

Unto Us a Child Is Born:
Part Two: Fulfillment

A Play in One Act with Songs

by

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Cast of Characters

Narrator (may be seen or off stage, unseen.)

3 Angels: Of indeterminate age, but mature in manner, sure and strong.

Joseph: Jewish carpenter, about 30.

Mary: Betrothed to Joseph, about 20-25.

Gabriel: An angel of the Lord Most High

Elizabeth: Mary's cousin, but about 45-50.

An Official Middle-aged man (non-speaking part).

Proprietor Middle-aged man (non-speaking part) operates the inn in Bethlehem.

Shepherds: Young men (one speaking part).

Music/Songs

"Glory to God in the Highest"

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

"Joy to the World"

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

Unto Us a Child Is Born
Part Two: Fulfillment

A Note on Staging and Costuming:

The staging can be extremely simple. Minimal set is needed. 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. **Other characters** need to be dressed as they dressed in ancient times: tunics or robes and sandals will do.

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: Stage empty, but with an "upper ground" area and MARY's place off to one side.

AT RISE: Late Evening. Stage apparently empty of actors at first, very low lighting. 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.¹ (RSV) The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the Only Begotten Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.² (NIV)

(ANGELS appear in white light in the "upper ground" area.)

ANGELS

We see the Lord, seated on a throne, high and lifted up; and the hem of his robe fills the temple. "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD [Almighty]; the whole earth is full of his glory!"³ (NRSV) Holy is the Lord; Holy is the Lord. . .

(slowly fading out)

ALL (including audience)

(Sing "Glory to God in the Highest."
-- all or selected verses)

NARRATOR

Glory to God in the highest.⁴ (RSV)

(Short pause)

The Word was 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.⁵ (RSV)

(pause)

NARRATOR (Cont.)

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,⁶
(RSV) and all that are in them. He created Man in his own
image--and he saw that all was good.

ANGELS

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is
full of his glory.⁷ (NIV)

NARRATOR

But Satan came to destroy all righteousness, and evil
entered the world through disobedience and rebellion. We
fell from grace and were put out of God's presence. Sin and
death took dominion over all the earth. The light went out
of the world and darkness reigned.

(Short pause)

Yet the Lord God Almighty, in his great and everlasting
love, promised salvation to his creation.

ANGELS

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is
and is to come!⁸ (RSV)

NARRATOR

And in the fullness of time, God sent a savior, the
Messiah, the Christ, the Holy One, who would redeem all who
believed. The Lord, the Blessed One, who would sacrifice
his life to save all others and reconcile them unto God.

ANGEL 1

In the fullness of time!

ANGEL 2

He is to come!

ANGEL 3

The Lord, the Lord--

NARRATOR

The Lord God sent his own Son. For God so loved the world
that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him
should not perish but have eternal life.⁹ (RSV)

ANGEL 1

The son of Abraham.

The son of David.

ANGEL 2

The Son of God.

ANGEL 3

FADE TO BLACK

END OF SCENE

ACT IScene 2

SETTING: MARY's room.

AT RISE: Night. Darkness. Moonlight slowly comes up as the NARRATOR speaks.

NARRATOR

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.¹⁰
(NRSV)

(MARY is kneeling and praying before the moonlit window in her bedroom.)

MARY (praying aloud)

Oh great Lord, God of Abraham and Jacob, look with favor on your servant, for you have blessed me, and I praise you, my Adonai.

(She begins to recite Psalm 103 from heart.)

"Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—
who forgives all your [sins],
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
who satisfies you with good as long as you live—"¹¹ (NRSV)

(As she was speaking, a bright light has come into the room and in the light stands the angel GABRIEL, all in white. Aware of the light she stops praying. There is silence. Then she

turns slowly as he speaks
to her.)

GABRIEL

(a strong, bold voice)

Greetings, you who are highly favored. The Lord is with
you.¹² (NIV)

(MARY is obviously troubled
by this greeting and
slightly frightened.)

GABRIEL (Cont.)

