

Arise and Shine

Arise and Shine! – Whole Choir

Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

700 years before a new star would announce the birth of the Savior, Isaiah was born. It was a dark time in Jerusalem. Assyria, ever expanding her empire, casted a shadow that loomed heavy and foreboding. Still the Lord's own people refused to listen to their prophet, refused to have faith in Jehovah, instead they chose ~~choosing instead~~ to trust a dangerous alliance.

But in this darkness, Isaiah saw a great light. He saw hope. He saw Christmas...

This Christmastide – Whole Choir

Across the years Isaiah saw in glorious vision the birth of the Savior. HE was a light that gentiles and kings would gather around. A light that would call the sons and daughters of the earth. That light reflected and refracted into a sound with carillon chimes that still rings out, calling us today. Come, Come! Leave the darkness and let the light restore you!

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

Can you hear the Christmas Bells – Whole Choir With Bells

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

For years, decades, centuries, Isaiah's prophecies laid in wait. If not forgotten, questioned, doubted, perhaps mythicized. But then in an obscure town in the northeastern providence of Judah, a young betrothed maiden received an extraordinary message.

Her response of "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" humbly, meekly accepted her calling. Her betrothed, Joseph would follow likewise. And so all was fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by his prophet.

What Strangers Are These? – Whole choir with guitar and flute (last time he

brought an electric acoustic so it has a direct line out.)

The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

As a new star arose in the evening sky, the everlasting light promised to the world was born.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n. No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

Infant Redeemer – Whole Choir

Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hands, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Isaiah describes Israel's king ruling with strength and might. Yet in the very next passage Isaiah compares his nature to that of a loving shepherd, tenderly feeding and protecting his flock, gently showing them the way they should go.

And of course, it was shepherds abiding in their fields and keeping watch over their flock by night who first heard the angles announce the King of Israel was born.

The First Nowell – Whole Choir with Organ

As angels flooded the sky on that starry night their voices echoed joy throughout the mountains and hills indeed. Even stoic trees rejoiced as the words, "For unto you is born..." rippled through their branches and out into the world. Like bells that echo in the night the sound of that song still rings ~~in our hearts~~ [true in our hearts](#) today.

Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel

Bell Songs – Handbells (I don't know the titles but there will be 2 pieces)

From hills and the deserts they would come to see him, to worship the light. Wise men with gold, Shepherds with flocks, led by stars and songs of angels to the newborn king, to the glory of the house of Israel.

The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Epha; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

Gesu Bambino – This will be a different piece, not this title, and will be a soprano/alto duet

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord...

The Savior himself would quote Isaiah more than any other prophet, using these very words to declare to the world his mission. To deliver good news to the hopeless, to give sight to the blind, to set free the enslaved.

The acceptable year of the Lord had begun, and it would replace heartache and sorrow with love and peace

Love Came Down at Christmas – Small Ensemble (13 people, standing on the floor behind the bell tables so the mics for the bells can be used for this group also.)

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth.

Unlike sound, light does not need matter to help it along. It can travel through space. It can travel through time, and so the light born that night traveled far from Mary, and Joseph, far from the reach of shepherds and wise men, far away from the boundaries of Israel itself. But not beyond the vision of Isaiah who saw the light born to the world that night shine like a beacon for all to see. It would bring redemption not just to the house of Israel, but for Jew and gentile alike. Every language, every culture, every people would come to celebrate that night with joy and song and light.

Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella – Women

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: 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 knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

What comfort it must have been for Isaiah to know his beloved Jerusalem would be recovered and become glorious again as the knowledge of the stem of Jesse filled the earth.

Rejoice, rejoice in the most high, while Israel spreads abroad, like stars that glitter in the sky, and ever worship God, and ever worship God, and ever, and ever worship God!

Joy to the World – Piano Duet

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

In this simple passage, Isaiah announces the name of the coming Messiah. The Hebrew word for salvation is Yesuah, which Greek translators of the bible rendered as Yay-soos – Jesus.

It is no mere coincidence that the angel Gabriel told Mary to name her baby boy Yesuah, for he would bring salvation to the ends of the earth. How beautiful are the feet of those that publish salvation.

Gentlemen's Christmas – Men

And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted

Isaiah used the word joy, or rejoice more than any other writer in the Holy Bible. It might be argued that of all people he had the least to be joyful about. Perhaps, but still Isaiah invites us to praise the Lord for his infinite goodness and mercy.

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty – Whole Choir

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Just as a small sprout might seem insignificant, a small baby born to unremarkable parents and placed in a manger might appear to be also. The Savior of the world was not born in a great palace, or laid upon a golden bed. He never wore silken robes. The only crown he ever wore was made thorns.

He was in many ways, like each of us, a common man. Born weak and helpless, the Son of God came to know our mortal sorrows by living them just as we did. He understands our heartache, our pain, our regret. He understands us.

Once in Royal David's City – Whole Choir

So humble were his beginning it might have been easy to miss that quiet, starry night so long ago in Bethlehem. But we didn't, because Isaiah had left signs and prophecies so we would know the light when it came. Revelations, clues buried within his text told us of the greatness that was to come and prepared us to recognize it.

When Jesus himself declared, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.", it was a familiar echo of what Isaiah had declared 700 years before when he wrote, "Arise and shine for thy light has come."

John 8:12 ¶ Then spake Jesus ... (again unto them,) saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

And so for hundreds, even thousands of years Isaiah declared-testified and still declares-testifies to a dark and gloomy world of a clus today of that clear, bright, blazing everlasting light.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

Hallelujah Chorus – Whole Choir with organ and piano

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