

“A Father’s Joy”

“Welcome” he whispered, for it was deep in the night. Mother and child were resting after an arduous birth. The mother had dozed off and the father had taken baby in his arms to gaze upon him in wonder.

Wonder and awe comes with the birth of a child and the new life brought into the world from a mother’s womb. But there was something even more wonderful and awe inspiring in this birth. The father wondered about the angel’s message that this child was born of the Holy Spirit. Not of flesh and blood or of human love, but of God’s love for humankind. What was it about God’s love that required God to come down in the form of a child?

The father knew stories from scripture of how God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve, but then God remained God. God did not become human in order to take those walks. Later when God spoke with Abraham, Moses and the prophets God remained distant. YHWH often spoke through signs, dreams and angels. People were fearful to look on God, for the Lord’s countenance was so overwhelming that no one could live after seeing the face of God.

Yet here he was in the flesh, incarnate as the theologians would later say. God had taken on the flesh of a human being in order to woo the people in a new way. If the teachings of the Lord were too grand or abstract coming from God’s mouth or from the prophets of old, perhaps coming from one of their own they would listen. But, the father wondered, why a baby and not a full grown man or woman with all of God’s knowledge and wisdom instilled from the beginning?

As he continued to ponder he thought that God knew there was something unique about humans that God needed to understand. The only way to understand it was to be one of them. God needed to start from the beginning and build knowledge innate to the human from birth onward. God wanted to walk in the shoes of the human, feel as humans feel, think as humans think, suffer as humans suffer, and enjoy life as humans do. The only way to do it was to become one or so the father thought.

It was a huge responsibility for the mother and father. They had to teach this baby to be a human being, but unlike other babies there would be something special about him that might confound and confuse their ability to do so. The father had to wonder why God chose them for this task. He was not sure he was special enough to raise God’s son. He did not know what talents were required of him and of the mother to bring this boy up to be a man, but most parents have their doubts. So he vowed to listen to God, pay attention to his dreams, and do his best by the boy.

But for now it was still dark. The baby was only hours old. The mother slept lightly as the baby cooed. The animals in the stable slept. He was tired too, but he would keep watch over mother and child tonight and in the days to come. That was what the Lord wanted him to do.

It was a silent night in that little town of Bethlehem as the father gazed in wonderment and joy on this little boy, God’s son, and his son, too. And once again he whispered, “Welcome, welcome to the world my son.”