

The Esterházy Chamber Choir, 11 December, 2004
St Bartholomew's Church, Brighton
Schutz: The Christmas Story

Introduction to the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ

Hear the birth of the Son of God, Christ Jesus
As for us the Evangelists, the evangelists in Holy Gospels, have
been told it all.

Evangelist

And, behold, it came to pass in those same days, that there went
out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the word enrol for
taxing. And this taxing was the first one and was made at the time
when Cyrenius was Governor in Syria and everyone went that he
might be recorded, each to the city where he dwelt.

Then also there went up Joseph who went from Galilee, up out of
Nazareth, to the city of David in Judaea, which is called
Bethlehem, (because he was of the lineage and house of David)
that there he might be enrolled along with Mary who was his wife
espoused, being great with child.

And, while they were staying there, came the time that she should
be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and
wrapped him round in swaddling, and laid the baby in a manger for
there was that night no room in the Inn for them.

And there were some shepherds abiding in the field in that same
country and softly keeping watch o'er their flocks by night. Behold,
then, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the
Lord shone all around, and they all were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them:

**The Angel to the Shepherds in the Field wherein is introduced
at times the rocking of the Christ Child's cradle**

'Be not afraid, see now, here I bring unto you tidings good, of great
joy. Joy to all people, lo, I bring unto you tidings good, of great joy.
This day to you the Saviour is born which is Christ, our Lord, born
in the city of David.

And this be a sign to you, the little babe ye shall find all wrapped
round in swaddling and lying in a manger.'

Evangelist

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly
host all praising God and saying:

Chorus of Angels

'Glory to God, God in the Highest, and to all men goodwill, peace
on earth, peace and goodwill.

Evangelist

And, as the angels were gone into heaven from them, there spoke
the shepherds one to another:

The Shepherds in the Field

'Let us even go now to Bethlehem, that we may see this wondrous
thing which there is come to pass, which the Lord God hath made
known to us.'

Evangelist

And they all came hurrying and found the two there, both Mary and
Joseph, and found the child in the manger lying. Then they made
known what they themselves had witnessed, spreading the tidings
abroad, the joyous tidings about the babe born in Bethlehem, and
all those that heard the word listened to it in wonder at all that was
told to them by the shepherds. But Mary kept to herself all the
words they said and remembered them to ponder in her heart.
And the shepherds now to their flocks returned, praising and
glorifying God for all the things they had seen and all they had
heard that day as it had all been foretold to them.

And, when eight days were accomplished for the infant's
circumcision, then was the name of the child called Jesus, which
name was given him by the angel before the day he was
conceived in his mother's womb.

Now when Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem, in the land of
Judaea, and in the reign of King Herod, lo, then, there came from
the East three wise men going to Jerusalem and saying:

The wise men from the East

'Where is the new born King of Israel for we have seen his star
before us and have journeyed, but to adore him.'

Evangelist

Now when King Herod was told these happenings, he trembled,
and with him trembled all of Jerusalem, and then he gathered all
the Scribes together and all the High Priests unto himself and
required of them to tell him where now the Christ child should have
his birthplace, and they said unto him:

High Priests and Scribes

'In Bethlehem, the city of David, for 'tis thus it was spoken by the
Prophet: 'And thou Bethlehem, thou city of David, surely shalt not

be the least of them, among the Princes of Israel. For from thee
there shall come forth a Ruler and he shall be a governor o'er
Israel.'

Evangelist

Then King Herod called the three wise men privily and with
diligence inquired of them when the star had shone before them
and bade them go to Bethlehem, and said:

Herod

'Now go forth, now go and seek him, go and seek me out the
Christ child, and when ye find him a message shall ye send me
that I may journey and may adore him.'

Evangelist

When the wise men heard what the King commanded forth then
they wen. Behold, then, the star which they had seen before them
in the East went on just ahead until it came and stood up above
them, where the Christ child la. When they beheld the star, they
were exceeding joyful and went into the house and saw there the
Christ child and saw Mary his mother, and straightway fell down
and worshipped on their knees and opened up their treasures
there, and gave to him gold, incense and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return
into the land of Herod, they departed and took another way back to
their own land.

And when the three wise men were departed, lo, then, there
appeared the angel of the Lord unto Joseph in a dream and said:

**The Angel to Joseph wherein again the rocking of the Christ
Child's cradle is introduced**

'Get thee up Joseph. Get thee up and take the child now and take
his mother with thee, and fly into Egypt's land. And be thou there
until I bring thee word, for it is upon thee that King Herod the child
is seeking, and he would dare destroy him.'

Evangelist

Then he arose and took the child and took the mother with him in
the night, and he fled into Egypt's land, and there he remained
until the death of King Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was
spoken of the Lord in the prophecy, which hath said: 'Lo, in Egypt's
land did I find my son and called him.'

Now when King Herod saw that the three wise men had mocked
him and mocked his commands he raged in fury and he sent forth
and had all the children of Bethlehem murdered and in all the
coasts thereof all those that were two years old and under, all
according to the time that he with diligence had learned from the
wise men.

Then, that was fulfilled what hath been spoken of by the prophet
Jeremiah, who hath said: 'High on the mountain there was heard a
voice lamenting with sighing, weeping and mourning, Rachel who
weepeth for all her children and will not let herself take comfort,
weeping because they are not.'

But when the death of King Herod came, lo, then, there appeared
the angel of the Lord to Joseph in a dream and said:

**The Angel to Joseph wherein once again the rocking of the
Christ Child's cradle is introduced**

'Get thee up Joseph, get thee up and take the Christ child and take
his mother with thee. And go forth now into Israel, for dead are all
they which before did seek to murder Jesus.'

Evangelist

And he arose and took the Christ child and took his mother with
him and came to the land of Israel. But when he had heard it told
that Archelaus was King in the land of Israel, in place of his father
King Herod, fear made him stop at going thither, and in a dream he
heard the command of God and turned then aside in to the places
of Galilee and came and made his abode in the town which is
called Nazareth, and thus fulfilled the sayings which had been
spoken by the Prophet:

'A Nazarene shall he be called.'

Lo, then, the child grew and was strong in spirit, filled with wisdom,
and on him was the grace of God.

Conclusion of the Birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ

'Now let us all thank thee God, God our Lord, Christ Jesus. Christ
Jesus who hath with his birth shone upon us and hath redeemed
his children by his Passion from the fires of Hell. Him shall we all
praise then with all his angels, praise him with music, singing
praised be God, God in the highest.'

Carols

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St Bartholomew's Church, Brighton

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled:
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King*

Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come
Offspring of a virgin's womb:
Veiled in flash the Godhead see,
Hail th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King*

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings;
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

*Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King*

C Wesley, T Whitefield, M Madan and others

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth;
For Christ is born of Mary;
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray:
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

Bp Phillips Brooks

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him
Born the King of Angels:

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

God of God,
Light of light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
Begotten not created:

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God
In the highest:

Tr. F. Oakeley, W. T. Brooke and others