

SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

His Birth and Resurrection

Act I: *His Birth*

A musical drama presented by
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Savior of the World: His Birth and Resurrection
was first performed November 28–December 30, 2000,
in the Conference Center Theater, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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**SAVIOR OF THE WORLD:
His Birth and Resurrection**

**ACT I
Scene 1
Segment 1.1**

(The stage is rimmed with a circular stone colonnade. An expanse of deep blue sky and bright stars is projected above it. As the play progresses, we see the sun rise and set, and clouds move across the horizon. Atop the colonnade, angels and prophets appear. Beneath the colonnade, on a circular mosaic floor, the scenes unfold rapidly and lyrically, with musical underscoring. Simple structures and props suggest a variety of settings that flow without interruption from one to another. The production begins with the CHORUS, representing angels and heavenly messengers, singing from the colonnade. Below on stage at Zacharias and Elisabeth's house, designated by a small bench stage right, ZACHARIAS kneels and prays.)

[Music cue: "Come, Lord Jesus – Opening Act I"]

CHORUS

*Come, Lord Jesus, to the manger;
May we see Thy tender face?
Great Creator, here a stranger,
Infant in this humble place.
Darkness scatter, morning swell;
Come, dear Lord Immanuel.
Come, Lord Jesus, to the manger;
Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

(Most chorus members exit. A few remain on the colonnade to observe. Zacharias stands and begins packing a bag.)

ELISABETH (offstage): Zacharias! Zacharias! Do you have your robes?

(ELISABETH enters.)

ZACHARIAS: I have them, dear. Thank you.

(Elisabeth exits. A small boy, EZRA, runs in.)

EZRA: Zacharias!

ZACHARIAS: Come here, Ezra.

EZRA: My father says it's almost time.

ZACHARIAS: Yes, Ezra. I'm almost ready.

EZRA: He says not to believe you if you say you're almost ready.

ZACHARIAS: Well then go tell him I am ready . . .

(Ezra runs off.)

ZACHARIAS: . . . almost.

(Elisabeth enters and sees Zacharias struggling. She helps him pack.)

ELISABETH: Zacharias, are you all right?

ZACHARIAS: I'm fine.

ELISABETH: Because if it's too much of a strain—

ZACHARIAS: It's my turn to serve at the temple.

ELISABETH: Yes, of course. But do they know how hard it is for you to—

ZACHARIAS: They know all they need to know. They know that the Lord has not chosen me to burn the incense. I have not yet drawn the lot.

ELISABETH: I'm sorry.

ZACHARIAS: No, don't be sorry. I accept it.

ELISABETH: I'm not sure I do.

ZACHARIAS: Elisabeth! We have to accept it. That's all we *can* do.

(Pause)

ELISABETH (rolling Zacharias's robe into a bundle that she cradles in her arms as if it were a baby): Did I tell you my cousin Mary is betrothed? Well, almost betrothed. The women are still planning it. She'll make a wonderful mother.

ZACHARIAS: Elisabeth, you're thinking about not having children again.

ELISABETH: What? I'm thinking of Mary. That she's good and obedient, and of course she's going to have children!

[Music cue: "I'll Give God Forever"]

ZACHARIAS: O my dear, people can be good and obedient and still not have children.

ELISABETH: I know that.

ZACHARIAS (exiting): Then for your own peace of mind shouldn't we stop thinking about it?

ELISABETH (after Zacharias): But Zacharias, I'm not just thinking about it. It's always here. It's always with me.

ELISABETH (contd)

*I've wanted only one thing since I could braid my hair,
When tending to my dolls was just an art –
And now I can't dismiss it or drive it from my heart!
How can I stop a thing I didn't start?
I'll give God forever to make me what I am.
Give my plans and give my dreams,
Give up all my fretful schemes.
I'll give God this moment to fill my soul with cheer –
I'll give Him forevermore
And that will keep Him near.*

(Underscore continues.)

ZACHARIAS (starting offstage as he enters): Yes, we must leave it in the hands of the Lord and not worry about it.

ELISABETH: Well then, I won't worry, but I won't forget.

ZACHARIAS: No, I wouldn't expect you to.

(Elisabeth exits.)

ZACHARIAS (contd)

*Of course, I've dreamt of drawing the lot one sacred day
And stepping forward straight and square and tall—
I pour the holy incense; the plume goes up to God!
I've known it, seen it, smelled it, felt it all.*

(Underscore continues. Elisabeth returns.)

ELISABETH: Oh, Zacharias, I knew you hadn't given up hope!

ZACHARIAS: No, not my hope. But my demands, yes.

ELISABETH: What do you mean?

ZACHARIAS

*I'll give God forever, but not to do my will.
Give my plans and give my dreams,
Give up all my lofty schemes.
I'll give God this moment, and if it's not to be,
Giving Him forever means
I'll wait and watch and see.*

(Underscore continues. The shepherds ASA and ELI cross on their way to the temple.)

ELISABETH: But Zacharias, it's not too late for you.

ZACHARIAS: Please be reasonable. Let's say I'm never chosen to burn the incense—

ELISABETH (in frustration, throwing up her hands): Ah!

ZACHARIAS: Now come here! Don't you understand? It's all right with me now! I have not been chosen, and you have not been chosen to have. . .
(softening) *We* have not been chosen to have children. But we still trust in the Lord.

ELISABETH: Trust in the Lord, yes, that He will fulfill His promises —

ZACHARIAS: In His due time.

ELISABETH: In His due time.

ZACHARIAS and ELISABETH

I'll give God forever and then give one day more!

What are plans and what are dreams?

What is what? Not what it seems!

I'll give God this moment and let Him lead me on!

ZACHARIAS

I'll give Him forevermore,

ELISABETH

Until my hours,

ZACHARIAS

Until my days,

ZACHARIAS and ELISABETH

Until my years are gone.

