

“While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.” Luke 2:6b-7 NIV

The more you think about it, the story of Jesus birth is really amazing. God in the flesh has come not as a “super hero” or even as an adult, but as a tiny, innocent baby. Babies really can’t do much. I remember when we took my son home from the hospital, and my daughter, 5, saw him . She was a bit disappointed in a way, because all the baby did was “eat, sleep, and cry”. She thought he’d be a bit more interesting and they’d get to play together the moment he came home.

So even though the shepherds visited, and the wise men later, all they saw was a little child, no different than other children.

Yet they knew he would be **RADICALLY DIFFERENT** than other children, the Son of God.

The simple birth of a baby and everything changes. The French leader, dictator and brilliant general Napoleon Bonaparte once reflected on the fact that it would take him a lot of time raise up even a small army to fight for him, but that there were a large untold number that would fight and even die for Jesus at a moment’s notice.

There is a favorite poem of mine called “One Solitary Life” that I think captures the awesome impact of Jesus upon the earth, and I leave it with you as we reflect on the Holy day of Christmas;

He was born in an obscure village, the son of a peasant woman.

He grew up in another village, where he worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty. Then for three years he became a wandering preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He did none of those things one usually associates with greatness.

He had no credentials but himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies and went through a mockery of a trial. He was executed by the state. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race and the leader of mankind's progress. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that One Solitary Life.

May you have a blessed Christmas week!
Pr. John Van Haneghan