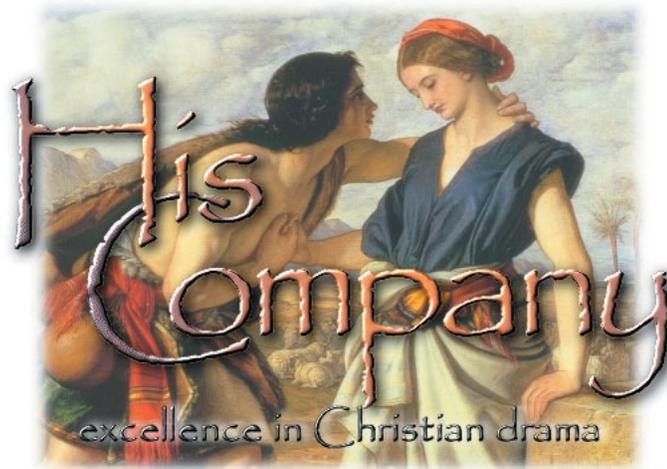


THERE'S ROOM IN MY HEART

A CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

by
David S. Lampel



AUTHOR'S NOTE

This play requires three separate areas of the stage—none of which need be very large.

The first area is for the “Leader” (and Choir), who, in modern dress, represents the standpoint and perspective of today. He or she stands in our own time and speaks for modern man.

The second area is for the two mysterious Visitors who stand outside of time. They may be angels, or some other sort of supernatural being. We don't really know. But they need to be isolated physically from the other two areas—ideally, higher, such as in an organ speaker chamber or high baptistry. In the original production, each Visitor was set in one of two high organ chambers—one on either side of the stage. They stood behind fabric screens with their faces (only) carefully lit by spots situated within the organ chambers. With the rest of the organ chamber black, and the Visitor dressed in black except for the head, this left them invisible to the audience when house or normal stage lights were up. But when these lights were out, and the organ chamber lights up, their seemingly disembodied heads became visible to the audience. If two matching areas such as this are not available, the two Visitors could be placed together in one space.

The third area is for the drama, and can be any portion of the stage that is clearly set apart from the other two.

Lighting is important to this production. The drama needs to be lighted as you would any play and requires blackouts. The “Visitors” require dark, mysterious lighting and black backgrounds so that, ideally, they are simply bodiless faces looking out of the darkness. If the director decides against a dark setting for the Visitors, it is still important that whatever the treatment, they remain mysterious, and set out of time. Smooth transitions (crossfades) are needed between the three areas.

SET & WARDROBE

The Leader needs no set—except that he or she may be supplied a stool to sit on during the dramatic scenes—and should be dressed comfortably modern, such as “business casual.” [Note: Even when not “on,” the Leader should remain in character, watching the scenes being played out for his or her benefit.]

The Visitors (depending on the director's approach) need no set, and should be shrouded in black, leaving only the head exposed.

The drama set consists of the interior of the front room of the Bethlehem inn, with a window in one wall and a door that opens out onto the main street. Set pieces within the interior are left to the director's discretion.

CHARACTERS

The musical opens with **the Leader**, who is a combination worship leader, narrator, and character. More than that, he or she represents believing, contemporary humanity—with all its faith and doubts, joy and cynicism. This person has a strong, yet comfortable stage presence that flows easily from speaking to the audience, to speaking for them. Though this person is a narrator, as it were, he or she remains in character throughout, as someone paying attention to the scenes being played out.

Two characters who set this play apart from the rest are the mysterious **Visitors**. It is left to the imagination of the director to specify—if he or she so chooses—just what these beings are. They may be angels; they may not. It doesn't really matter. They are simply two supernatural beings that stand astride time—able to dwell in the present, as well as to conjure up the past and see into the future.

Simon, the innkeeper, is the disturbing picture of today's upwardly mobile, self-absorbed, Type A individual. While he does love his family, his behavior rarely shows it. His true passion is for the game and challenge of making profit, and he is mostly blind to his failings. In spite of these, Simon is lovably obnoxious; he is a good man misguided.

Simon's wife, **Joanna**, is the calm amidst her husband's storm. She is obedient when it comes to helping run the inn, but she is still opinionated, and always ready to point out her husband's failings.

Their son, **Nathanael**, is a good and dutiful son of around 12 years of age whose real goal in life is to please his father.

Eliezer, their next-door neighbor, is an older man of solid reputation. In contrast to his friend Simon, he has not given up on the promises of the God of their fathers.