(clearly, without rushing)

Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.
And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and
you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be
called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give
to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over
the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will
be no end."¹³ (NRSV)

MARY

How can this be, since I am a virgin?¹⁴ (NRSV)

GABRIEL

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the
Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be
born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now,
your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a
son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be
barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.¹⁵ (NRSV)

MARY

(humble, but with quiet conviction)

I am the Lord's servant. Let it be to me as you have said.¹⁶
(NIV)

(All the light fades and
the angel GABRIEL departs.
It is difficult to see
clearly in the moonlight.
For a while there is total
silence, then MARY speaks.)

MARY

Yes, my Lord. Holy is your name.

ANGELS

(Sing a chorus of "Holy, Holy, Holy")

ALL (including audience)

(Sing "It Came Upon a Midnight
Clear"--all or selected verses)

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

END OF SCENE

ACT I

Scene 3

SETTING: Main room, ELIZABETH's house.

AT RISE: Daytime. ELIZABETH at far end or offstage at first.

NARRATOR

After the angel Gabriel visited her, Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah, where she entered Zechariah the priest's home and greeted Elizabeth.¹⁷
(NIV)

MARY:

(Entering--)

Elizabeth? It's me, Mary.

ELIZABETH

(coming in to see MARY,
feeling her baby leap in
her womb)

Oh!

(then in a loud voice)

Blessed are you among woman, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!¹⁸ (NIV)

MARY

(arms outstretched)

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.¹⁹ (NRSV)

ANGELS

(Off to one side or above
on upper ground area.)

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty--

(MARY and ELIZABETH talk
silently.)

NARRATOR

So everything was as the Angel said, and Mary stayed about
three months with Elizabeth before returning home.

FADE TO BLACK

END OF SCENE

ACT I

Scene 4

SETTING: In JOSEPH's bedroom.

AT RISE: Late at night. JOSEPH going to bed.

NARRATOR

[Now] Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to [divorce] her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream--²⁰
(NRSV)

JOSEPH

(Praying as he gets into to bed.)
Help me, Lord, to sleep, for my soul is troubled and my heart is sore.

(JOSEPH settles down and goes to sleep. After awhile a light appears in the room, in the light is the angel GABRIEL. As JOSEPH is lightly tossing and turning, GABRIEL approaches and stands beside where he is sleeping. JOSEPH doesn't wake as GABRIEL speaks to him, but he stops moving about; his spirit is listening.)

GABRIEL (clearly, boldly)
Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. ²¹ (NRSV)

(The light fades and GABRIEL is gone. JOSEPH

awakes briefly and sits up.
He looks heavenward.)

JOSEPH

Yes, Lord, I will do as you say.

NARRATOR

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the Prophet [Isaiah]: "The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²² (NRSV)

(pause)

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²³ (NIV)

ANGELS

(Sing a few lines of "O Come,
O Come Emmanuel")

FADE TO BLACK

END OF SCENE

ACT IScene 5

SETTING: Outside JOSEPH's and MARY's home. Bethlehem inn off to one side and a stable with manger off another.

AT RISE: JOSEPH and MARY enter together. It is obvious they are man and wife. She is very pregnant. They are busy about something when the OFFICIAL shows up.

(An OFFICIAL appears and acts the part of publicly reading a decree but does not speak aloud. JOSEPH and MARY hear the decree.)

[During this part to come, as the NARRATOR is speaking, the OFFICIAL is reading, and the song is sung, JOSEPH and MARY need to pick up some bundles or baggage and walk along as if traveling, perhaps about the sanctuary or auditorium. They need to arrive in Bethlehem and be sent away from the inn by the PROPRIETOR and to the stable where Christ was born.]

NARRATOR

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the [Roman] world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

(The OFFICIAL leaves.)

[So everyone] went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.²⁴ (NRSV) But there was no room for them at the inn.

(The PROPRIETOR sends them off to the stable.)

ALL (including audience)
(Sing "O Little Town of
Bethlehem"--all or selected
verses)

NARRATOR
And Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son.
(A baby is heard, briefly, crying.)
She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger,
because there was no room for them in the inn.^{25 (NIV)}

(In the stable at night in
darkness.)

