



# His Name Is Called Emmanuel

On July 16, 1969, Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the moon. With the achievement, Armstrong announced to the world, “One small step for man; one giant leap for mankind.” While it was inconceivable to watch a man walk on the moon, nothing is more astonishing than to know that the God of the universe set foot on earth. The fullness of his glory was wrapped up in the flesh of the Christ-child, Jesus. Read the Apostle John’s announcement of this great news to the world in the first chapter of his gospel:

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” 1:14 (TNIV).

John’s news was also “one giant leap for mankind.” To be sure, this was the *greatest* news for man and not an accomplishment of anything we’ve done. Because of the incarnation, we have personal access to the One and Only God. Because Jesus came to be like us, he can go to the Father on our behalf. Right relationship between a Holy God and humanity needed a mediator in the person of Jesus.

Do you know the difference between sympathy and empathy? With the first, a person shows feelings of pity and sorrow for the circumstance that one is experiencing. The perspective is from the outside, looking in. But, empathy is a deeper feeling of understanding as the person places herself in the situation of the other. The experience becomes shared by the two in that the one person also knows what it’s like to be in that place. In that God became man, we now have a Father who *empathizes* with us. He’s been there. We hear this reality in Paul’s letter to the Hebrews, saying, “We don’t have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He’s been through weakness and testing, experienced it all—all but the sin. So let’s walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help” Hebrews 4:15–16 (The Message).

Christ was “born in our darkness...[and] weakness.” Because he came from the Father, he can be for us true Light and Strength. What he provides is complete because he is God; his provisions meet our every need because as man he’s been in our place. What great confidence we can have resting in a God like this. There is peace when we call his name, “Emmanuel;” for, we know that God – the Creator God – is with us!

Do you remember what it was like as a young child at bedtime? I can recall many nights of being afraid when the lights went out. It wasn’t that I feared what surrounded me in the darkness, as much as it was the feeling of being alone in the absence of my dad when he left the room. I would only need to see his face again or feel his hand on my head to handle any amount of darkness. God, the Father has stepped into our darkness. We have seen his face in the person of Christ Jesus. This kind of assurance allows us to “lay aside [our] fear [for] the Holy One is here.” He has stepped out of heaven and onto earth, bringing hope with him. This God deserves our worship and his nearness makes intimate worship possible. Let’s rejoice! Alleluia!

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