

Among the eight quotations of the Gospel of the Ebionites in the writings of Epiphanius, none is more interesting than the one in which he describes John the Baptist. Its humorous side may not be evident at first glance. Here is what he says could be found in the Gospel:

And so John was baptizing, and Pharisees came out to him and were baptized, as was all of Jerusalem. John wore a garment of camel hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was wild honey that tasted like manna, like a cake cooked in olive oil. (Epiphanius, Panarion, 30, 13, 4-5)

What has long struck investigators is that John here is not said to be eating locusts and honey, but honey that tasted like manna, like a cake cooked in oil. That is, a pancake. That is interesting, and somewhat amusing, for two reasons. The first is that to *make* this alteration in the account found in the Gospels of the NT, the author (whoever he was) of the Gospel of the Ebionites had to make a very simple change. The word for locusts in Greek is AKRIDES. The word for pancake is EGKRIDES. They sound and look very much alike. All the author had to do was change the A of the first word to an EG and he moved John from eating locusts to eating pancakes. Which, I might add, goes much better with honey.

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