting pilgrims.

Surrounding this point is the "wilderness" where John the Baptist did most of his preaching. The Biblical term "wilderness" must have referred to desert, unless the Jordan Valley has changed drastically since Biblical times. The Jordan plain is green only in the few places where irrigation has permitted cultivation, or where occasional streams water the parched earth. Apart from these verdant splashes, the valley is the domain of jackals, hyenas, and wild pigs roaming over rocky soil among desert shrubs. Rising on either side of the Jordan plain are the semi-desert hills of Judea to the west and Moab to the east.

Although the Jordan is one of the world's most famous rivers, its small size is a disappointment



This is the Jordan River at the spot where Christ was baptized by John. The desert (Biblical "wilderness") can be seen beyond the strip of vegetation at the water's edge.

Must Diversify In Lumber, Says Canada Official

PORTLAND (P)—The Pacific Northwest Trade Assn. heard a warning from a British Columbia official Monday night that the "post-war honeymoon" for the lumber industry may be over. Ray Williston, minister of lands and forests for the province, said the industry will have to diversify to survive. He added that the big future lies not in lumber but in wood cellulose products.

Eden Sits Up, Shows Steady Improvement

BOSTON (P)—Sir Anthony Eden continued to show improvement Tuesday in his convalescence from major surgery Saturday for removal of a bile duct obstruction. The 59-year-old former British prime minister was able to sit up in bed Tuesday at New England Baptist Hospital as physicians reported his early response to the operation has been good.

PSYCHIATRIST SAYS Jokes Misleading To Schizophrenic

By DELOS SMITH
Unlited Press Science Editor
NEW YORK (UP)—Some jokes which most people consider quite funny are indistinguishable from the disturbed thinking of schizophrenia, according to Dr. Max Levin, a psychiatrist. But he said that for healthy people the jokes serve a healthy and useful purpose.

To show what he meant, he cited a schizophrenic woman who thought a former employer whose name was Smith, was her brother. She was reminded that her maiden name was Jones. Her reaction was to remark that one of her forefathers had changed his name.

Dr. Levin's premise was that many a professional gag writer does no better than that while working with the same structure which represents a confusion of "form" with "substance." That is one of the flaws of schizophrenic thinking.

Blind To Inconsistency
Schizophrenic thinking (along with that of many healthy people) is also blind to inconsistency, and in that connection Dr. Levin cited the following joke as typical of a family of jokes:

"I can't see why people think it so hard to give up smoking. I've done it many times."
The schizophrenic in thinking

ing from trial and error what makes sense and what doesn't. Nature has made this pleasurable for a kitten, in both cases for a purpose. The kitten grows up and catches mice and birds with unfailing efficiency, and the child grows up and distinguishes the real from the unreal, the true from the absurd, with more or less complete accuracy. But the early trials and errors in learning to think are remembered and become the basis for all sorts of jokes which are considered to be funny. The schizophrenic, however, doesn't grow up in this sense—he still is immersed in the trials and errors which have come to form the pattern of his disturbed thinking.

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to most visitors. A stream so narrow in America would be called a creek.

Every Jan. 6 the anniversary of Christ's baptism is observed in a special service on the water. Bearded priests in their vestments stand in a flat-bottomed boat to say mass over the exact spot where they believed Christ was baptized. In the early centuries of the Christian era the site was marked by a cross standing in the river bed.

Although followers of Christ adopted baptism as a ritual for admission to the faith, the baptism by John also has been interpreted as a cleansing ritual. For centuries afterward Christians who already had been baptized would visit the site of the sacred baptism for ceremonial washing. On the eve of the Epiphany, thousands used to collect on the river banks, wrapped in white garments, and bathe in the waters. Lepers and other afflicted persons washed in the river to be cured.

Modern economic planning may affect the site of the sacred baptism in the next few years. A vast irrigation scheme for the Jordan Valley calls for diverting the waters of the Jordan's main tributary, the Yarmuk, into irrigation canals. This probably will lower the level of the narrow Jordan below the baptismal site.

Religious leaders here have tried to remind world opinion that this scheme, important as it is economically, may destroy one of Christendom's most sacred sites by leaving the place of Christ's baptism a dry spot on the bank.

Tomorrow? The "Mount of Temptation."

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