

## Who is This Baby?

by Coty Pinckney 12/11/2008

Child of the stable's secret birth  
The Lord by right of the lords of earth  
Let angels sing of a king newborn  
The world is weaving a crown of thorn  
A crown of thorn for that infant head  
Cradled soft in a manger bed.

Eyes that shine in the lantern's ray;  
A face so small in its nest of hay -  
Face of a child who is born to scan  
The world of men through the eyes of man:  
And from that face in the final day  
Heaven and earth shall flee away.

By Timothy Dudley Smith, © Hope Publishing Company,  
1983

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Since we all love babies, it is easy for us to love the Baby Jesus. He is cute. He is fat. He is cuddly.

But babies don't start out cute and cuddly. And Jesus, indeed, was a real human baby, born in the normal human way: Mary began to have contractions; her water broke; she felt overwhelmed by the process going on inside her body; her back hurt; there was pain and effort and sweat and pushing and stretching and burning – and then, finally, amazingly, this new little creature came forth from her body: a new creature covered with mucous and amniotic fluid and blood and vernix – hair (if any) plastered to his head; that head possibly misshapen from hours of pushing, his skin bluish in color until the first breath, and first cry. Mary gave birth – and the baby, Jesus, came into this world just as you and I, through His mother's strong efforts: bloody, slippery – and yet beautiful.

As you see pictures this season of a clean and comfortable Baby Jesus, remember His humanity. Jesus was a baby who soiled himself, spit up, cried when He was hungry; He was completely dependent upon his parents for meeting His every need. He could do nothing for himself. With His little hands, he grasped fingers held out to Him. He couldn't communicate at first except by crying. He took months to learn to crawl, and more months to learn to walk, and to speak. Jesus was a normal, lovable human baby.

But Jesus did not remain lovable to many. Actually, "He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him" (John 1:11). Most Jews rejected their Messiah. He called down woes on the scribes and Pharisees, labeling them, "whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). He was forceful. He was courageous. He was bold. He spoke what needed to be said. And so they turned the people against Him, as the crowds cried out, "Crucify! Crucify!" They mocked Him, beating that crown of thorns into His skull. And then they executed Him as a common criminal.

The lovable baby in the manger was despised and rejected by men. He was a real human baby. And He suffered a real human death.

But God raised Him from the dead. And through His death, He rescues His people from the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15), He pays the penalty for the sins of all who believe in Him – even those who mocked Him and crucified Him and deserted Him. Raised to God's right hand, He is, as the poem states, the "Lord by right of the lords of earth." So this baby, unable to feed Himself, is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Indeed, before Him every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. No power can withstand Him; no force can resist Him; no enemies can overpower Him. He will reign forever and ever.

Jesus: A human baby. Jesus: A dead body. Jesus: King of kings.

One last image: The baby in the manger is not only King but also Judge. He is the Judge of all the earth. As the poem says, "from that face in the final day/ Heaven and earth shall flee away." On the coming day of His wrath, the most powerful men on earth will call out, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" (Revelation 6:16-17). The baby in the manger will destroy "the destroyers of the earth" (Revelation 11:18). He will welcome as His own all who thirst and come to Him for satisfaction, but He will condemn to the lake of fire all who are without faith (Revelation 21:7-8). He is righteous, and all His people will rejoice at His judgments (Revelation 19:1-3).

This is Jesus. This is the infant in Mary's arms. Really human. Really killed. Really King. And really Judge.

This season: See Jesus for Who He is. See all these facets of His person – and love Him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.