

Matthew 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

Analysis

John's austere lifestyle demonstrated prophetic separation from worldly comforts and identification with the wilderness prophets like Elijah (2 Kings 1:8). His camel's hair garment and locust diet symbolized repentance from luxury and conformity to the world. This prophetic symbolism called Israel to remember the wilderness wanderings and return to covenant faithfulness. John embodied his message of radical repentance.

Historical Context

Camel's hair clothing and a leather belt marked John as a prophet in Elijah's tradition. Locusts were permitted under Mosaic law (Leviticus 11:22) and wild honey provided sweetness. This diet was available in the wilderness without depending on settled agriculture.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does John's lifestyle demonstrate that the messenger must embody the message he proclaims?
2. What does John's separation from worldly comfort challenge about contemporary Christian materialism?

Interlinear Text

αὐτοῦ δὲ ὁ Ἰωάννης εἶχεν τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ^{his} ^{And} ^{G3588} ^{John} ^{had} ^{G3588} ^{raiment} ^{his} ^{of}
G846 G1161 G2491 G2192 G1742 G846 G575

τριχῶν καμήλου καὶ ζώνην δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὁσφὺν
hair camel's and girdle a leathern about ^{G3588} ^{loins}
G2359 G2574 G2532 G2223 G1193 G4012 G3751

αὐτοῦ ἡ δὲ τροφὴ αὐτοῦ ἦν ἀκρίδες καὶ μέλι
his ^{G3588} ^{And} ^{meat} ^{his} ^{was} ^{locusts} ^{and} ^{honey}
G846 G1161 G5160 G846 G2258 G200 G2532 G3192

ἄγριον

wild
G66

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 1:8 (Parallel theme): And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.

Leviticus 11:22 (Parallel theme): Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind.

Mark 1:6 (References John): And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

Zechariah 13:4 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:

Matthew 11:8 (Parallel theme): But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

Luke 1:17 (Parallel theme): And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Malachi 4:5 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

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