

God showed up to the shepherd's JOB

Shepherds have been primarily lower class and often poor and uneducated throughout history. In a family, shepherding was usually done by the youngest son or hired out by owners that could afford it. Bethlehem was a rural town five miles from Jerusalem with open fields for grazing sheep. Though shepherds graze sheep any time of year, because of winter storms, most would put them in pens near the towns after October. As these were in the open fields at night, Jesus' birth may have been in the summer or early fall. *God can show up and show out at any time and place in our lives!* The shepherds were watching over their animals by taking three-hour shifts to protect them overnight. Then, an angel descended and terrified the shepherds with his presence (Gr. *megas phobos*; 'feared with massive fear'). *God specializes in surprising and shocking us out of our complacency.* The angel told them that in King David's birthplace, the ultimate King had been born! God revealed the greatest news in history to illiterate, lower-class men with no social clout. *No one is unusable—God loves to do unexpected things with unexpected people in unexpected ways* (1 Cor. 1:26-30)!

God showed up to deliver the shepherds JOY

Once the angels told them the good news (Gr. *euaggelizō*, 'to declare good news') of God's salvation, the shepherds leave their animals and quickly run off to Bethlehem to find Jesus. *Humans are built to want to share great news!* After searching, they found the home of Joseph's relatives. Upon entering, they discover Jesus in an animal trough/manger in the lower part of the house as there was no space for them in the upper room (Gr. *kataluma*, 'guestroom, upper room', Mark 14:14; not *inn*, Luke 10:24). As it was odd for even a lower-class woman to lay her infant in an animal trough, the shepherds knew they had found the One the angels spoke of. *The greatest King came in the lowest way!* The shepherds tell Joseph and Mary and everyone in the house what they had heard from the angels and become the first people to declare the good news about salvation in Jesus! The shepherds had found the ultimate Shepherd and went back to their old job full of new joy praising God. *While many things can produce temporary happiness in life, only God can provide permanent joy that lasts throughout life* (Ps. 16:11)!