

A painting of a night scene with shepherds and sheep under a starry sky. The sky is filled with a dense field of stars and constellations, rendered in shades of blue, white, and gold. Below the sky, a dark, silhouetted landscape shows several shepherds standing with their arms outstretched, looking up at the stars. In the foreground, a group of sheep is gathered, some looking towards the shepherds. The overall mood is one of awe and wonder.

December 23  
*wednesday*  
Luke 2:8-20

Seeing Shepherds | Daniel Bonnell | 2012-2015

What's a birth without an announcement? And who deserves the very best announcement ever made?

In ancient times (well, modern times too) royal births would spark great public celebration. But not that of Jesus. His announcement, while glorious, went to a very limited audience: certain shepherds outside town.

Not only did they represent poor working classes; these men were smelly, dirty, and mainly quite young. Certainly not in a mood for rejoicing: night is when predators prowl, when rustlers rustle. Indeed, when the heavenly messenger appeared, the shepherds were sorely afraid. I remember a young mom, an Iraq war veteran, who stood with me in that very same field outside Bethlehem, describing how night terror feels.

But their initial fear gave way to good news, amplified by celestial song. God was inviting these dirty, stinky fellows to come, see our Savior in (where else?) a feeding trough. As if the newborn was truly kin to them. As if he might be destined to become the greatest Shepherd of all. Or else, the Lamb of God....

**Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me. Bless thy little lamb tonight. In the darkness, be thou near me. Keep me safe till morning light. Amen.** *Pastor Ted Wright*