

Glad Tidings

Narration

(adapted and paraphrased by Charles Hausmann)

(all entrances cued by conductor:)

1. The Journey to Bethlehem

Two thousand years ago, when the Great Roman Empire was ruled by Caesar Augustus, a decree was proclaimed:

“All shall be enrolled as part of a general census.”

Heeding this directive, Joseph and Mary, who were expecting a child, traveled to the city of David to be enrolled. The city was known as – Bethlehem.

2. The Birth of Jesus

It was there in Bethlehem, on a cold winter night, that Mary and Joseph, unable to find lodging, were given a place to rest in a lowly stable.

During that holiest of nights, Mary gave birth to the one who was to be called Jesus.

3. The Shepherds

The great news of this holy birth was proclaimed by the angel Gabriel. With mystery and wonder, this heavenly announcement was not given to ruler, priests or the multitudes; instead, it was given to humble shepherds watching their flocks in nearby fields.

The good news of great joy was suddenly accompanied by a multitude of angels, singing:

“Glory to God in the highest and, on earth, peace to people of goodwill everywhere.”

4. The Wise Men

Hearing of the birth of Jesus, three wise men came quickly to Jerusalem. There were guided on their journey by an unusual star burning brightly in the east, which they knew would lead them to the child. They brought with them gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

5. The Nativity

In that humble place where hope was born, there gathered such an array of worshipers as never seen before.

With Mary and Joseph and a host of angels looking on, simple shepherds together with wise men from far away places, surrounded by common animals of the stable, presented their own gifts to the Child, while all stood in heartfelt adoration over the one who would come to represent all that is good in people everywhere.

6. One Solitary Life

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in still another village, where he worked in a carpentry shop until he was thirty. Then, for three years he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He did none of the things one usually associates with greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross, between two thieves.

While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is considered by many to be the central figure of the human race and the leader of mankind's progress.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one, solitary, life.

7. Peace and Goodwill

It is our hope that the wonder, mystery and joy of the Christmas story continue to warm your heart, and that all of us will once again be inspired to bring our own peace and goodwill to people everywhere, from this day forward through the new year.