

A Tribute to the Master

Choir: This is the Christ

Long before His birth in Bethlehem, Christ actively championed the cause of his Father, guiding the holy prophets of the Old Testament, revealing unto them the plan of salvation and the need for a Savior. The great prophet Abraham was commanded by an angel to sacrifice his beloved son. During the ensuing hours, he experienced a small token of the forthcoming sacrifice to be made by our Heavenly Father. The captured ram rescued him and alleviated a complete understanding of the gift of the Father at Calvary. The Old Testament is replete with prophecies of the coming Messiah. No prophet is more known for his Messianic messages than Isaiah who said, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel."

In due time, an angel of the Lord visited a virgin by the name of Mary. The angelic characteristics possessed by Mary qualified her for her role as the mother of the Savior. She faithfully accepted her role without hesitation responding to the Angel Gabriel, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word."

"And it came to pass in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed". Joseph and Mary traveled to Jerusalem to the city of Bethlehem. After the long trip, slowed by his careful attention to Mary, no vacancy could be found. Joseph's pleading with the innkeepers accomplished nothing and with a great sense of discouragement the tired couple retired to the lowly stable. "And so it was that while they were there the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn."

Choir: Angels We Have Heard on High

Organ Solo: Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Narrator: Christ's divine parentage provided him not only the tutelage of loving earthly parents but the guidance of the all-knowing Father. At a tender age, Christ was found in the temple with the doctors and priests. They marveled at the simplicity of His divine answers. Even the most learned of his day were amazed at the completeness of his teaching. His incredible knowledge of the scriptures was only surpassed by his understanding of the heart. The depths of his sympathy, his compassion, his mercy and his love became apparent immediately in His ministry. Obedience to the commandments was absolute, evidenced by his travels to find Elias, the man they called John the Baptist, to be baptized of him, even though he was without sin.

Choir: Here I Am, Lord

Narrator: As we truly ponder the scriptures, we can perhaps gain a small appreciation of the love that Jesus had for the downtrodden. Think with me of the lepers of his day. Relegated as outcasts, they were required to unite with whole colonies that had been shunned from society. Can we even imagine the feelings in the hearts of the cleansed lepers? No longer would they be separated from their families or their souls be scarred by shouts of unclean. Or think with me of the blind who had never known the beauty of this great earth. As Christ lifted the scales from their eyes, their first gaze was of the healer from Galilee. The tenderness and sureness of His

hands left little doubt of His power and with great gratitude they received the miracles of his love.

Solo: His Hands

Choir: Consider the Lilies of the Field

Narrator: Through parables and example, the Savior beckoned all to reach out to the prodigal. He championed the Samaritan. His short ministry was replete with examples of His love towards our Heavenly Father and all of God's children. Tender moments with his followers exhibited that love. He could not bear the thought of leaving the hungry five thousand, feeding them not only with bread and fishes, but also with the love of God. His love for the family of Lazarus drew Him to the tomb, where the dead man was raised. Never before had men beheld such a Man. He calmed the raging sea, made wine from water and expelled demons from the lunatic. The lame were made to walk, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Choir: The Pilgrim Song

Narrator: Notwithstanding the great importance of miracles and love exhibited by the Savior during the majority of his ministry, Christ's greatest love for each of us came during the final days of His mortal existence. With a few of His trusted apostles, He retired to the Garden of Gethsemane. After several pleas for deliverance, Christ prayed alone, atoning for the transgressions, understanding the weaknesses and the afflictions of all mankind. Luke records, "And being in agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

Solo: The Lord's Prayer

Choir: I Stand All Amazed

Narrator: As the emotional and physically exhausting garden experience ended, the Savior was met by Judas and the soldiers. His evening arrest was illegal. A trial of lies and hatred ended in a verdict of guilty. Pilate would not reject the voice of the people and the penalty of crucifixion was decided by the crowd. They mocked Him, scourged Him, spat upon Him and crowned his head with plated thorns. His weakened body could not bear the weight of the beam of the cross. A follower from the crowd was beckoned to carry the tool of punishment. At Golgotha, cruelly positioned spikes tore through tender nerves creating intense pain and a slow death. A cry from the central cross rent the thickening air, "Eloi, Eloi lama sabacthani". For a small moment the Savior was alone, finishing the infinite sacrifice. And the heavens wept.

Small Group: Lonesome Valley

Narrator: As the dawn approached, Mary Magdalene and other faithful women set out for the tomb to properly anoint the body of Jesus. Blinded by grief, the women failed to fully recognize the angel's announcement of the resurrection. Alone again, the sorrowful Magdalene sought comfort at the tomb. Turning from the vault, a presence in the garden became evident. His query of her sorrow provided the opportunity to request the body of her Lord. "Sir, if thou has born Him hence, tell me where thou has laid and I will take Him away". It was Jesus to whom she spoke thou she knew it not. The tenderness of His tone immediately captured her attention, rescuing her from the despairing depths of her soul. She turned and saw the Lord. Every fiber of Mary's body and soul rejoiced at His call as she realized the reality of the resurrection.

Duet: Did Jesus Really Live Again?

Choir: Christ the Lord is Risen Today

Narrator: Mary's reunion with Christ exemplifies the experience that we all can have. "Behold I stand at the door and knock, and if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me." The invitation is not hollow. You and I must invite Christ into our lives, into our hearts and into our souls.

Choir: Come, Let Us Anew

Narrator: Prophetic passages in the New Testament foretell of the Savior's Second Coming. We must not forget the promise of the Messiah to return. As we align our lives with His commandments, we can better understand the love of Jesus Christ. We as believers of the Holy One must seek constantly to have His name upon our hearts and His countenance upon our souls as we prepare for the joyous day of His promised return.

Choir: Joy in the Morning

Narrator: The choir that has performed this evening has shared angelic talents that have provided a vehicle for the Spirit of Truth to speak to our souls. Hopefully you have had feelings that have made you want to be a better person, a better friend, a better father, mother, husband, or wife; a better follower of Christ. Unitedly, we testify of the reality of our elder Brother, Jesus Christ. As we conclude with one final song of praise, we recognize the Holy One as our Advocate with the Father, the Lamb of God, and the Prince of Peace. We will remember the depths of His sacrifice for us, but more importantly we will rejoice in the spiritual and physical victories of the Savior. His life was one of peace, hope, love and salvation. He is the fount of every blessing, and His Atonement provides each of us with the possibilities of exaltation in the Kingdom of the Father. May our hearts sing praises to our King!

Choir: Come Thou Fount