

ὁ λόγος παρακλήσεως  
**Christmas III; 25 December 2019**  
**St. Thomas', Glassboro – Todd Foster**  
(rev. 201912241150)

**True Light**

*In nomine...*

**I. Beginning: Once upon a time...**

John's Gospel is a favorite of many people. The beginning here is especially beloved of students of New Testament Greek because it uses easy words and easy syntax. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

"In the beginning" carries a very self-conscious echo of Genesis 1.1, the beginning of the Bible and the story of Creation.

One common theme in the New Testament, in the Gospels and in Paul, is of Jesus as a new beginning, a new creation. Jesus is the new Adam. Jesus is the new Moses, with the five great discourses in Matthew which correspond to the five books of Torah.

**II. Middle: Tension: destabilizing**

If you've been listening to me in the past couple years, you've probably heard me once or twice express my conviction that there is a clear and unbroken line of continuity throughout Holy Scripture – that the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, the Tanach, is every bit the Christian story as the New Testament. We've talked about how the Hebrew Bible was, in fact, Jesus' Bible. I've been preaching all Advent from Isaiah because that seems to have been Jesus favorite book in the Bible! And it's full of Gospel.

However, something did change at the birth of Jesus, didn't it? Something new was afoot. *The Word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn 1.14 NJB)*

God chose to live among us as a human being named Jesus. It was not as if God had been remote before. But it seemed to be that we human beings still managed to ignore God, to forget about God, whenever it was convenient for us. So God put on flesh and lived among us, a flesh-and-bones, historical, in-your-face expression of God's love for us.

And, of course, we killed him.

### **III. End: Now / not yet; Because God... therefore...**

But, it turns out, even crucifixion was not an obstacle for God.

So we practice the cycle of the church year, we practice Christmas at this ahistorical but really pretty appropriate time of the year with the long, dark, nights, in order to keep from forgetting God's immense, amazing love for us and presence with us.

Christ is born today. "In the beginning" is every moment in time when you choose to turn back towards God. God is present, waiting patiently and impatiently. It is *God* who keeps reaching out to *us*.

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