

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN:
Part One: Prophecy

A Play in One Act with Songs

by

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Cast of Characters

Narrator (may be seen or off stage unseen.)

Isaiah's Angel: Of indeterminate age, but mature in manner, sure and strong, a leader.

Daniel's Angel: Of indeterminate age, but mature in manner, sure and strong.

Jeremiah's Angel: Of indeterminate age, but mature in manner, sure and strong.

Zechariah's Angel: Of indeterminate age, but mature in manner, sure and strong.

Powerful Angel: A big, powerful-looking angel.

Isaiah: An aging, but strong prophet.

Christ (voice only): A good, but not overly dramatic voice

God (represented by the sound of rolling thunder)

Singer(s) or a Choir

Music/ Songs

"El Shaddai"

"God Will Provide the Lamb"

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

" All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

(also an appropriate, recognizable Christian hymn or song, without lyrics, for background music at the beginning.)

Unto Us a Child Is Born
Part One: Prophecy

A Note on Staging and Costuming:

The staging can be extremely simple and inexpensive. Minimal set is needed. However, **Isaiah** will need a writing table and a chair or somewhere to sit and write, and a quill pen.

Costuming is also very simple. The **Angels** need to be in very white robes. Gold trim could be used but is unnecessary. However, it needs to be clear from their attire that they are angels, but avoid using wings and halos. **Isaiah** needs to be dressed as they dressed in ancient times: a tunic and sandals will do.

ACT I

SETTING: In heaven, stage empty, but with an "upper ground" area. ISAIAH's place is unseen, lower off to one side or low in front, a table and chair or somewhere to write will come into sight later.

AT RISE: Daytime. Stage empty of actors at first. Appropriate background music is playing low, something with no lyric, just a recognizable Christian song or hymn.

NARRATOR

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.^{1 (RSV)}

SINGER(S) or CHOIR:

(Sing "El Shaddai")

NARRATOR

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,^{2 (RSV)} and all that are in them. He created Man in His image, and God saw that all was good. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve lived in a paradise in the presence of God. They walked with Him and they talked with Him in the cool of the evening. All was at peace, and God's grace reigned over all the Earth. But Satan came to destroy all righteousness, and evil entered the world through pride and rebellion. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought desolation upon themselves. They fell from God's grace, and sin and death took dominion over them. They were expelled from the Garden, removed from God's favor, sent to toil in the earth till the end of their days. And the way to the Garden was closed behind them.

(Quietly, a small band of four ANGELS has gathered and are all talking amongst

themselves. Exactly what they are saying cannot be heard, but it is obvious there is great concern. Shortly, the POWERFUL ANGEL joins them. He has come from the Lord. The other ANGELS look at him, questioningly.)

POWERFUL ANGEL

It has happened. They have been expelled from the Garden.

(All of the ANGELS are dismayed to hear this.)

(Significant Pause.)

ISAIAH'S ANGEL (speaks up)

Who is to go?

(Short Pause)

POWERFUL ANGEL

I am.

(He draws his flaming sword and departs. The other ANGELS watch him until he is gone.)

DANIEL'S ANGEL

What will the Father do?

(The ANGELS pause, listening intently.)

NARRATOR

But even as they were expelled from the Garden, the Lord God Almighty promised that he would send one who would redeem all mankind from our fallen state and restore us to God himself. He would send salvation, a savior who would pay the price of sin with his own life.

(Pause)

JEREMIAH'S ANGEL (realization)
The Holy One.

ZECHARIAH'S ANGEL (agreement)
The Holy One.

(They are all suddenly silent
as there comes the sound of
rolling thunder. Then --)

ISAIAH'S ANGEL
God himself will provide the lamb.^{3 (NRSV)}

DANIEL'S ANGEL
He will sacrifice his only son.

SINGER(S) or CHOIR
(Sing "God Will Provide the
Lamb"-- or other appropriate
song.)

**[All the following lines said by the ANGELS need to be
spoken boldly, like proclamations, but with reverence
regarding the importance of the message. They should take
their time and not hurry, pausing between each prophecy, so
that the Word has a chance to be clearly heard and to
settle on the audience.]*

ISAIAH'S ANGEL
He will be called Savior, the Lamb of God.

DANIEL'S ANGEL
He will be born of a virgin.

JEREMIAH'S ANGEL
He will be born in Bethlehem.

ZECHARIAH'S ANGEL
He will be called a Nazarene.

ISAIAH'S ANGEL
All nations on Earth will be blessed through Him.

DANIEL'S ANGEL
God the Father will appoint Him his firstborn.

JEREMIAH'S ANGEL

He will be exalted above all the kings of the Earth.

ZECHARIAH'S ANGEL

His name will be called The Lord Our Righteousness.

ISAIAH'S ANGEL

He will be a son of Abraham.

DANIEL'S ANGEL

-- a son of Jacob.

JEREMIAH'S ANGEL

-- a son of David.

ZECHARIAH'S ANGEL

He will be -- the Son of God.

