



Nearly 40 years ago on July 16, 1969 Apollo 11 departed earth with three astronauts aboard to achieve a mission that before had never been accomplished-land a manned spacecraft on the moon and take a “moon walk”. The task was accomplished successfully as Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon.

These men were willing to set aside the safety and security of their surroundings on earth to go to an environment that they knew was hostile and involved great risk with no guarantee that they would return to earth safely. They were compelled by their sense of duty to the country as President John F. Kennedy in a 1962 speech given at Rice University in Houston, Texas, reaffirmed America's commitment to landing a man on the moon before the end of the 1960s.

2000 years ago Jesus was compelled by a sense of duty and obedience of His Father to leave the security, comfort and splendor of heaven to come to this hostile environment of earth. Jesus was willing to set aside His glory and fellowship with the Father to come to this earth where he would be rejected by his own family, where he would be spat upon, mocked, beaten, and eventually placed on a cross and crucified. The Astronauts engaged in their journey not knowing exactly what they would encounter, but continued with the expectation that they would return safely to earth. Jesus however, knew exactly what He would encounter and

yet He willingly came, knowing the consequences that would await His arrival.

Perhaps the “saddest” verse in the entire Bible is found in John 1:11, “He came unto his own, and his own received Him not”. On the other hand, I think the very next verse (John 1:12) is perhaps the “gladdest” verse in all the Bible, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

Jesus refers to Himself in one of two ways, as the Son of God or as the Son of Man. When Jesus wanted to convey His Deity (God of very God) He chose to call himself the Son of God. When Jesus wanted to convey His humanity he refers to Himself as the Son of man. Jesus came and dwelt in a human body as the Son of man. Jesus was tempted in all points like we are yet He was without sin. Jesus felt pain, He was hungry, He thirsted and He wept. The Son of God became the Son of man so that the sons of men might become the sons of God.

Luke chapter two gives us the account of the first coming of Jesus to earth to save man from their sins. Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem because of an enrollment decree which commanded each Hebrew citizen to be counted from that town where he or she was born. During their journey Mary gives birth to the Savior. She “wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn”.

The Bible says that after the shepherds had come to visit Jesus in the manger, “Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). When Mary looked into the face of this baby she was looking into the face of God. As Mary reflected upon the birth of Jesus, she pondered the fact that this baby, the Son of God, was older than his mother. This baby was as old as His Father. Mary pondered the fact that this baby was involved with His Father and the Holy Spirit in the creation of the world. Mary pondered the thought that this baby would one day go to the cross

and lay down His life so that her sins as well as the sins of all men and women could be forgiven.

As we reflect upon the Christmas season this year, may we ponder the fact that when Jesus set aside his glory and fellowship with the Father to come to Bethlehem's manger He came as a suffering Savior, but Jesus has promised that He will return not as a suffering Savior, but He will come as a mighty king to destroy the enemies of God and establish His kingdom. "And I saw heaven opened; and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelations 19:11,15,16).

It is an awesome thought to ponder that Jesus would step out of the portals of heaven and take on the form of human flesh and go to the cross and die for a world that was hostile to Him, yet Jesus endured all of this to save us from our sins. Jesus simply asks us to make room for Him in our hearts and receive Him as our Savior and make Him the Lord (master) of our life.

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