

Scandalous Witness

Scripture Reading — Luke 2:8-20

There were shepherds ... keeping watch over their flocks at night.

Luke 2:8

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Sometimes a familiar passage contains startling facts that have escaped our notice. The truly shocking words in this passage are these: "They spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child." The *shepherds* were the first to bear witness of Jesus' birth!

But, legally, shepherds *could not* bear witness about this event. By the very nature of their profession, shepherds were disqualified to serve as witnesses in a court of law. They were considered low-lives. Their witness would only be regarded as rumor or hearsay.

So why does God intentionally use shepherds as the first Christmas witnesses? Perhaps because it takes one to know one. Old Testament history didn't share the same view of shepherds as the first-century elite. Moses was a shepherd. So was David. Even more, God himself was known as the shepherd of Israel (Psalm 23)! And the Messiah born in Bethlehem? He would be a ruler who would shepherd God's people, Israel (Micah 5:4). Jesus would not be ashamed to identify himself as the good shepherd who gathers his sheep (John 10:14-16).

If you feel "sheepish" today about your life—if you are as lost as a sheep who can't find its way back home—then take special note of the shepherds' witness. The good shepherd is calling your name. Come to him and let him carry you on his shoulders (Luke 15:4-6).

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we sense the elation in the shepherds' voices. We enter into their joy. Come to us as the great Shepherd. Feed us and lead us in your pathways, we pray. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Seasons](#), [Christmas](#)

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