(Underscore continues. Ezra runs in.)

EZRA: They're waiting, Zacharias.

ZACHARIAS: Yes, Ezra, I'm ready now.

EZRA: Almost ready?

ZACHARIAS: Just go tell them I'm coming!

(Ezra runs out.)

ZACHARIAS: Well, I'm ready, then.

ELISABETH: Very well. I will pray for you. For you, there is still time.

ZACHARIAS: Even if there isn't, may the Lord bless you . . .

ELISABETH: And keep you . . . as He did Abraham and Sarah, who bore a child
in *her* old age.

ZACHARIAS: Elisabeth . . .

ELISABETH: I know. May the Lord bless you . . .

ZACHARIAS: And keep you . . . quiet!

(They exit.)

Segment 1.2

[Music cue: "Come Deliver Us"]

(The temple. The shepherds Asa, Eli, and NATHAN enter. Nathan is carrying a lamb and singing.)

NATHAN

*Yibone hamikdosh ir Tsiyon t'ma le
V'shom noshire shir chodosh
Uvirnono naale.¹*

(TEMPLE BOYS assist TEMPLE PRIESTS to dress in their robes while the Chorus as townspeople gradually enter from every direction and fill the stage singing.)

CHORUS

*Come deliver us!
Come deliver us!, etc.*

CHORUS WOMEN

*He will come
In mightiness and pow'r,
With watchmen on the tow'r,
He will come deliver us!*

CHORUS (ALL)

*Come deliver us!
Come deliver us!, etc.*

CHORUS MEN

*He will come,
His sword aloft and blazing,
Resplendent and amazing,
He will come deliver us!*

CHORUS (ALL)

*Come deliver us!
Come deliver us! Ooo.*

(The music continues. A circle of priests forms at center stage. They draw lots. Atop the colonnade, NEPHI appears.)

NEPHI: And my father spoke concerning a prophet who would come before the Messiah, to prepare the way of the Lord, even that he should baptize the Messiah with water.²

(The circle of priests opens, revealing Zacharias with the lot. The other priests congratulate him and bring him incense as an altar is placed center stage. Nathan comes forward, carrying the lamb.)

NATHAN

*Come, oh come, my little lamb,
Sweet and soft and pure.
Give your life for all of us.
Make our pathway sure.
Go, and when you're here no more,
As a shepherd be.
I will follow you to heav'n,
To eternity.*

(Underscore continues. MALACHI appears on the colonnade.)

MALACHI: Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant.³

(The priests and chorus kneel in supplication. Zacharias covers his head and begins to pray.)

ZACHARIAS (praying): Oh, Lord. I stand before Thee in this holy place. I thank Thee. I thank Thee. I pray Thy merciful blessings be upon me, upon my household, my dear wife, and upon all Thy children, the house of Israel.

(Zacharias kneels alone at the altar. The angel GABRIEL appears before him. Zacharias sees him and shrinks back.)

GABRIEL: Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt have joy and gladness. And thou shalt call his name John; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall make ready a people prepared for the Lord.⁴

ZACHARIAS: Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.⁵

GABRIEL: And I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not be able to speak because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled.⁶

(Gabriel departs. The priests and chorus rise and come forward in anticipation. Zacharias cannot convey the wondrous event that has just occurred. All are bewildered.)

CHORUS MEN

*Come, come,
Come, come,
Come deliver us!
Come deliver us!, etc.*

CHORUS WOMEN

*He will come
In mightiness and pow'r,
With watchmen on the tow'r.
He will come deliver us!*

CHORUS (ALL)

Come deliver us, etc.

CHORUS MEN

*He will come,
His sword aloft and blazing.
Resplendent and amazing,
He will come deliver us!*

(Zacharias exits, assisted by Ezra and BENJAMIN.)

CHORUS (ALL)

Come deliver us.

CHORUS WOMEN

He will come.

CHORUS MEN

He will come.

CHORUS (ALL)

He will come deliver us.

(All exit.)

Segment 1.3

(A street in Nazareth. A boy, BEGGAR, begs of two men, JOSEPH and his uncle MICHAM, as they walk the nearly deserted streets.)

BEGGAR: Alms! Alms!

(Joseph reaches for his purse.)

MICHAM (stopping Joseph): Joseph, if you're going to be married, you can't afford to take care of every beggar in the city.

JOSEPH: But uncle, the law says that thou. . .

MICHAM: Yes, yes, I know the law. I taught you the law.

JOSEPH: "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need." ⁷

MICHAM (cutting Joseph off): “. . . sufficient for his need.” If he’s truly in need.
Do not be fooled by appearances, nephew.

(Micham exits. Joseph gives a coin to the beggar. Both exit. Micham approaches Mary’s house. MARY and her family enter: MOTHER, FATHER, younger sister ANNA, and younger BROTHER.)

MARY’S BROTHER: He’s coming! He’s coming!

MOTHER: It’s Micham.

FATHER: Where’s my coat?

MOTHER: Here, dear. You children run upstairs now.

FATHER (struggling with his coat): Wife . . .

MOTHER (as Mary begins to exit): Not you, Mary!

(Father reaches the door and opens it.)

FATHER: Micham, come in!

MICHAM: Shalom! Alohim!

FATHER: Alohim! Shalom! (To Mary) Mary, would you get something for our guest to drink? (Turning back to Micham) Come, sit.

(Mary exits.)

FATHER (contd.): So, what manner of business brings you here today?

MICHAM: I have come to make a proposal.

MOTHER: Yes, he’s ready to hear your proposal, Micham. Go on.

MARY (returning and handing Micham the drink): Are you Joseph’s uncle?

MOTHER: Excuse us. Mary, come with me.

MICHAM: Forgive me sir, the matter is plain . . .

(Lights down on Father and Micham as Mother and Mary move away from them.)

MOTHER: Come here. You're worried.

MARY: I'm trying not to be.

MOTHER: But . . .

MARY: But how can I be sure that Joseph . . . How can I be certain that . . .

MOTHER: Certain?

MARY: I've seen him at synagogue. He's faithful.

MOTHER: The rabbis think so.

MARY: And he's a carpenter, with a good reputation.

MOTHER: Yes.

MARY: And he is kind. He is. And—

MOTHER: Mary, I was betrothed once myself.

MARY: You were?

MOTHER: Your father's uncle came to visit my parents, just as Micham has come to us. And you wonder . . .

[Music cue: "Do His Will"]

MOTHER (contd): . . . will you love Joseph as your husband, and will he love you.

MARY: I'm sorry.

MOTHER: I think it's good to wonder a little about yourself, if you will be true to the covenants you're going to make. But we need never wonder about the Lord.

MOTHER (contd)

*Ask God all your questions,
Tell Him all your fears,
Thank Him for His mercy,
And wait with open ears.*

*Listen as He answers,
Hear the voice so still,
Let the Spirit's whisper
Teach how to do His will.
Then go and do His will.*

(Mary and Mother embrace.)

FATHER: Mother, come!

MOTHER (to her husband): Yes, dear. (To Mary) Now go be with your sister.

(Mary starts to leave.)

MOTHER (contd.): And Mary —

(Mary turns back.)

MOTHER (contd.): I have never wondered about you.

(They exit.)

Segment 1.4

(Zacharias and Elisabeth's home.)

EZRA (running in): Elisabeth! Elisabeth! Elisabeth!

ELISABETH (entering): What?

EZRA: It's Zacharias!

ELISABETH: Zacharias?

EZRA: He was in the temple and the lot—it fell to him.

ELISABETH: Oh!

EZRA: And he went in to burn the incense . . .

ELISABETH: The lot fell to him? Truly?

EZRA: Yes!

(Zacharias enters, leaning on the shoulder of Benjamin. Elisabeth runs to them.)

ELISABETH: Is it true? Did it? Oh my love! Finally after all these years it fell to you. Tell me, Zacharias; tell me all about it.

(Silence.)

ELISABETH: Zacharias . . . Zacharias?

BENJAMIN: Elisabeth, he can't speak.

EZRA: He can't hear either.

ELISABETH: Oh mercy. I knew it. It was too much for you!

BENJAMIN: We tried to talk to him, to ask him what happened . . .

ELISABETH: Here, sit here. You must lie down.

BENJAMIN: . . . But he can't hear what we're saying.

ELISABETH: Ezra, the blanket! Benjamin, go for your mother, quickly!

BENJAMIN: Elisabeth! He's not sick. He saw something.

EZRA: He saw the Lord!

BENJAMIN: Or someone like Him. He was in the temple a long time. Some say he saw a vision.

ELISABETH (pausing, suddenly subdued): A vision.

[Music cue: "I'll Give God Forever – Reprise" underscore]

ELISABETH: Oh, my beloved. A vision.

(Zacharias takes Elisabeth's hand. He gazes deeply into her eyes. He folds his wrap and places it in Elisabeth's arms as if it were a baby. As he does so, Elisabeth understands and begins to weep.)

ELISABETH: Oh, Zacharias. I know. I know.

BLACKOUT

ACT I
Scene 2
Segment 2.1

(Mary's home. The betrothal. Mary and her family, Joseph and Micham, MARY'S AUNT and MARY'S COUSINS are present.)

MICHAM (as they all approach the table): Good? It's very good. Don't you agree?

FATHER: It's a standard agreement.

MOTHER: Oh, it's a very good contract.

MICHAM: Joseph, present your gift, and make your vow.

(Joseph places a gold ring on the table.)

JOSEPH: Mary, I will betroth you to myself forever, betroth you in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness. I will betroth you in faithfulness. And you will know the Lord.⁸

MICHAM: The drink.

(Joseph pours from a pitcher into a cup and places the cup on the table before Mary. Silence.)

FATHER: Now, Mary, it is time for you to choose. Joseph is a good man. If you pledge faithfulness to him, he will provide for you and care for you forever, as a wife and mother in Israel. (Pause) Drink, and you have a covenant. Put it away, and all is forgotten.

MICHAM: You won't regret it!

WOMEN (Mary's aunt and cousins): Shhh!

FATHER: As you choose.

(Mary takes the cup and drinks. All erupt into joyous congratulations.)

MICHAM: Wonderful! Wonderful!
(Joseph places a ring on Mary's forefinger.)

JOSEPH: It is done. You are set apart for me according to the law of Moses and Israel. And one day we'll be married.

[Music cue: "There Are Rules"]

FATHER (embracing Joseph): This day you shall be as my son-in-law!

(Mary's Father and Brother exit. Micham and Joseph put on carpenter's aprons and work together on Joseph's house while Mary's Mother, Anna, and other women – Mary's Aunt and Cousins – help prepare Mary for her wedding day.)

MICHAM

*There are rules for joining of two timbers:
First you find the surest, truest ground.
Then you sink the footing where it always will stand,
And nothing under heav'n can bring it down.*

MARY'S MOTHER

There are rules for joining of two people:

MOTHER and WOMEN

*First betrothal known throughout the land,
Then a year of raising high a good Hebrew house,
Then wrapping of the hands in swaddling bands.*

JOSEPH and MICHAM
*Build a house for a prophet,
 Filled with law and truth –*

MOTHER and WOMEN
*A house for a handmaid
 Obedient as Ruth.*

JOSEPH and MICHAM
*Build it firm as a mountain,
 A house of faith and prayer*

ALL
For the children,

JOSEPH and MARY
Israel's children,

ALL
Ever pure and fair.

(Underscore continues.)

MICHAM: Well, Joseph, it's coming along nicely, very nicely.

JOSEPH: I think she will be happy here. (Gazing at Mary) She's beautiful, isn't she?

