



In The Shadow Of The Cross

By Lucy Wall

Having reached the end of December 2015 I had been experiencing the joy of being surrounded by all the festive lights and nativity scenes. I'm a huge fan of Christmas time and all that it brings but one thing I had become very aware of was how romanticised the image of the birth of Christ has become. The brutal reality of that cold night is replaced by warm, cozy stables, sweet looking animals and twinkling starry skies. I don't have an issue with this of course as I love a nativity scene but I began to reflect on how different the actual event must have been for all involved.

The thought of a desperate and frightened Mary giving birth in a gloomy stable while surrounded by stinking animal filth is quite a different picture. It's certainly not the ideal environment for a young mother to bring a baby into the world!

I think it may be partly due to the glamorised version we have that many people have no issue with a nativity scene but take huge issue when faced with the image of Jesus on the Cross. Clearly one is much more upsetting than the other for obvious reasons but there's certainly nothing threatening about the image of a Baby. The sight of a Man dying on a Cross on your behalf however is a much more challenging picture to embrace. These two images are inseparable though because the Baby in the manger is the same person as the Man on the Cross; the nativity scene is simply the prelude to the crucifixion and resurrection scenes.

It was this thought that got me thinking about how the Cross was always the pivotal part of the story when it comes to the Baby in the manger. Knowing why Christ had come and how He knew His whole life was leading up to the pre-eminent moment when He would be crucified for the sins of the world, I suddenly couldn't see any stage of Jesus' life without it being overshadowed by the shape of the Roman Cross.

It was this thought that inspired me to start writing my poem and my hope is not to take away from the beautiful atmosphere of the time when we celebrate the birth of Christ. Rather it's to simply tell a more detailed story about this amazing Man and perhaps create a fuller picture of who the incredible Baby in the manger is.

In the shadow of the Cross a woman is chosen,
Deemed to be worthy and part of God's plan.
Placed in her womb as Heaven is opened,
The moment in time when God became Man.

In the shadow of the Cross lies a Babe in a manger,
A fragile gift from Heaven above.
A Child born to die and become a great Saviour,
His sacrifice found in the heart of true love.

In the shadow of the Cross three gifts are presented:
Frankincense, myrrh and the finest of gold.
Each with deep meaning, His life represented;
Their purpose prophetic and soon to unfold.

A gift to acknowledge His heritage Royal;
A metal so precious and brought from the East.
Myrrh for His death, to embalm Him in oil
While Frankincense spoke of our Greatest High Priest.

In the shadow of the Cross there lies a new mother,
Reduced by the pain and exhaustion of birth.
Contently she cradles this Babe like no other;
The Saviour of all and God of the Earth.



In the shadow of the Cross there sits a young Jesus,
Keenly He listens and learns of God's ways.
Astonishing all of the temple's great teachers,
Knowing the purpose and point of His days.

Greatly aware of His Heavenly mission;
Placed on the Earth to suffer great loss.
Pleasing the Father fulfilling His vision;
Saving mankind with His death on the Cross.

Deep in that shadow the Saviour is tempted;
Led in the wilderness forty long days.
Showing the devil his reign will be ended
And man once again will give God his praise!

In the Shadow of the Cross Christ prays in the garden,
Knowing His hour is now drawing near.
Taking the blame and seeking our pardon,
Resolving to die for His children so dear.

Enveloped in darkness the King is arrested,
Tortured and beaten to save you and me.
Placed on His shoulders, each fibre invested,
Engulfed by it's shadow, Christ carries the tree.

In the shadow of the Cross His mother kneels weeping,
Helplessly watching her suffering Son.
Bearing the stripes that would bring others healing,
Knowing that this was the reason He'd come.

Strong to the end, our Saviour succeeded!
Conquering death to make a new way.
Rising again, His work is completed;
Glory to God for there dawns a new day!

In the shadow of the Cross I stand here forgiven!
Thankful my heart could receive mercy's call.
Never forgetting the grace that I live in,
He's King of my heart and King over all!

Oh what a wonderful, mighty Redeemer!
Praise to our Saviour in whom we delight.
Thanks to the Babe who was placed in a manger,
Forever we'll dwell in His glorious light!



Luke 1:26-33

"Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favoured one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Philippians 2:5-11

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Revelation 1:17-18

"Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen."