

A Christmas Like No Other

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Her feet meandered down a dusty pathway in the village. The sun was warm against her face, as she felt a gentle kiss from the wind. She could hear the birds singing and her heart seemed to sing with them. It was a beautiful day for a walk through this village in Capernaum. As she looked down on the pathway, her feet were colored by the sand between her toes. Her robe hung just above her weathered sandals and her head covering was waving in the wind. She couldn't help but sense there was something special in the air. As she walked, she could hear voices talking. The voices became clearer as she continued to walk. As she took each step, the voices were closer. It became apparent to her that some people were conversing outside one of the homes ahead. She continued her walk and tried very hard to simply keep walking as she drew closer to the voices. The moment she passed by; she could not help herself. She felt persuaded by a strong pull and was compelled to turn her head. Her feet stopped and her eyes gazed in wonder. She had never seen this man before, yet she knew that he was the one she had heard about. Everyone had been talking about him. He was the one who had performed miracles and spoke with such love and wisdom. It was Jesus, standing in the outer courts of a man's home. He was having a conversation with this man, saying farewell, when her eyes met his. Jesus' face was sun-kissed, and he greeted her with a gentle smile. Her eyes were still fixed on him as he spoke to her. He walked over to her and stretched out his hands to reach for hers.



“There you are. I’ve been waiting for you. It’s so good to see you.”

She was pleasantly surprised. “You have been waiting?”

“Yes.” He smiled.

She was miffed, “But how did you ...”

Before she could finish her sentence, Jesus' eyes smiled brightly.

“Child, my father above told me your footsteps were nearby. I am on my way to meet some people by the shore at Galilee. My friends Peter, John, and Matthew will be joining me soon. Would you walk with me?”

Little did she know that her life was about to change. She walked with Jesus and heard his teaching. She followed him, enthralled with this man from Galilee, coming to the full revelation that he was the Messiah, the Savior, who gives the everlasting water.



What an experience it would have been to walk with Jesus when he was here on the earth! To follow him, hear his teachings, and witness the miracles. I'm sure there was a time when not even the disciples knew that they encountered the son of God. Imagine, knowing what we know now, seeing him face to face, and speaking with him about the Kingdom of God.

In John 21:25 it says that there were many things that Jesus did. If they were all written down, the world itself could not contain the books that could be written about what he did.



The Heavenly Father made Jesus' first appearance known on the earth by the star that shone brightly in the sky over the town of Bethlehem. It beckoned the Magi to find the baby Jesus. The shepherds were heralded by angels to announce the Messiah had been born in Bethlehem. It was the beginning of the incarnate God, the Son of Man's journey, face to face, with his creation. He was there in the beginning, (John 1:1) and by him all things were created.

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:” **Colossians 1:16**

Consider the very calling Jesus had, and his destiny as the Messiah. He was born a lamb, as the final sacrifice for the sins of the world. He knew that his time here would lead him to the cross. For now, this would also be the first time since the fall of man, that God could walk with his creation he loved, but, this time, in the form of a man.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-3,14).

However, it is important to remember what Jesus left behind, to know how important his journey as the Son of Man would be for all of heaven and earth.

Jesus stood on his eternal throne and witnessed everything that man faced from the beginning of creation. Throughout the Old Testament Jesus revealed himself many times. These are called Christophanies, meaning, a pre-incarnate appearance of the Son of God. The term “angel of the Lord” is interchangeable where it references the Lord, in certain visitations. The Lord appeared to Abram in human form in Genesis 18:1-18. Also, in Daniel 3:16-28, when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into a furnace of fire, yet a fourth man like the Son of God stood with them. Jesus, in his deity, made tangible encounters. These stories are scattered throughout the Old Testament scriptures.

Genesis 16:7-14; 22:11-18; Judges 5:23; 2 Kings 19:35; Daniel 3:25).

“Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5-8).

It says, “he made Himself of no reputation” which means that Christ “emptied” Himself apart from His place with God. He did not lose his position in the Godhead but left his glorified incorruptible nature to become the lamb, sacrificed for the sins of the world.

That is the amazing part of Jesus' birth and sacrifice. It's found in what he left behind and who he became, to make this possible. He was God who became man. God and the Son, shared glory (John 17:5). Jesus left his throne in glory. He left an incorruptible body. He was God who took on flesh and became man, bearing all the burdens of humanity. He experienced temptation and so he knew what it was like when man was tempted. (James 1:14; Hebrews 2:14-18; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 2:16). He left a glorious realm filled with light as the Godhead, where he had all power, all knowledge, and his presence was everywhere. He exchanged it to dwell among men and learned to walk as a little child, increased in wisdom, (Luke 2:52, Luke 2:46-49), and grew to be a man. He experienced hunger, yet in the heavenly realm, he had never experienced, hunger, thirst, or the need to sleep. All of this was a new experience for him as a human being because, for God, he never needed these before.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, The Creator of the ends of the earth, **Neither faints nor is weary**. His understanding is unsearchable. Isaiah 40:28

He felt the anguish and deep emotions of the human heart (John 11). He felt the physical pain of the lashes on his back, with iron spikes ripping his flesh, and then nailed him to a cross. As God in the flesh, he had not known these experiences.



Throughout his life's journey here on earth, we see the humanity and deity of Jesus. It is vital to understand what he left behind when he left his home in glory. Then we must realize that He became man to be a merciful and faithful High Priest for those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:17,18) and offer his redemption.

What was on the Father's mind when Jesus left glory to be born on earth?

Separated from the Father, and especially as Jesus hung on the cross. How dark this side of heaven must have been when Jesus cried out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" meaning, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). We cannot fathom the pain or sorrow as the Father watched as Jesus became sin and was separated from the Father.



Since we have never experienced it, we do not yet understand the fullness of God's glory and the realm from which Jesus came. We don't fully know what Jesus' existence in glory was like before he became the incarnate, Son of God on earth. His eternal home and his very existence consisted of being "all-knowing", "all-powerful", and "ever-present", yet sovereign and wise because he let humankind determine their eternal destiny.

When Jesus emptied himself from the glory within, we cannot measure it. However, we do know what we gained. We gained his mercy, his grace, and the gift of his salvation. He gave his lifeblood for us. He pursued us with an everlasting eternal love before we came to love or knew him (1 John 4:19).

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11)

He has given up all that he knew in the realms of glory, just to be with us now. Emmanuel, God is with us.

This is the gift of the Father, Jesus’ birth, who came to dwell among man, to pursue us with his love, and to save us from the wrath of sin and shame. Let’s celebrate as we remember and give thanks. The gift of baby Jesus, wrapped in swaddling cloth, was the gift of mercy, and grace, truly wrapped in the Saviour’s love from the Father above. Receive a new and or renewed dedication of your life to Jesus. This will make it a Christmas like no other!



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