MICHAM: Beautiful? Well, so far. Strong bones and good joints. But a good beginning is no guarantee of a good finish.

JOSEPH (sternly): Uncle, I will not have you speak of Mary in those terms.

MICHAM: Mary? Who's talking about Mary? I was talking about your house!

JOSEPH (abashedly): Oh.

MICHAM: Mary is a beautiful girl, to be sure Joseph. And this house will be a wonderful place to raise a family, if . . .

JOSEPH: If I follow all the rules.

JOSEPH (contd)

*Build a house and marriage with devotion,
Follow every rule that God prescribes,
Then observe how the promises to Father Abraham
In me and in my house are realized.*

(All women exit.)

JOSEPH and MICHAM

*Build a house for a prophet,
Filled with law and truth –
A house for a handmaid
Obedient as Ruth.
Build it firm as a mountain,
A house of faith and prayer
For the children,
Israel's children,
Ever pure and fair.*

(All exit.)

Segment 2.2

(Mary's house. Before they go to bed, Mary brushes Anna's hair.)

ANNA: You'll live in Joseph's house when you're married, won't you?

MARY: Yes, Anna. He's building it right now, and when he's finished, we'll go live there.

ANNA: Is that when we have the big wedding party and he comes and gets you?

MARY: Yes.

ANNA: And will you put on a beautiful dress like Hannah did when she was married?

MARY: Of course.

ANNA: And then what?

MARY: Well, people in the neighborhood will come out carrying their lamps and they will join the procession —

ANNA: Oh yes! And they'll surround you with their lights and carry you off in the chair like a queen. And you'll be married under the canopy and live with Joseph forever.

MARY: Yes! That's the way it's done! I can hardly believe it's me.

ANNA: Mary, do you have to go?

MARY: Don't worry, Anna. This is how Mother and Father began, and look at them now. They say Joseph keeps his covenants, just like Father, and that will make him a good husband.

ANNA: I don't understand.

MARY: You will someday.

ANNA: Someday when I'm older, like you?

MARY (suddenly emotional): Oh, Anna.

ANNA: What's wrong, Mary?

MARY: I don't feel very old. I don't feel any older than you are. I don't even know if I'm ready. Come now, run along.

(Anna runs off. Mary kneels and prays. The angel Gabriel enters behind her. The light grows around them. Mary becomes aware of his presence and turns, frightened.)

GABRIEL: Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

[Music cue: "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth" underscore]

GABRIEL (contd.): And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the

throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.⁹

MARY: How can this be? I am not yet married. ¹⁰

GABRIEL: Thou shalt be carried away in the spirit.¹¹ And the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy child which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.¹²

MARY: Elisabeth . . .

GABRIEL: For with God nothing shall be impossible.¹³

MARY: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.¹⁴

(Gabriel exits.)

[Music cue: Segue into "Look on Me This Day"]

MARY

*Who am I, that this day
He should come to me?
Dressed in white, filled with light,
What wonder did I see!
And he spoke words divine,
Words I cannot say.
So I'll praise His name, I will praise His name,
I will praise His holy name,
Praise His name from day to day.*

Segment 2.3

(While underscore continues, the scene is transformed into a street in Jerusalem. Ezra runs onto the stage carrying a basket filled with items from the market and bumps into Mary.)

MARY: Oh, excuse me! Are you all right?

EZRA: I'm sorry. I just have to get back to Elisabeth.

MARY: Elisabeth! Is something wrong with the baby?

EZRA: The baby? How do you know about . . .?

MARY: I'm Elisabeth's cousin.

EZRA: But she said no one knows.

MARY: And no one does.

EZRA: But you do.

MARY: Yes. And I'm keeping it right here, safe in my heart.¹⁵

(Ezra runs off. Mary smiles, filled with joy.)

MARY

*O Lord, my God, be with me this day,
Show Thy mercy on me,
And keep me in Thy way.
What I feel, what I know,
Leads my heart to say,
I will praise Thy name, I will praise Thy name,
I will praise Thy holy name,
Praise Thy name to all, alway.*

CHORUS WOMEN

Ooo . . .

Segment 2.4

(Zacharias and Elisabeth's home. Elisabeth enters, visibly with child.)

EZRA: Elisabeth, I'm back! And I got everything you said – the bread, the meat, the fish, it's all here.

ELISABETH: Oh, my boy. Thank you.

EZRA: But, um, I . . .

ELISABETH: What is it?

EZRA: I met a stranger on the way here. I think she was coming to visit you. And she knew that you were going to have a –

ELISABETH (interrupting him): Ezra, I hope you didn't tell anyone!

EZRA: No, *I* didn't, she knew all about the baby . . .

ELISABETH: Baby . . . ?

MARY (offstage): Elisabeth! Elisabeth!

(Elisabeth feels the movement of her child.)

ELISABETH: Oh, my. . .

EZRA: Are you all right?

MARY (still offstage): Elisabeth!

ELISABETH: Ezra, take these things in the other room and hurry home.

EZRA: But maybe I could help you. Maybe I could —

ELISABETH: Thank you, but not now, child. Go quickly.

(Ezra leaves.)

MARY (still offstage): Elisabeth!

(Mary enters.)

MARY (contd.): Cousin!

ELISABETH: Mary! Come in! Come here!

(They embrace.)

MARY: How is the baby?

ELISABETH: You know about the baby?

MARY: Yes.

ELISABETH: Oh, Mary, blessed art thou among women!¹⁶

MARY: What—?

ELISABETH: And blessed is the fruit of *thy* womb.¹⁷

MARY: Elisabeth, you know!

ELISABETH: Don't be afraid, Mary. I am honored that the mother of my Lord would come to me! As soon as I heard your voice, I felt my son leap inside me for joy.¹⁸ And I knew. (Touching her abdomen) He knows.

(Nephi appears on the colonnade with an ANGEL. Elisabeth exits. Mary turns downstage.)

