

“His Quest for Our Salvation”

The launch and mission of Artemis II was nothing short of spectacular. After years of painstaking planning and anticipation mankind has now journeyed farther from earth than ever before. The four heroic astronauts have broken Apollo 13's 1972 distance record from earth and have become the most distant humans from earth in history. What a remarkable quest to discover the mysteries of outer space.

This remarkable quest for knowledge is topped only by a previous quest; this was mankind's quest for independence from God. As far as Artemis II distanced itself from earth, mankind's zealous pursuit to secure independence from God served to infinitely and permanently distance mankind from God's holiness and righteousness. This pursuit of independence left even the slightest inclination to abide by God's word, will, and ways an unfathomable distance behind. As truly laudable as the Artemis II expedition has been, mankind's pride-filled determination to escape beyond God's domain was truly damnable.

One of Christianity's beautiful hymns reminds us of God's intent to bridge this chasm: “From heaven above to earth I come...” Indeed, this was God's announced mission, but why would He come, and how? Would God come to earth from heaven as tormentor? As punisher? To bring retribution? To bring damnation? Admittedly, such a coming from heaven to earth would have been justified given our rejection of God and our fervent jettisoning of His truth.

But, no; God would come from heaven to earth for another reason. He would not come to bring us damnation, but to secure and to declare our salvation. “From heaven above to earth I come,” the angels announced at Jesus' arrival at Bethlehem, “to bring good news to everyone.”

Jesus' mission to procure and declare God's grace for us proceeded just as foretold: He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. Yes, “O, God, O Lord of heaven and earth...since light awoke and life began, Thou hast desired Thy life for man.”

As we celebrate the quest of Artemis II to discover the mysteries of outer space - deep, deep, space - we, as God's people, also now celebrate God's quest for our salvation. This was His coming from heaven above to earth below in the mission of all missions that was undertaken and accomplished. This successful mission of mercy is now celebrated by God's people on earth below and by His people who now rest in His heavenly presence above. Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, O heavenly host. Alleluia, alleluia!

Pastor Case, Vacancy Pastor