

Christmas Eve 2007

“O Holy Night” – Solo

<Length 4:45>

<Total 4:45>

The Prophet Speaks Into Despair

<Length 1:00>

<Total 5:45>

We are living in days marked by fear, darkness, and even despair. Around our globe are wars, famine, and suffering of unimaginable proportions. It was into a similar world scene that the prophet Isaiah spoke these words of hope to a despairing people.

Isaiah 9:1 Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever... ²The people who walk in darkness will see a great light—a light that will shine on all who live in the land where death casts its shadow.... [The] people will rejoice as people rejoice at harvest time. They will shout with joy like warriors dividing the plunder. ⁴For God will break the chains that bind his people and the whip that scourges them... ⁵In that day of peace, battle gear will no longer be issued. Never again will uniforms be bloodstained by war. All such equipment will be burned.

⁶For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. And the government will rest on his shoulders. These will be his royal titles: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His ever expanding, peaceful government will never end. He will rule forever with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David. The passionate commitment of the LORD Almighty will guarantee this!

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (Em)

<Length 4:45>

<Total 10:30>

An Ordinary Night

<Length 2:30>

<Total 13:00>

There is one word that describes the night He came - Ordinary. The sky was ordinary. An occasional gust stirred the leaves and chilled the air. The stars were diamonds sparkling on black velvet. Fleets of clouds floated in front of the moon. An ordinary night with an ordinary sky.

The sheep were ordinary. Some fat. Some scrawny. Some with barrel bellies. Some with twig legs. Common animals. No fleece made of gold. No history makers. No blue-ribbon winners. They were simple sheep--lumpy, sleeping silhouettes on a hillside.

And the shepherds. Peasants they were. Probably wearing all the clothes they owned. Smelling like sheep and looking just as woolly. They were conscientious, willing to spend the night with their flocks. But you won't find their staffs in a museum nor their writings in a library. No one asked their opinion on social justice or the application of the Holy Scriptures. They were nameless and simple.

An ordinary night with ordinary sheep and ordinary shepherds. And were it not for a God who loves to hook an "extra" on the front of the ordinary, the night would have gone unnoticed. The sheep would have been forgotten, and the shepherds would have slept the night away.

But God dances amidst the ordinary. And that night, God Danced.

The black sky exploded with brightness. Trees that had been shadows jumped into clarity. Sheep that had been silent became a chorus of curiosity. One minute the shepherds were dead asleep, the next they were rubbing their eyes and staring into the face of an alien. The night was ordinary no more.

The angel came in the night because that is when lights are best seen and that is when they are most needed. God comes into the ordinary for the same reason. He joined us in the darkness of life and said "I am the Light of the world." The dark forest of human existence was lit up.

As the prophet said "there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" (F)

<Length 2:20>

<Total 15:20>

Matthew 1:18

<Length 1:10>

<Total 16:30>

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel" --which means, "God with us."

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

"What Child is This?" (Em)(3 verses)

<Length 3:30>

<20:00>

A Humble Birth

<Length 3:35>

<Total 23:35>

God had entered the world as a baby.

Yet, were someone to chance upon the sheep stable on the outskirts of Bethlehem that morning, what a peculiar scene they would behold.

The stable stinks like all stables do. The ground is hard, the hay scarce. Cobwebs cling to the ceiling and a mouse scurries across the dirt floor.

A more lowly place of birth could not exist.

Off to one side sit a group of shepherds. They sit silently on the floor, perhaps perplexed, perhaps in awe, no doubt in amazement. Their night watch had been interrupted by an explosion of light from heaven and a symphony of angels. God goes to those who have time to hear him--so on this night he went to simple shepherds.

Wide awake is Mary. My, how young she looks! Her head rests on the soft leather of Joseph's saddle. The pain has been eclipsed by wonder. She looks into the face of the baby. Her son. Her Lord. His Majesty. Mary didn't know whether to give Him milk or praise, but she gave Him both since He was, as near as she could figure, both hungry and holy. At this point in history, the human being who best understands who God is and what he is doing is a teenage girl in a smelly stable. She can't take her eyes off him. Somehow Mary knows she is holding God. So *this is He*. She remembers the words of the angel. "His kingdom will never end."

He looks nothing like a king. His face is prunish and red. His cry, though strong and healthy, is still the helpless and piercing cry of a baby. And he is absolutely dependent upon Mary for his well-being.

This baby had watched over the universe. Stepping from the throne, He removed His robe of light and wrapped Himself in skin: pigmented human skin. Skin that could burn, blister and bleed. The light of the universe entered a dark, wet womb. He whom the angels worship

nestled Himself in the placenta of a peasant, was birthed into the cold night, and now slept on cow's hay. His golden throne room had been abandoned in favor of a dirty sheep pen. And worshipping angels had been replaced with kind but bewildered shepherds.

Majesty in the midst of the mundane. Holiness in the filth of manure and sweat. Divinity entering the world on the floor of a stable, through the womb of a teenager and in the presence of a carpenter.

To many, it was a typical night. Routines were kept, lamps were extinguished and heads lay down for rest without knowing that this night, this ordinary night, had changed eternity. And yet, for the shepherds who left their sheep at the prompting of angels; for the wise men who would begin their journey to deliver gifts to the child of prophecy; for the teenage girl and the carpenter in a quiet stable, it was a night to celebrate the sacred. A night to worship and celebrate the birth of a King.

In Korean culture, traditional fan dances were often performed to commemorate the coronation or birthdays of royalty. Tonight we join in celebration with the shepherds, the wise men, Mary & Joseph, and generations of Christ-followers. We celebrate a King.

Korean Fan Dance

<Length 5:00>

<Total 28:35>

Luke 2:8

<Length 1:05>

<Total 24:55>

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "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 cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

"Angels We Have Heard on High" (F)(3 verses)

<Length 2:30>

<Total 32:10>

"Hark, The Herald Angels Sing" (F)(3 verses)

<Length 2:55>

<Total 35:05>

Message
<Length 12:00>
<Total 47:05>

"Would I know You Now?" solo 3:50

Violin plays 1 vs. of "Silent Night" (B flat) – 1:30

"Silent Night-with His Name Speaks Peace" – 4:30

"Away in a Manger" (F-G) – 2:30

"Here I Am to Worship" (G) – 4:30

"O Come, All Ye Faithful" (G) – 2:30

Offering Instructions/Benediction

"Joy to the World" (C-D)(2 verses)

<TIME 2:00>

<Total 69:25>