ANGEL TO NEPHI: Nephi, what beholdest thou?¹⁹

NEPHI: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins.²⁰

[Music cue: "Look On Me This Day – Reprise 1" underscore]

MARY (to herself): My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.²¹

ANGEL TO NEPHI: Knowest thou the condescension of God?²²

NEPHI: I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things.²³

ANGEL: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.²⁴

(ABINADI appears on the colonnade.)

ABINADI: And God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God.²⁵

(Time has passed. Mary is in Elisabeth's home, embroidering a long strip of linen cloth.)

ELISABETH: How is the embroidery coming, Mary?

MARY: Swaddling bands aren't easy, even after three months.

ELISABETH: Here, let me see.

MARY: It would be easier if I only had to worry about one side, and not about all the threads on the other.

ELISABETH: That's the idea, dear. First in your marriage, and then in your home, nothing can be hidden. We must try to make everything beautiful front and back, inside and out.

MARY: Elisabeth, do you think I can be as good as these bands should be?

ELISABETH: What do you mean?

MARY: In my marriage.

ELISABETH: With Joseph.

MARY: Yes. I need to tell him, so that nothing is hidden.

ELISABETH: Good!

MARY: But I don't know if I'm ready.

ELISABETH: Well then, you are ready.

MARY: I am? It doesn't feel that way.

ELISABETH: You're ready because you know you need the Lord. Now you'll depend on Him. It will come to you what to say to Joseph. (Pause) Oh, I will miss you, Mary . . .

MARY: But Elisabeth, the baby. I came here to help you.

ELISABETH: Don't worry. We'll be depending on the Lord, too.

(They embrace. Elisabeth exits. Mary turns downstage, alone in the light.)

[Music cue: “Look On Me This Day – Reprise 2” underscore]

MARY (to herself): And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever.²⁶

(Immediate segue to. . .)

Segment 2.5

(Mary’s home.)

MARY: Joseph! Is that you, Joseph? Come in.

(Joseph enters.)

JOSEPH: Mary, it’s good to see you back. (Pause) I have to tell you I’m a little uneasy about being here before the wedding.

MARY: I understand. (Pause) Elisabeth had her child.

JOSEPH: Oh. She did?

MARY: Yes. They sent word. A boy.

JOSEPH: Oh! Well, that’s good to hear.

MARY: Yes, he’s healthy and strong, and Elisabeth is doing just fine.

JOSEPH: Good. What about the father, the priest? I heard that he –

MARY: Zacharias. . .

JOSEPH: Yes.

MARY: Well, he couldn’t hear, and he couldn’t speak, either.

JOSEPH: So what happened?

MARY: An angel . . . appeared to him.

JOSEPH: An angel?

MARY: Yes, he told him Elisabeth was going to have a child, and he even told him the name. His name is John.²⁷

JOSEPH: John. They didn't name him after his father?

MARY: No.

JOSEPH: Why not?

MARY: Well, that's what I wanted to talk to you about. At the time of the circumcision, Zacharias finally spoke. He said the child would be called the prophet of the highest, to go before the face of the Lord and to prepare His ways.²⁸

JOSEPH: How did he know that?

MARY: That's what the angel told him.

JOSEPH: Do the elders know?

MARY: Yes, of course. You do believe it, don't you?

JOSEPH: Oh yes, Mary. Yes. All manner of wondrous things can happen in the temple. I've heard others say it. I believe it's true.

MARY: I know it's true.

JOSEPH: Well Mary, I'm glad you told me. I guess I'd better be going.

(Joseph starts to leave.)

MARY: Wait, Joseph.

(Joseph stops.)

MARY (contd.): Before I visited Elisabeth, an angel came to me, too. I was praying, and the room became light –

JOSEPH: Where?

MARY: Here at home.

JOSEPH: You are a blessed person, Mary. I'm not surprised.

MARY: He said the Messiah is coming, through our lineage, just as the scriptures say. And quickly. Very quickly.

JOSEPH: Quickly.

MARY: Now don't be afraid.

JOSEPH: I'm not afraid, Mary.

MARY: Because He is coming as every child comes. To a family. To a father. Through a woman. (Pause) Joseph . . . through me.

JOSEPH : An angel came to you, and told you the Messiah is coming, and that He is coming soon, through you? Through you who are betrothed to me?

MARY: Yes.

JOSEPH: And now you're saying that I will be His father . . .

MARY: You will raise Him.

JOSEPH: Raise Him. What does that mean?

MARY: It means He will be the Son of the Highest. He *is* the Son of the Highest.

JOSEPH: Is?

MARY: It's been three months, Joseph.

JOSEPH: You are three months with child? What are you saying? What are you saying, Mary?

MARY: He's not just a child, Joseph. He is the Son of God.

(Joseph exits and walks to his half-finished house. Lights down on Mary.)

[Music cue: "There Are Rules – Reprise"]

JOSEPH

It's a house, but not what I envisioned.

There's no door,

[Music cue: Continuation of "There are Rules – Reprise" and segue into "Look on Me This Day – Duet"]

JOSEPH (cont'd)

no window to be found.

And within, the rooms have been forever rearranged,

And soon I'll see it topple to the ground.

(Underscore continues.)

JOSEPH (contd.) (to himself): Mary, you've come upon some trouble. But whatever it is – whatever it may be . . . I can't think of it.

(In her home Mary kneels in a pool of light.)

JOSEPH (contd.): What is the right thing to do? I know the law and the law is clear. If the damsel be not a virgin, they shall bring her out "to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her . . . that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel."²⁹

JOSEPH (contd.)

And then what will protect you

And hide you from the storm?

Who will give you shelter

And mend the heart that's torn?

And who will defend

The child from cunning men

If the children,

Israel's children,

Come without a friend?

