

The Shepherds

Mary and Joseph weren't the only ones awake that night. In the hills just up the road from Bethlehem, shepherds were camped out watching their sheep. Shepherds were busy day and night, keeping the sheep safe and making certain they didn't wander off.

Sheep were important to people in the Bible. God's Word says that David, Rachel, Moses, and Abraham were shepherds. Sheep provided wool for clothes, milk for refreshment, and meat for food. Their horns were even used as bottles.

The sheep on the Bethlehem hillside would likely be led a few miles away to Jerusalem to be sacrificed in the temple. God's Word says Jesus was like a sacrificed lamb. Just as the temple lambs were offered as a sign of cleansing the people of their sins, so Jesus was the Lamb of God who was offered as the final sacrifice for our sins. Jesus did that all when he died on the cross. Now we know our sins are forgiven.

Sometimes we are like sheep who wander away from the flock. That's why Jesus also calls himself the Good Shepherd. He means that he loves us and is always watching over us. Jesus is the best shepherd there is. That makes us happy!

God's Word says:

"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." John 10:14