With house lights still up, lights up on Leader.

PROGRAM MUSIC

55

Leader

Welcome. We have gathered tonight to remember and rejoice in the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Let's welcome Him to this gathering. Lord...

60

SONG: COME TO MY HEART, LORD JESUS

Leader

65

Long ago the Son of God left His heavenly peace to bring that peace down to man. He who created the world emptied Himself of all privilege, took on the likeness of men, and came to them—came as a baby, with open arms filled with love. He came to dwell in their hearts—those hearts that would have Him. And from that one, glorious day, until this day, He has known rejection as men and women have shut their hearts to Him.

(pause)

70

Long ago the prophets proclaimed His coming. They painted word-portraits of the Savior so that the people would clearly know the day of His arrival. Isaiah said it best:

75

“Arise, shine; for your light has come. And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.”

SONG: ARISE, SHINE!

80

Leader

What a wonderful thought: That the glory of the Lord has come, and is now shining on us.

(pause)

85

But I wonder if we see that light? The light of Jesus Christ rarely penetrates the smog of our humanity. Our world today is filled with the tarnished light of our own brilliance. And never more so than during this festive time of year. Plastic Santas and aluminum trees greet us in every shop of the mall—

Visitor #1

90

(a disembodied voice)

And do you think it was so different back then?

Leader

Back when?

(pause)

95

Who said that?

Lights up on Visitors.

Visitor #1

Back when Jesus came to this world for the first time.

100

Leader

They had shopping malls in 6 BC?

Visitor #1

(impatiently)

105

No. But people were just as preoccupied with their own problems and the distractions of living. In those days the people, too, had little time for “peace, and goodwill toward men.”

Leader

But they didn't have the incredible pressures we have. Business deals and deadlines and mortgages...

110

Visitor #1

Oh really.

Lights down on stage; up only on Visitors.

115

Visitor #2

Bethlehem was a small, inconspicuous town lying just short of a day's journey south of the city of Jerusalem. It was a sleepy little village, tucked away and forgotten by most; nothing flashy, a bit disheveled.

Visitor #1

120

Few people ever visited by choice. Time and trends had passed it by, disregarded and even held in contempt by some—until one day the mighty despot called for a census to be taken of all the people in all his conquered lands.

Visitor #2

125

In the village was a small inn, unimpressive and tattered, worn down by time, home for the village innkeeper and his wife and son.

Visitor #1

130

From the large room facing the street they conducted their business. This room more than any other was home for the innkeeper as he welcomed new guests and dispensed with the old.

Visitor #2

The mighty despot was Caesar Augustus; and the village innkeeper was called Simon.

Lights transition from Visitors to Drama.

135

Enter Simon, an Innkeeper of Bethlehem. He has been frantically scurrying about for days because of the Roman Census. While he continues his grumbling about the hated Romans, he has no complaints about the money he has been raking in from their Census. Enter his wife, Joanna, right behind him.

140

Simon

Where is that boy? I sent him an hour ago.

Joanna

Should I go look for him?

145

Simon

No time! No time! Get back upstairs and see if anyone is ready to leave.

Joanna

But what difference does it make? If the room's occupied, why look for another?

150

Simon

(taking her quickly down stage; secretively)

Sssshh...! Each time one leaves I raise the rate! We're making a killing off this census.

Joanna

155

(shocked)

But Simon—that's dishonest!

Simon

Listen, those filthy Romans have been bleeding us for every denarius. If they hand me a chance to make some of it back, well, I'm going to take it.

160

Joanna

But it's our people you're taking it from.

Simon

(failing a rejoinder; turning away)

Where is that boy? He should have been back long ago.

165

Joanna

He may have stopped to see one of his friends. You've been working him awfully hard these last few days.

Simon

Much to be done.

170

Joanna

You worry me, Simon. I've never seen you like this.

Simon

(impatiently; wishing she would get busy)

Must I do everything around here?

175

Joanna

(firmly)

Now you just sit down here and take a break. The world won't pass you by if you rest for a moment.

Simon

(reluctantly sitting)

180

Why do you fight me so? It's all for the family.

Joanna

But this isn't my husband: running around, squeezing every drop of profit from his neighbors—

185

Simon

They're not our neighbors. These people are coming all the way down from Galilee. We aren't the ones forcing them to stay in our town.

Joanna

But we don't have to cheat them.

190

Simon

And where's the difference? When the harvest is poor, the price of wheat is high; when the harvest is good, the price is lower. Simple economics, Joanna. The law of the marketplace.