MARY
My Lord,

JOSEPH
My Lord,

MARY
My God,

JOSEPH
My God,

MARY
Came to me that day,

JOSEPH
Come to me this day,

MARY
And His mercy

JOSEPH
Shed Thy mercy

MARY
On me

JOSEPH
On me,

MARY
Has led me in His way.

JOSEPH
And lead me in Thy way.

MARY
What I saw,

JOSEPH
Let me see,

MARY

What I heard,

JOSEPH

Help me know,

MARY

Fills my heart to say,

JOSEPH

And teach me now to hear Thy voice,

MARY

I will praise Thy name,

I will praise Thy name,

I will

BOTH

praise Thy holy name.

Praise Thy name to all, alway.

(In their separate houses, Mary and Joseph each lie down to sleep. An ANGEL enters Joseph's home and stands over him.)

ANGEL TO JOSEPH: Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of God. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. ³⁰

(The angel departs. Joseph awakens and runs to Mary's house.)

JOSEPH: Mary!

MARY: Joseph?

JOSEPH: We must be wed without delay.

MARY: You know!

JOSEPH: Yes. It's exactly as you said. His name shall be called —

MARY: Jesus.

JOSEPH: How did you know?

MARY: That's what the angel told me.

JOSEPH: And me as well.

MARY: For His mercy is on them that fear Him.

JOSEPH: The house isn't quite finished. There won't be time for all the usual preparations. Not everyone will understand.

MARY: With God nothing shall be impossible.

Segment 2.6

[Music cue: "Come, Lord Jesus – Wedding Song"]

(Mary's family and Micham enter. Four young boys, including Mary's Brother carry the wedding canopy. As the chorus of angels sings, Mary's Mother drapes white wedding attire over Mary's costume, while across the stage Micham assists Joseph to dress in white. Zacharias and Elisabeth, holding a newborn baby, observe. Mary and Joseph approach Mary's father, who stands under the canopy. He wraps their right hands together with swaddling bands.)

CHORUS

*Come, Lord Jesus, see the wedding,
With Thy kinsmen joined in feast.
In our hearts Thy joy is spreading,
Bringing to the earth Thy peace.
Come in glory to the earth,
Come to us to rule and reign.
Ready us to kneel and greet Thee.
Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

CHORUS WOMEN

*Come, Lord Jesus, see the dawning
Jubilation in the skies.*

CHORUS MEN

*Hear the heav'nly host responding,
Echoing our joyful cries.*

CHORUS (ALL)

*Come in glory to the earth,
Come to us to rule and reign.
Ready us to kneel and greet Thee.
Come, Lord Jesus, come.
Come in glory to the earth,
Come to us to rule and reign.
Ready us to kneel and greet Thee.
Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

(Mary's family, Micham, Zacharias, and Elisabeth watch as the newly married couple leave the stage.)

**ACT I
Scene 3
Segment 3.1**

[Music cue: "Herald Trumpets" underscore]

(A ROMAN STATESMAN appears with four soldiers behind him. Townspeople gather hurriedly around them to listen to their proclamation.)

[Music cue: "Roman Soldiers" underscore]

ROMAN STATESMAN: Come near, citizens and subjects of the Roman Empire. Caesar has spoken to all this land and people. All citizens are hereby commanded to return to their city of origin. All citizens of Nazareth. All citizens of Capernaum. All citizens of Bethlehem.³¹

(The soldiers and townspeople exit.)

(Mary and Joseph's home. Mary sits, resting. She is visibly with child. Joseph enters.)

JOSEPH: Are you all right?

MARY: Yes, just tired. Are *you* all right? Something's bothering you.

JOSEPH: I'm fine.

MARY: Joseph, what's wrong?

JOSEPH: It's this census. I've been down to the market. It's humiliating.

MARY: You mean sending us back to our ancestral homes?

JOSEPH: Yes. Micham says it's Herod cooperating with the Romans, trying to make their plan look like it's our tradition. But it degrades our tradition; it robs it of its holiness. Others keep saying we have to go along with it, that we have to do the best we can and keep praying for the Messiah . . .

MARY: And what did you say?

JOSEPH: I was agreeing with them until they started talking about the Messiah . . . about Him . . . and then I didn't dare say anything. (Pause) Oh Mary, how can I leave you right now? The baby will be here soon.

MARY: Joseph, I've been thinking about this. Perhaps this is what God wants.

JOSEPH: What? What do you mean?

MARY: Well, perhaps I could go with you.

JOSEPH: Mary, six days round trip over bad roads is difficult even for me—

MARY: No, Joseph. I mean perhaps we should go there to live.

JOSEPH: But the house is just finished, I've finally set up shop in town—

MARY: We could start over there.

JOSEPH: Start over? Why start over?

MARY: I know it hardly makes sense. But Bethlehem is the home of our ancestors, the city of David.

(MICAHA appears on the colonnade.)

MICAHA: And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda . . .

MARY: We'd be nearer Zacharias and Elisabeth, and nearer the temple.

MICAHA: For out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.³²

JOSEPH: Yes, I see. The City of David. It's for His sake. We never would have chosen Bethlehem.

MARY: We didn't.

JOSEPH: No, Caesar did. And Herod.

MARY: The Lord did. All flesh is in His hands.

JOSEPH: Does He have to grip so tightly?

MARY: Please, let me come.

(They exit.)

Segment 3.2

[Music cue: "Scene Change to Shepherd's Hill" underscore]

(A hillside near Bethlehem.)

ELI (calling from offstage): Nathan!

(Nathan, a shepherd boy, runs onto the hillside.)

NATHAN: Up here, father! I found him. He's with the others.

(Eli, Nathan's father, climbs the hill.)

ELI: Where?

(Eli's father Asa, REUBEN, JESHUA, and AMON climb up after Eli.)

NATHAN: Down there, see?

ELI: Ah! Good for you, son.

REUBEN: Good for the lamb.