(The ANGELS pause in silent reverence of the Divine Truth they have spoken and in awe of what it means. After a moment, there is again the sound of rolling thunder. Then --]

ISAIAH'S ANGEL

Yes, Almighty God.

(Short Pause)

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.^{4 (NRSV)}

DANIEL'S ANGEL

The Lord will establish his throne forever.

JEREMIAH'S ANGEL

The Lord will set Him over his house and his kingdom forever.

ZECHARIAH'S ANGEL

He will be given authority, glory, and sovereign power; all peoples, all nations, and men of every language will worship him.

ISAIAH'S ANGEL

His dominion will be an everlasting dominion that will not pass away; his kingdom will never be destroyed.

DANIEL'S ANGEL

The Lord will put his words in his mouth, and He will say everything the Lord commands him.

JEREMIAH'S ANGEL

He will come into his temple; He will be the messenger of the covenant of peace.

ZECHARIAH'S ANGEL

The Lord will love him forever; His covenant with him will never fail.

ISAIAH'S ANGEL

He will speak in parables about things hidden since the creation of the world.

DANIEL'S ANGEL

He will pour out his Spirit on all people.

JEREMIAH'S ANGEL

Everyone who calls upon his name will be saved.

(Pause)

ZECHARIAH'S ANGEL

Thus saith the Lord God Most High.

THE VOICE OF CHRIST

It is time. Go. . .tell the prophets of God.

(A short roll of thunder follows.)

ISAIAH'S ANGEL

Yes, Lord.

(ISAIAH'S ANGEL then begins to direct the other ANGELS, indicating each one in turn.)

ISAIAH'S ANGEL (Cont.)

You, take the Word to Daniel. You, go to Jeremiah. And you, to Zechariah. I will go to Isaiah.

(The ANGELS disperse to do as the Lord instructed.)

SINGER(S) or CHOIR and AUDIENCE:

(Sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel")

(ISAIAH is on stage in his home, humble and plain, perhaps even sparse. He is at prayer. He is praying silently at first, but ends aloud.)

ISAIAH

Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth; for the Lord has spoken.⁵ (NRSV)

(He sighs heavily and rises to go to his writing table.)

NARRATOR

In the time of King Hezekiah, the word came to Isaiah, son of Amoz, set apart as a prophet of the Most High God.

(ISAIAH has settled at his writing table. His ANGEL comes in from behind him. As ISAIAH is considering what to write, the ANGEL speaks. ISAIAH hears him only in his heart and mind. As the ANGEL speaks in the following line, ISAIAH writes what he is hearing.)

ISAIAH'S ANGEL

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.⁶ (NIV)

ISAIAH

Yes, here I am. I hear you.

ISAIAH'S ANGEL

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.⁷ (RSV)

ISAIAH

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

(The ANGEL continues to speak to ISAIAH, but no longer can anyone but ISAIAH can hear him. Every few moments as ISAIAH is writing he exclaims --)

Yes, Holy One.

(pause)

I praise the name of the Lord God Most High.

(pause)

May the Lord God reign forever.

(Then ISAIAH stands and, carrying his papers with him, he speaks what he's heard from the ANGEL. The ANGEL nods as he hears the words, but is silent. Temporarily, the focus is all on ISAIAH.)

ISAIAH (Cont.)

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.⁸ (NIV) And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of

ISAIAH (Cont.)

knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.^{9 (RSV)}

(He pauses to mark or note something.)

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.^{10 (NRSV)} [Then] says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: "I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations..."^{11 (NRSV)}

(Delighted, ISAIAH goes to sit and write again. As he does so, the three other ANGELS that went out to the prophets enter and come near. As he takes up his quill pen to write again, they speak over him, in turn.)

ISAIAH'S ANGEL

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.^{12 (NIV)}

DANIEL'S ANGEL

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.¹³ (NIV)

JEREMIAH'S ANGEL

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.¹⁴ (NIV)

ZECHARIAH'S ANGEL

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.¹⁵ (NIV)

(Pause.)

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.¹⁶ (NRSV)

(There is a momentary
silence. Then the sound of
rolling thunder. Then --)

THE VOICE OF CHRIST

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.¹⁷ (NRSV)

(As He spoke, the ANGELS knelt, then prostrated themselves. ISAIAH does also, but last.)

NARRATOR

Therefore God has highly exalted him and [gave] him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.¹⁸ (RSV)

ALL

(Sing "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name.")

CURTAIN

THE END

Unto Us a Child is Born (Part One)

Scriptures Quoted
(in play script order)

1. John 1:1-5
2. Genesis 1:1
3. Genesis 22:8a
4. Psalm 118:26a
5. Isaiah 1:2
6. Isaiah 7:14
7. Isaiah 9:6-7
8. Isaiah 42:1
9. Isaiah 11:2-4a
10. Isaiah 35:5-6
11. Isaiah 42:5-6
12. Isaiah 53:1-3
13. Isaiah 53:4-6
14. Isaiah 53:7-9
15. Isaiah 53:10-12
16. Psalm 118:26a
17. Isaiah 61:1-2
18. Philippians 2:9-11