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What Did He Leave?

By Teresa Hampton

During this time of year, people focus on the birth of Jesus. While his birth was indeed astounding, his entire life is the most amazing account in the history of man. There is a beautiful song we sing, *If That Isn't Love*. It begins, "He left the splendor of heaven knowing his destiny, was the lonely hill of Golgotha there to lay down his life for me..." What did Jesus leave when he came below and took on flesh?

He left heaven's riches—streets of gold, gates of pearls, precious stones,
To come to earth, to be born into a poor family, born by a young virgin (Mt. 1:20-21).

He left the splendor of a King in a palace on high,
To be born in a stable and sleep in a feeding trough (Lk. 2:7).

He left a secure, safe, heavenly home,
To be hunted by Herod who wanted him dead (Mt. 2:13).

He left immeasurable love in the presence of God the Father,
To live among men and women filled with hate and envy (Mt. 27:18).

He left innumerable angels who sang praises to him and served him endlessly,
To become a humble servant in shepherd's clothing (John 10:11).

He left an environment of everlasting peace, joy, light, and holiness,
To enter a world filled with darkness, pain, wickedness, and rejection (John 3:19-21).

He left the position of one *receiving* sacrifices and worship,
To come below and sacrifice himself as an atonement for the sins of the
world (Mark 10:45).

He left a unending source of divine affirmation,
To live among those who constantly ridiculed him and questioned his deity
(John 5:17-18).

He left all of his power and strength—he emptied himself,
To live among men who rejected his miracles, accusing him of doing them
by the power of Beelzebub (Mt. 12:22-24).

He left the constant companionship of his equals, the Father and the Spirit,
To be forsaken in his darkest hour when he hung on the cross (Mt. 27:46).

Jesus left these things and much more, *knowing* that he would be despised
and rejected. What was his impetus? It was LOVE, an indescribable love for all
souls. Let us resolve, then, to focus on Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection not
once a year, but *every* day of the year!

Today's verses: *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for
his friends* (John 15:13). *In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that
God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him*
(1 John 4:9). *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us...* (1 John
3:16a).

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