
From Pastor Jayneann's Pen

Pastor Jayneann McIntosh

December 2018

At the origin there was the Logos, and the Logos was present with God, and the Logos was god. This one was present with God in the origin... It was the true light, which illuminates everyone, that was coming into the cosmos. He was in the cosmos, and through him the cosmos came to be.... the Logos became flesh and pitched a tent among us.

These words from the opening of John's gospel account are less familiar than: "In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus..." In truth, the John is usually used only for Christmas morning. (And UMs don't do Christmas morning often.)

I chose a strange translation—said to be closer to the original Greek because of one word: Tent. "God's Word (or Reason, actually) *became flesh and pitched a tent among us.*" You can find so many great passages in the bible. Take this one from the Hebrew prophet Habakkuk:

Though the fig tree does not blossom,
and no fruit is on the vines;
though the produce of the olive fails,
and the fields yield no food;
though the flock is cut off from the fold,
and there is no herd in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the LORD;
I will exult in the God of my salvation.
God, the Lord, is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
and makes me tread upon the heights.

Since I first read this as a teenager, I've loved its poetry and hope. Hope is big with me. (All my favorite movies are "Inspirational.") People need hope as much as we need sunshine and water. When finding hope is difficult, people just work harder to find it. In Palestine, the other pilgrims and I were amazed by the hope of the people who spoke to us. One woman in Haifa put it this way: "I'm not privileged enough not to have hope." (!!!)

Some years, hope is easy to come by. Others, not so much. Then comes December with Advent and Christmas and most of the time our hope is resurrected. After all, God is so crazy in love with creation that God sets this fantastic series of events in motion so that we'd believe it.

And God doesn't set up residence in some palace or fortress. Just like the Bedouins we saw from a distance in October, more like a transient living out of a rucksack or a housing challenged person equipping a large box with all the comforts of home, God ... pitches a tent among us!

God chose—and chooses—solidarity, particularly with the folks on the underside, by taking up residence with us, in a style that says, "I'm no better than you. We're in this together."

Since I'm not on the underside at present, I'm so thankful that God doesn't *just* love the ones that society treats roughly. God loves each of us.

I don't know how things are for you this December. But it's my opinion that we can always use more hope. So I encourage you to do whatever grows hope for you. Light a candle ... Step outside and look at the stars ... Give someone a hug ... Notice your breath ... Accept help ... Give help ... Make or build something ... Ring a bell ... Pray ... Sing ... Laugh with someone ... well, you get the idea ...

May you know God's hope & peace!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jaymann", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.