MARY
Joseph.
(He gets up.)
Bring him to me.

(Light comes up as the moon
comes out from behind
clouds. JOSEPH gets the
baby and gives him to MARY
who is lying on the straw
resting after having given
birth earlier. The manger,
used as a crib, is clearly
seen. The scene is a sweet
tableau of father, mother,
and child; MARY comforting
the baby, and JOSEPH
admiring his family.)

ANGELS
(each speaking praises)
Glory to God! Peace on Earth! Glory Alleluia!

ALL
(Sing "Hark the Herald
Angels Sing"--all or
selected verses)

FADE TO BLACK

END OF SCENE

ACT IScene 6

SETTING: A hillside outside Bethlehem.

AT RISE: Night. Shepherds tending their flocks.

NARRATOR

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.^{26 (NRSV)}

(A few SHEPHERDS are on a hillside watching over their flocks at night. A bright light appears, the angel GABRIEL in the light. The SHEPHERDS are at first fearful, cowering.)

GABRIEL

Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.^{27 (NIV)}

(A HEAVENLY CHORUS--this could be the ANGELS-- appears (or is heard) praising God.)

HEAVENLY CHORUS

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."^{28 (NIV)}

(The bright light fades, then the angel GABRIEL and the HEAVENLY CHORUS are gone. After a minute, in

the silence, one of the
SHEPHERDS speaks.)

SHEPHERD

Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has
taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.²⁹ (NRSV)

(They gather their few
belongings and leave
quickly, excited, but not
noisily.)

FADE TO BLACK

END OF SCENE

ACT I

Scene 7

SETTING: The stable.

AT RISE: Night. JOSEPH, MARY, and the BABY JESUS. MARY is tending the baby. The ANGELS are gathered near the baby and family, keeping watch, singing, praising.)

ANGELS (softly)

(Sing--)

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty
The whole earth is full of His Glory.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty
Who was, and is, and is to come.

ALL (including audience)

(Sing "Silent Night, Holy Night"
--all or selected verses)

(When the SHEPHERDS arrive, excited, but quiet, JOSEPH, not knowing their motives, moves quickly to intercept them. There is a momentary standoff as JOSEPH holds his ground and the SHEPHERDS come before him.)

SHEPHERD

(eager, but humbly and politely)

We beg your pardon, sir. We've come to see the Christ child.

JOSEPH

(cautiously, but intrigued)

How do you know of this?

SHEPHERD

We were in the hills tending our flocks when a bright light came down and a messenger of the Lord told us that the

SHEPHERD (cont.)

Savior had been born in Bethlehem - the sign would be a baby lying in a manger. So we've come to worship him.

(JOSEPH hesitates, amazed
by this revelation.)

MARY

Joseph. Let them come in; let them see him.

(After a moment, JOSEPH lets them pass and they enter quietly and politely to see the baby JESUS held in MARY's arms. Then the SHEPHERDS leave glorifying and praising God to the audience, perhaps going up the aisles encouraging the people to also praise God. After they have gone through the audience, have all join on stage and sing with the audience.)

ALL (including audience)

(Sing "Joy to the World"
--all or selected verses.)

CURTAIN

THE END

Unto Us a Child is Born (Part Two)

Scriptures Quoted
(in play script order)

1. John 1:1-2
2. John 1:14
3. Isaiah 6:1b; 6:3b
4. Luke 2:14a
5. John 1:1; 1:3-5
6. Genesis 1:1
7. Isaiah 6:3
8. Revelation 4:8b
9. John 3:16
10. Luke 1:5a, 1:26b-27
11. Psalm 103:1-5a
12. Luke 1:28b
13. Luke 1:30-33
14. Luke 1:34
15. Luke 1:35-37
16. Luke 1:38
17. Luke 1:39-40
18. Luke 1:42-45
19. Luke 1:46-49
20. Matthew 1:18-19
21. Matthew 1:20-21
22. Matthew 1:22-23
23. Matthew 1:24
24. Luke 2:1-6
25. Luke 2:7
26. Luke 2:8-9
27. Luke 2:10-12
28. Luke 2:14
29. Luke 2:15b