Joanna

195

So tell me, my husband the banker, why is it your harvest is good and your prices remain high?

Simon

(once again, without rejoinder)

Where is that boy?

200

Joanna

Ugh huh.

Enter their son Nathanael, with their neighbor, Eliezer. Nathanael is carrying a basket of bread.

205

Eliezer

(generously)

I had to return with Nathanael, to compliment his father on his son's bargaining skills. Quite amazing in one so young.

(with a twinkle)

210

I wonder where he learned them.

Nathanael hands the basket of bread to his mother, but speaks to his father.

Nathanael

(proudly)

215

I did good, papa.

Simon

And what did Eliezer's fine bread cost us today?

Nathanael

Only three shekels.

220

Simon

Three shekels! Why, that's robbery! I would have paid no more than two.

(to Eliezer)

Why such a high price to your neighbor?

Eliezer

(innocently)

225

Many new customers in town. My poor wife is kept busy with the orders.

Simon

So with all the orders you can afford to lower the price.

Eliezer

230

This census won't last forever.

Simon

(stepping closer to Eliezer)

No, but your greed probably will.

235 **Joanna**
(quickly intervening)

Stop it you two!

(sarcastically)

Simon, what is one shekel when the harvest is good? It's the law of the marketplace—simple economics.

240 **Nathanael**
(contritely)

It's good bread, papa.

Simon
(affectionately, but with some reluctance; embarrassed by the truth)
245 You made a good bargain, son. I couldn't have done better myself. Now go help your mother put the bread away.

Joanna and Nathanael exit.

250 **Eliezer**
He's a good boy, Simon.

Simon
The God of Abraham has been generous. Now if He would just see to these filthy Romans.

(with great bitterness)
255 They stain this land with the blood of our own people. They count our heads like sheep, so they can gouge us for more taxes.

Eliezer
And make you rich in the bargain.

Simon
260 If the Lord of Israel will turn His back on our sorrow, then we'll have to survive on our own.

Eliezer
You have no patience, Simon.

265 **Simon**
 Patience will get us killed.

Eliezer
(chiding)
 No one is getting killed.

270 **Simon**
 No—but the Roman taxes bleed us dry.

Eliezer
(firmly)
 Messiah. Messiah will come.

275 **Simon**
 Sure. Here we go with all the old prophecies. How many years? How long
 must we wait for our Messiah?

Eliezer
 There is no peace for one so angry with God.

280 **Simon**
(emphatically)
 The Romans are systematically taking everything from us—

Eliezer
 Everything but our faith.

285 *(with a sigh)*
 But I see they have now taken that from you, Simon.

Simon
 What good is a prophet's story of a Savior when people are in chains?
 What do we tell our children when they ask about Messiah? How do we
 290 cover up the reality of today?

Cue Trax

295

Eliezer

The Lord heard our fathers in Egypt; He hears us, too. Today's reality leads us to our God—not away from Him.

Simon

(with mild contempt)

300

The Romans have weakened you.

Eliezer

(firmly)

No. They have strengthened my faith.

305

(pause)

The Lord will choose the day of Messiah. It will not be the Romans and it will not be us who choose. Simon, it is your faith that has been weakened by the decrees of a Caesar. Our God is God! He is the God who led our fathers out of Egyptian slavery—and He is the God who will deliver us from our bondage.

310

SONG: BEHOLD YOUR GOD

Visitor #2

315 That night, after the evening meal, two weary travelers knocked at the
closed door of the Bethlehem inn. It had been a full day for Simon—so he
sent his wife to answer.

Simon

Tell them we're full up! And that they've got a lot of nerve even trying at
this late hour.

320 **Joanna**

(at the door; speaking to someone the audience cannot see)

I'm sorry, but we have no more room.

(pause, looking at them)

One moment.

325 *(closing the door; to Simon)*

Simon, she's pregnant. We must find a room for them.

Simon

(emphatically)

There's not one room left.

330 **Joanna**

(opening the door; to their visitors)

I'm sorry. Maybe there will be something tomorrow.

(she listens)

Excuse me.

335 *(closing the door; to Simon)*

Where is your heart? Surely we have something for them.

Simon

How else can I say it? No room!

(pause)

340 Unless...

Joanna

Unless they can pay extra, right?

Simon

I can be... persuaded, by certain—

345

Joanna

(disgusted with her husband)

I can see that these people have no money—and the woman is near her time.

