



still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 147.12-20 [Worship]

12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! 13 For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you. 14 He grants peace within your borders; he fills you with the finest of wheat. 15 He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly. 16 He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes. 17 He hurls down hail like crumbs— who can stand before his cold? 18 He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow. 19 He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel. 20 He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his ordinances. Praise the LORD!

### Consider:

### [Words]

In the Epiphany season the world gets its first good look at Jesus. The world seeks to locate Jesus in the categories it already has at hand. But of course Jesus shatters all of those categories and exhibits a newness that the world cannot domesticate. These texts are an effort to situate Jesus in the midst of the world.

In the poem of Jeremiah, God is gathering all the Jews home to well-being. The Jews are treated as God's beloved firstborn. And now, in the epistle reading, there is a "gathering" of all the "adopted children" of God, all now valued like the first born (Ephesians 1:5, 10).

The awesome truth of Jesus requires special articulation. John affirms that Jesus is the very word of the Creator "full of grace and truth." Paul lets wondrous words and phrases tumble out, one after another, to articulate Jesus as the one who "gathers up all things," according to the purpose of the Creator. Both of these testimonies

locate Jesus on the screen of creation to show that his birth and his life are events of cosmic proportion. Both John and Paul speak of Jesus as "the truth of God," the truth being grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation (John 1:14; Ephesians 1:13). In Christian imagination, all the creatures are wrought through Jesus. He is the one who "grants peace" (Psalm 147:14). Those who praise him and trust him live in and toward a shalom that contradicts the destructiveness of a tired world. No wonder his creation erupts in joy. — Walter Bruggemann

### [Scripture]

## John 1.1-18

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. 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. 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, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. 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. 15 (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") 16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Reread Ephesians 1:3-14