ELI (helping Asa up): Up here, father —

REUBEN: Jeshua — the bread?

(Jeshua breaks pieces from a loaf of bread and distributes them.)

ASA: This seems a good spot.

ELI: Yes. Nathan, do you see all those lights!

REUBEN: Lots of people over there.

ASA: That's ol' Herod again.

ELI: As if he were a Hebrew — calling them back to the land of their fathers.

NATHAN: It makes our little town seem so important!

ELI: Bethlehem *is* important, son.

REUBEN: I'd say!

NATHAN: What do you mean?

ASA: The Messiah will be born there — don't you remember? In the city of David.

REUBEN: Some day . . .

NATHAN: How do you know?

ELI: The prophets.

NATHAN: Prophets?

JESHUA and ELI (answering together): Yes!

ELI: The Lord told Samuel that a king would come from Jesse —

JESHUA: A Beth-lehemite.³³

NATHAN: Will that be Him? Will that be the Messiah?

ASA: From the stem of Jesse, the scriptures say; and —

ASA and REUBEN (together): A Branch shall grow out of his roots.³⁴

ASA: Even so.

REUBEN: The root and offspring of —

NATHAN and REUBEN (together): David.³⁵

ASA: Yes.

[Music cue: “The Lord is My Shepherd”]

(Nathan begins playing the harp.)

AMON: Uncle Eli, what will He be like?

ELI: Like *His* fathers, I suppose; like David.

AMON: David the king?

JESHUA: Or David the shepherd?

ELI: Both.

AMON: A shepherd? How a shepherd?

ASA: He shall feed his flock, and gather the lambs, and carry them close to His heart.

ELI: And He'll gently lead the mother sheep, those that are with young.³⁶

AMON: Sheep? What sheep?

ELI: Us.

AMON: Us?

NATHAN: Us!

NATHAN (contd)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

ALL SHEPHERDS

Yea, though I walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil:

For thou art with me;

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou anointest my head with oil;

My cup runneth over.

(Underscore continues.)

NATHAN: When will He come, father?

ELI: Nathan, when I was your age, I prayed that I would be there. But it's just as important to wait for Him, son, and to watch.

ASA: And be ready.

ELI

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

ASA

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

ALL

The Lord is my shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd

The Lord is my shepherd . . .

NATHAN

*I shall not, I shall not want.*³⁷

(The shepherds gather in prayer. Blackout. In the darkness the shepherds lie down to sleep.)

Segment 3.3

(In Bethlehem. Lights up on Mary, who is resting, heavy with child. Joseph enters, carrying a lamp.)

MARY: Did you find something?

JOSEPH: We have a stable.

MARY: A stable, who would have thought?

JOSEPH: When I think the town's been full for a week, Mary . . . His arm is stretched out over us.³⁸

MARY: All flesh is in His hand. But it is strange – wonderful but strange. Our people have waited for the Messiah. “The Messiah will come.” “The Messiah is near.” “The Messiah will deliver us.” And now, here tonight, He comes to just you and me, strangers in this place, unknown. He comes in a stable. How will our people know?

JOSEPH: His Father has sent Him to the earth. He will tell them.

MARY: Yes.

JOSEPH: Come. We must be ready.

[Music cue: “Feed Thy Sheep – Reprise” underscore]

(Joseph helps Mary up. They exit.)

Segment 3.4

(On the hillside. The shepherds are sleeping. Eli is keeping watch. An ANGEL appears on the hillside above them. As the light intensifies, Eli turns and sees the angel. He gazes in awe for a moment.)

[Music cue: “Glory to God in the Highest”]

ELI (awakening the others): Wake up! Wake up, all of you.

(The other shepherds awake, see the angel, and shrink back, frightened.)

ANGEL: Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

CHORUS OF ANGELS

Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory!

ANGEL: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

CHORUS OF ANGELS

Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory!

ANGEL: And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.³⁹

(Lights up on the multitude of angels on the colonnade.)

CHORUS OF ANGELS

Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory to God!

Glory to God in the highest,

And peace on earth, good will to men.

Glory to God in the highest!

Glory to God! Glory to God!

Glory to God on high!

(The Angel steps down from the hillside, and a bright new star appears in the sky.)

ASA: The prayers of our people have been answered.

ELI: Then let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which the Lord has made known unto us.⁴⁰

[Music cue: "Glory to God – Reprise" underscore]

JESHUA (pointing to the new star): Wait! Look!

NATHAN: What is that?

REUBEN: In the east.⁴¹ I've never seen it before.

AMON: What does it mean?

JESHUA: All things testify of him.

ELI: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob."

REUBEN: "And a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."⁴²

NATHAN: He *is* a king.

AMON: The King of glory.⁴³

ELI: Come, let's hurry!

(They make ready to go. Asa walks away from the group.)

NATHAN: Grandfather!

(Nathan runs to Asa.)

NATHAN (contd.): Grandfather, aren't you coming?

ASA: I'll stay with the sheep.

NATHAN: Don't you want to see Him?

ASA: "I shall see him, but not now."⁴⁴ Nathan, go. Follow the star. And find the Child.

(Nathan embraces Asa.)

NATHAN: Yes! Goodbye!

(They depart.)

Segment 3.5

[Music cue: "Scene Change to Bethlehem" underscore]

(The scene is transformed to the streets of Bethlehem. The shepherds enter.)

ELI: Everyone, come quickly. This is it. This where we will find Him.

NATHAN: How do you know?

ELI: I just know. (Approaching a stable door) Here. Nathan, come. Up you go.

(Eli boosts Nathan high to see into the stable.)

ELI (contd.): What do you see?

NATHAN: It's just as they said.

REUBEN: A manger?

NATHAN: Yes.

ELI: And the swaddling clothes? Is He wrapped?

NATHAN: Yes!

(Eli lowers Nathan. Subdued, the shepherds walk away from the stable.)