Simon

350

(bombastically)

Charity! Always charity. This is a business—not a charity. People give us money, and we give them a room for the night.

(sarcastically)

Do you see how it works?

355

Joanna

(angry)

All I see is your empty heart.

(opening the door as she grabs a lamp)

Come with me. I'll put you up in the stable tonight. At least you'll be

360

warm.

Cue Trax

365

As Joanna exits, Simon returns to what he had been doing, with a satisfied smirk on his face. But as he looks around the empty room his smug attitude turns to an uneasy loneliness, as Trax begin. Lights stay up on Simon during song, then fade slowly as song ends.

SONG: NO ROOM

Visitor #1

Poor Simon. How important he has become to himself.

370

Visitor #2

He keeps the walls of his life very close, doesn't he.

Woman from Choir

(to the Visitors)

Was that Mary—and Joseph?

375

Visitor #2

It's about to happen.

Woman from Choir

They seem so very much alone.

Visitor #1

380

This is a great and terrible thing happening to them. But soon He will be born.

Woman from Choir

Is Mary well?

Cue Trax

385

Visitor #2

She is young, but strong. God's hand is upon her.

Woman from Choir

390

How can she bear the wonder of it all? How could any woman? To give birth to the Son of God!

Visitor #1

Is there so much difference? Is not the hand of God in every birth. Is not the wonder of God in every new life.

Woman from Choir

395

I'm not sure I could have her faith.

Visitor #2

She loves her God enough to obey Him—to become His servant.

Visitor #1

400 She opened the door of her heart.

Woman from Choir

And He walked right in.

Visitor #2

There's the wonder.

405 **Woman from Choir**

(Mary soloist)

Maybe I do know Mary. Maybe I do know the wonder inside her. When my _____ was born, I too could sense the power and wonder of God. As my first born took shape within me—as my life gave him life, my heart sang praise to a God who would so bless me. Me! There was nothing so special about me; I was just allowing God to work His will through me—into a new life.

410

SONG: MARY'S SONG

Cue Trax (for THOU SHALT CALL/THEN HE CAME)

415

Visitor #2

(with a sigh)

But Joseph was another matter.

Visitor #1

420

Oh my, yes.

Woman from Choir

(Mary soloist)

Why do you say that?

Man from Choir

(Joseph soloist to Mary soloist)

425

Well for one thing, he was a man.

Woman from Choir

(with mild sarcasm)

Really.

430

Man from Choir

All he got were explanations. For Mary it was happening inside her—she could feel the power of God in her.

Visitor #1

Joseph was running on pure faith and trust—

435

Visitor #2

—and obedience.

Visitor #1

The Holy Spirit had permeated the heart of Mary.

Man from Choir

(Joseph soloist)

440

But Joseph was left with a greater helping of his own logic.

Visitor #2

(wryly)

A dangerous habit for humans.

445

Man from Choir

I have to hand it to Joseph—he had a lot of pressures from society to do just about anything but what he did. He must have been very confused at times—to wonder why God would put him in such a position.

SONG: THOU SHALT CALL/THEN HE CAME

450

Visitor #1

(during Interlude, p.34)

Yes, Joseph had his moments of doubt and confusion.

Visitor #2

455

Most humans would.

Visitor #1

But then it was time for Jesus to be born. And the heart of Joseph could only open to receive the love God was pouring into his life.

SONG: THOU SHALT CALL/THEN HE CAME (CONTINUES)

460

Lights up on Drama as Simon enters.

Simon

(shouting overhead)

465 —and hold it down up there! You born in a barn?

Nathanael

(entering excitedly)

Father, they're asking for more wine. And there is no more.

Simon

(thinking)

470 Well, try at Saul's house. Maybe they have some to spare. And hurry,
(sarcastically)
can't keep our guests waiting. Oh yes, if you run into your mother, tell her
I would appreciate her help one of these days.

475 *Enter Eliezer, excited and slightly out of breath, as Nathanael exits.*

Eliezer

Simon, this is a most curious night—a most curious night.

480 **Simon**

What's the matter, your wife run out of flour? Don't come crying to me.

Eliezer

Can't you feel the excitement in the air?

Simon

485 The only thing I feel in the air is the breath of two drunken soldiers in one
of my rooms.

Eliezer

(uneasily)

Soldiers?

490

Simon

It's not bad enough they have to push us around in the streets. Now they're staying in my own house!

495

Eliezer

They're camped outside town; what are they doing in here?

