

Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-14

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
² He was in the beginning with God.
³ All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being ⁴ in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
⁵ The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.

The Spirit came down;
Had come down;
Is coming down.
Wending and winding her way from on high.
Coming down to rest in the womb of this woman,
- Young woman -
Girl, really, by our standards.

Resting,
Nestling,
Growing.
Becoming an embryo,
Becoming a fetus,
Becoming Human.

What did that young woman think?
We're told she hadn't known a man before she became Theotokos
- "Bearer of God"
Was pregnancy all that she expected?
Did the baby kick and stretch as he grew inside his mother?
When the child was ready to be born,
Did he let her know with strong contractions,
Or did he, as some would have us believe,
Simply slid out, with
No mess,
No muss,
No blood
Or water
Or pain?

But if he did come out so clean,
Why, then, so many years later, as he hung on the cross,
Was there was
Blood and
Water and
Pain?

This child who was born, grew, as any normal child would
There were

Feedings and
Diapers and
Crying and
Cooing,
Because if there *wasn't*,
He wouldn't be a normal kid,
But rather Something Else Entirely.
Yet already, everyone involved KNEW he was BOTH
Normal AND
Something Else Entirely.

He went to school.
He sounds as though he was a precocious student.
On at least one occasion, teaching the teachers, rather than being the student.
Did he get into fights?
Did he play in the mud?
Did he get colds or bruises?
Did he have a crush on a girl?
All questions for which we have no answers.

As he got old enough, he must have helped his father,
Working with wood,
Building things.
Did they do any kitchen rehabs?
Did they build any homes from the ground up?
Was he ever called upon to build an instrument of death -
To put together a cross?

⁶ *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

⁷ *He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.*

⁸ *He himself was not the light,
but he came to testify to the light.*

John:
His cousin, according to Luke.
John, Proclaimer of The One to come, according to everyone.
NOT The One,
Although some would have it be so.
John, who himself said he was not worthy even to
Bend down tie the laces of the sandals of The One to come.
John, who believed in Right so strongly
That he lost his head,
All for what he believed to be true.

And I have to wonder, is there *anything* that I believe in so strongly
That I would be willing to give my life?

John proclaimed.
John testified.
John rattled the cages of the establishment.
John questioned authority.
John went against the status quo.

John was the outsider, looking in, with his
Camel hair shirt and
Diet of bugs
(which many nutritionists will tell you are really quite good for you).

John was set aside from birth.
The one whom he proclaimed -
That child grown into a man -
He was an insider.
He grew up in society.
He knew the rules.
He knew better than to
Rattle cages or
Question authority or
Go against the status quo.

Yet he did so, anyway.
Did he truly know the cost?
The payment of blood and death and pain?

⁸ *(John) himself was not the light,
but he came to testify to the light.*
⁹ *The true light, which enlightens everyone,
was coming into the world.*
¹⁰ *He was in the world,
and the world came into being through him;
yet the world did not know him.*
¹¹ *He came to what was his own,
and his own people did not accept him.*
¹² *But to all who received him,
who believed in his name,
he gave power to become children of God,
who were born,
not of blood
or of the will of the flesh
or of the will of man,
but of God.*

It comes back to that again, full circle:

Blood and
Water and
Pain.

Because that's what birth is;
That's what death is;
That's what life is:

Blood and
Water and
Pain.

There at the beginning, in the birthing room.
There at the end, in where ever we breath our last.

And in all the in-between:
The tears and
The laughter;
The triumphs and
The failures;

And what do we learn?

That through it all,
Immanuel,
God with us.

¹⁴ *And the Word became flesh
and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth.*

Behold this day The Christ.
Behold this day The Child.
One and the Same.

Forever a paradox.
Forever in our lives.

Amen.