REUBEN: It is the sign.

ELI: We must tell. We must tell and testify of these things.

NATHAN: How do we do that?

ELI: What do you mean, son?

NATHAN: We're just shepherds.

ELI (kneeling before Nathan): Yes, Nathan, just shepherds. But tonight we are servants, servants of a King.

(Joseph emerges from the stable, carrying a clay vessel. The shepherds see him and kneel. Noticing them, he stops.)

JOSEPH: Are you looking for someone?

ELI: Will you tell us about the Child, sir?

JOSEPH: The Child? Stand up. Who are you?

NATHAN: We're shepherds.

JOSEPH: Yes?

NATHAN: And we know about the baby.

JOSEPH: Yes?

REUBEN: He is the Lord.

ELI: The Messiah, the Savior of the World.

JOSEPH: Who told you?

ELI: An angel – angels, actually. A whole multitude of them.

JOSEPH: Where?

NATHAN: With the sheep.

ELI: In the fields, sir.

NATHAN: We were keeping watch.

JOSEPH (shaking Eli's hand): Fields . . . all manner of wondrous things.

ELI: I'm not sure I understand . . .

JOSEPH: Just a moment, let me tell my wife.

(As Joseph returns to the stable, we see Mary, holding the Child wrapped in the swaddling bands. She hums to Him.)

JOSEPH (contd.): Mary, there are shepherds here to see the Baby. Angels sent them.

MARY: Angels?

JOSEPH: Yes.

MARY: Then they must see Him.

(Joseph and Mary sit, with Mary holding the Child. The shepherds enter the stable and stand in the doorway.)

JOSEPH (to the shepherds): Come in.

(The shepherds enter.)

MARY: Come close.

(The shepherds kneel around Mary and Joseph, their heads bowed. Nathan looks up.)

NATHAN (to Mary): I've seen many lambs just born.

MARY: Have you?

NATHAN: He looks sort of soft and helpless, just like a baby lamb.

MARY: He *is* a lamb. The Lamb of God.

NATHAN: What does that mean?

REUBEN: Hush, child. Mustn't speak too much.

MARY (reassuring Reuben): Oh, no, no. (To Nathan) What is your name?

NATHAN: Nathan.

MARY: Oh, like the prophet.

NATHAN: Was he a shepherd?

MARY: In a way, all prophets are shepherds. I am glad you've come, Nathan. All of you. God didn't let Him come into this world alone, and for that, His mother is grateful. (Pause) I should have known it would be shepherds who would come – someone who could be trusted to believe.

ELI: And tell.

MARY: Tell?

ELI: Yes. The angel said it was unto all people. So if you'll excuse us, we should go.

NATHAN: And do as he said.

(The shepherds rise and begin to exit. Mary and Joseph watch them go. Eli stops and whispers to Nathan. Nathan returns to Mary and Joseph.)

NATHAN: My father said I should start with you.

JOSEPH: With us?

MARY: For what, Nathan?

NATHAN: The message from the angel.

MARY: Very well. Go ahead.

[Music cue: "Come, Lord Jesus – End of Act I"]

NATHAN: Fear not. For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you . . .

MARY: Go on.

NATHAN: . . . for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

(Nathan kneels and kisses the child. He exits the stable. The shepherds move toward the audience, proclaiming the message.)

JESHUA:

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. . . . For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

REUBEN:

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. . . . For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

AMON:

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. . . . For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

(Eli and Nathan are also added to the above sequence of lines.)

(As the Chorus sings, a few of the angels descend from the colonnade and gather at the edge of the stable. As they watch, the light narrows around Mary, Joseph, and the baby.)

CHORUS

*Come, Lord Jesus, to the manger;
May we see Thy tender face?
Great Creator, here a stranger,
Infant in this humble place.
Come in glory to the earth,
Come to us to rule and reign.
Ready us to kneel and greet Thee.
Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

*Come in glory to the earth,
Come to us to rule and reign.
Ready us to kneel and greet Thee,
Come, Lord Jesus, come.*

(Underscore continues. LUKE appears on the colonnade.)

LUKE: And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.⁴⁵

MARY and JOSEPH
Come, Lord Jesus, Come.

BLACKOUT

END OF ACT I

NOTES

1. English translation: "Let the temple be restored, Zion refilled, that we may come up singing a new song."
2. See 1 Nephi 10:1, 4-5, 7-11, 17.
3. Malachi 3:1.
4. See Luke 1:13-15, 17.
5. See Luke 1:18.
6. See Luke 1:19-20.
7. Deuteronomy 15:8.
8. See Hosea 2:19-20.
9. Luke 1:28, 30-33.
10. See Luke 1:34.
11. See 1 Nephi 11:19.
12. See Luke 1:35-36.
13. Luke 1:37.
14. Luke 1:38.
15. See Luke 2:18-19.
16. See Luke 1:42.
17. Luke 1:42.
18. See Luke 1:41.
19. 1 Nephi 11:14.
20. 1 Nephi 11:15.
21. See Luke 1:46-49.
22. 1 Nephi 11:16.
23. 1 Nephi 11:17.
24. 1 Nephi 11:18.
25. Mosiah 15:1-2.
26. See Luke 1:50-55.
27. See Luke 1:13.
28. See Luke 1:59-63, 76.
29. Deuteronomy 22:21.
30. See Matthew 1:20-21.
31. See Luke 2:1-3.
32. Matthew 2:6 (based on Micah 5:2).
33. See 1 Samuel 16:1.
34. See Isaiah 11:1.
35. See Revelation 22:16.

36. See Isaiah 40:11.
37. See Psalm 23.
38. See Luke 2:7.
39. See Luke 2:10-12.
40. See Luke 2:15.
41. See Matthew 2:2.
42. Numbers 24:17.
43. See Psalms 24:7-10.
44. Numbers 24:17.
45. Luke 2:40.