Simon

They've brought more soldiers in because of the census. They ran out of officer billets, so I'm stuck with them for the night.

500

Eliezer

(turning quickly to go)

Then I'll be on my way.

Simon

(stopping him)

505

Wait a minute.

Eliezer

I'm not hanging around with them in here.

Simon

They're too drunk to bother with us. What did you come here for?

510

Eliezer

(relaxing)

Don't you know what's going on out there?

Simon

Somebody has to stay here and see to business. Joanna took off with two customers more than an hour ago and never came back!

515

Eliezer

Practically the whole town is out in the streets. There's something magical going on out there.

Simon

(taking his friend by the arms, with mock solemnity)

520

It's been a rough day. You've been working too hard, Eliezer.

Eliezer

(dismissively)

Don't be silly.

525

Simon

Listen, I've been thinking about what you said before—about the Messiah—and, you're right.

Eliezer registers shock.

530

Simon

(continuing)

No, I mean it. A Jew is just another man without his faith. We must be united against our common enemy—and in our hope for the Redeemer.

535

Eliezer

(with amazement)

This is a magical night.

Simon

I'm just bullheaded, Eliezer.

540

(glancing up)

He made me that way.

(pause)

He understands.

Eliezer

545

Come with me outside.

Simon

I'll stay for any new customers.

Eliezer

(gently pleading)

550

Simon...

Simon

You could find Joanna for me, though. It's time she was in for the night.

Eliezer

All right, my friend.

555

Eliezer exits.

Simon

(to himself; moving to and looking out the window)

560

Is there a full moon tonight?

SONG: SHEPHERDS BESIDE THEMSELVES

Joanna

(bursting in with great excitement)

Simon! The most marvelous thing has happened!

565

Simon

I expected you hours ago.

Joanna

He's here! He's finally come!

Simon

(pouting)

570

I've been here all by myself, you know—and with two Roman soldiers overhead.

Joanna

(more firmly)

575

Simon! Messiah! Messiah has come!

Simon

Not you too. Have you been talking to Eliezer?

Joanna

I've been at the stable, with Joseph and Mary—those are their names.

580

Simon

Who?

Joanna

Mary and Joseph—the couple I took to the stable because you said we had no more room.

585

(pause)

What soldiers?

Simon

The two passed out upstairs.

Joanna

590 Oh, I see how it is. A nice couple about to have a baby and there's no room. Two soldiers of the state and suddenly there's a vacancy.

Simon

They had swords, you know.

Joanna

595 Simon, listen to me. There are miracles taking place in our stable and you're still worried about business.

Simon

600 Fine. Next time you can tell the soldiers we have no accommodations. Until Messiah comes and does away with these Romans, we have to play by their rules.

Joanna

(exasperated)

But He has! And in our stable!

Simon

605 Who?

Joanna

(getting very frustrated)

The baby! He's the one!

Simon

610 *(you've got to be kidding)*

The Messiah? Come on...

Joanna

615 If you'd ever get your nose out of your accounts receivable you might notice what's going on around you! The Redeemer of our people has just been born under your roof—and all you can feel is the weight of Roman oppression.

(taking his hand)

Come with me, and see the future in a baby's eyes.

620

Simon

A baby? You're putting a baby up against the power of Rome?

Joanna

(seriously)

For this baby, Caesar himself would be no challenge.

625

Simon

You're talking nonsense.

Joanna

All right. You stay here and live with a past that's already passed you by. I choose the hope resting in that manger.

630

Simon

(wanting to go, but afraid to give in)

What can be so special about a little baby?

Joanna

(seriously; with intensity)

635

Only that he was announced by the angels of heaven, and people from all corners are coming to worship him.

(with wonder)

Strangers are coming to worship this little baby—and for the first time I can see God smiling on the world.

640

Cue Trax

They exit together.

SONG: GLORY TO GOD

645 *Cue Trax (for I Have Seen the King)*

Visitor #2

And finally the wise men came to give him honor. Visitors from faraway lands, they sought the one announced by the glory of heaven.

650

Visitor #1

They came with their gifts: Gold, Frankincense, Myrrh.. But the greatest gift they brought was their worship. Before all, they acknowledged that this was indeed the Messiah—the Son of God.

655

Visitor #2

And once again, Jesus Christ entered the hearts of men. Those who earlier had worshipped the charts of stars and crystal balls, opened their hearts to the child of the Holy Spirit.

