

John 1:1-14

Christmas Day

December 25, 2004

Mohammed wrote ninety-nine beautiful names for God. One alone God. Transcendent, Unique, Beyond all description. Almighty, Wise. Nothing is like unto Him. Mohammed wrote: "No human visions can encompass him, whereas He encompasses all human visions, for he alone is unfathomable, All Aware.

In the 1800's a Christian hymn writer wrote in the same vein, "Immortal, invisible God only wise. In light inaccessible, hid from our eyes.

John begins his gospel with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

Mohammed said that he wrote the very words of God yet those words do not contain God. God reveals His Will but not His nature, taught Mohammed.

But John wrote, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

Mohammed taught that God is not affected by anything outside of God's own self – cannot be changed by anything humans do.

John wrote, "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Not God above it all –invisible, in light inaccessible hid from our eyes –but God and humans forever bound together in one life. Not God only revealing God's will but revealing God's own self to be known by humans. Not God above it all but God in this world as vulnerable as a newborn baby.

And the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The one who called into existence the sun and the moon, the stars and the seas was born the son of Mary. The God that called into existence fruit flies and dinosaurs, protozoa and horses knew hunger and thirst, sleep and waking in Jesus. The God who created human life at the beginning and will finally judge all human life played in

the sand, tasted apples, felt ~~the~~ wind and ~~the~~ rain, and sang praises to the Father in Jesus. Some would teach that the religions of this world are all the same – many different paths but all proceeding to one God But on this day and every day Christians affirm that God became human in Jesus.

Tiny and fragile as a newborn at this mother's breast – feeling her warmth - sensing her breathing in – her breathing out – calmed and comforted by her closeness.

But he will not remain an infant in Mary's arms. He will grow as you and I have grown and know friendship and love, grief and happiness. ^{Then} ~~Yet~~ far too soon soldiers will be taking the shepherds' place, coming to arrest rather than coming to worship. Angels singing will be drowned out by crowds crying crucify him. The wooden slats of the manger will be replaced by the beams of the cross. The life that began in Bethlehem will end on Golgatha.

The sky turned dark that day, the day of Jesus' crucifixion, for the life that is the light of all humans was extinguished that day. John said, "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." But on the day of Jesus' dying there was darkness over all the land.

On this new morning for everyone who has loved ones all around it is easy to say that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not, has not, will not overcome it. But sometimes darkness comes that takes our breath away – a loved one dies - there is shame – a loved one turns away from us – hopes are dashed. In that moment it is not so clear that the light will shine again.

God raised Jesus out of death. The Father re-lit the light of the world in restoring to life the one the darkness claimed. And God re-lights that life in you in every moment of your believing in Jesus.

For God is not a God distant and aloof – hidden from our eyes but now God is a God who comes to dwell in you. Though the whole world be darkness His Spirit will be light in you – guiding, giving hope, giving life. And through you he will continually be bringing the light of Christ to others, his own self to others in you.

One day we will know just how much light there is in the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us for that light will shine in life for all eternity. Until that day in every darkness trust that the light who is Jesus will shine and the darkness will not overcome. Amen.