Visitor #1

660

They now worshipped the Savior—incarnate God—and their lives would forever be changed.

SONG: I HAVE SEEN THE KING

Enter Simon, thoughtfully.

Simon

665

(with a slow, deliberate pace; to himself)

Have I seen Messiah? Could this little child be the One? He's so small for a king. But they say He is. The shepherds say this child is the Savior—the Christ. How can it be? How can one so small solve the problems of such a big world? Forget the world—solve my problems! What can He do for me?

670

(pause; troubled)

And why is He still in my mind?

Enter Joanna.

675

Simon

(to Joanna)

You knew all along.

Joanna

680

I told you, Simon.

Simon

(distantly; more to himself)

But no one speaks more clearly than the Savior Himself.

(surprised at himself for saying "Savior")

685

Listen to me! He's just a baby!

Joanna

No! He's so much more. You heard the shepherds—you saw the star—you can feel God's presence in that child. Why do you still resist?

Simon

(blurting out)

690

Because I can't bear the thought that it's going to be that easy!

Joanna

For what?

Simon

695 *(expansively)*

I wanted God to sweep his arm down and wipe my enemies off the face of the earth! I wanted Him to send a bellowing king to conquer the Romans and lift us to the power we once knew!

(quieter; after taking a breath)

700 I wanted God to send a comforting wind that would, somehow, change my life.

Joanna

(softly)

I think He has.

705 *(pause)*

We don't see it—we can't. We can't see what that baby will become. But Simon, there is a wind, and it's blowing through Bethlehem tonight. And you've felt it—you can already feel the change taking place.

Simon

710 *(seriously)*

Yes. And it frightens me.

Joanna

It's what you've been looking for all along.

Simon

715 *(thoughtfully)*

I can feel the old ways slipping away. And it frightens me.

Joanna

720 We so easily cling to our imperfections. But I think what you're feeling—what we're both feeling—is the redemption of that child entering our hearts.

Simon

Well, if that's what it is—there're a lot of layers to get through.

Joanna

But you can feel it.

725

Simon*(after a moment; thoughtfully)*

730

In the stable, when I looked down into that bed of straw, I looked into His eyes, and it was the most amazing thing. I remember when Nathanael was just born—his eyes seemed to be a blank slate, waiting for something to be written there. But when I looked at that child in the straw, He looked right back at me—right into my eyes! It was almost as if He were speaking to me. I know it sounds ridiculous, but, it was like looking into... eternity itself. And it was then.

735

(pause; working through it)

He became a part of me. Suddenly, all the other things became very small—all the pressures, the problems, all the burdens of living became, well, livable. Because of Him.

(almost whispering)

Because of Him.

740

SONG: THE ANGELS REJOICE

INVITATION by the Pastor, followed by Instrumental version of...

SONG: COME TO MY HEART, LORD JESUS (WITH AUDIENCE)

Then SEQUE by Pastor into...

745

SONG: A GREAT JOY

OVERTURE ("Going Home" Music)

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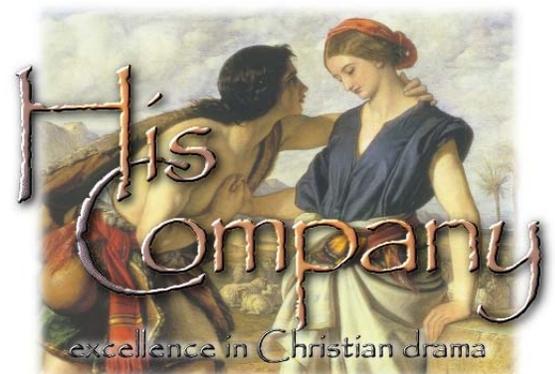
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But if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, and you would like to contribute to this work, we want you to know that your gift will be very much appreciated, and will be put to work covering our expenses. To express our appreciation, we have prepared some special “thank-you” gifts for those who contribute. Visit our *Contribution Page*, at [HTTP://DLAMPEL.COM/CONTRIB.PHP](http://DLAMPEL.COM/CONTRIB.PHP), for details.

Upholding Your Performance

We would like to hear from you when performances of this His Company script have been scheduled, so that we (and others) can be lifting you and your production up to the throne in prayer. Post as much information as you can about your production at our *Support Center* ([HTTP://DLAMPEL.COM/SUPPORT/](http://DLAMPEL.COM/SUPPORT/))—and may the Lord use this resource for His glory.



His Company logo illustration: *Jacob and Rachel*, by William Dyce
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