

**HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**  
**#3: I'll Be Homeless for Christmas**  
**December 16-19, 2006**

<sup>8</sup>And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." <sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." <sup>16</sup>So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

*Luke 2:8-20 TNIV*

Introduction: Like our own traditions and memories surrounding the celebration of Christmas, the story of Christ's birth is filled with references to "home." As we view the nativity through this lens, we can see that God always has a home for his people and his plans. The night that Jesus was born, shepherds "living out in the fields" were invited by an angel to come and worship. Oddly enough, these "homeless" men were the first to receive the Good News that God had come to make his home with humanity.

I. Homeless Shepherds

A. The Bible tells us that God loved to use shepherds to accomplish his purposes, including Abel (the first), Abraham, Rachel, Jacob/Israel, Moses, and David.

- B. Jesus spoke of himself as "the Good Shepherd . . . who lays down his life for his sheep."
- C. Psalm 23 famously speaks of God as our shepherd.
- D. The Hebrew people, God's chosen, were a loose confederation of Bedouin tribes without a home, until God led them to the Promised Land.
- E. God used shepherds, at least in part, because they were unattached to a homes and thus willing to follow.

II. Shepherds Living in the Fields

- A. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, there were of course shepherds abiding in the nearby fields "keeping watch over their fields by night."
- B. An angel of the Lord appeared to these shepherds and frightened them, though it is very possible that the angel appeared to whomever would pay attention.
- C. Perhaps others were busy tending to their homes and families, locked inside their houses, while the unattached shepherds were out in the open to hear.
- D. Whatever the case, it is significant that the shepherds were the first to receive the Good News that the Messiah was born in Bethlehem.
- E. The message here seems to be that God uses common people who are willing to come and worship.
- F. The shepherds came and worshiped, then went to tell others of Jesus' birth; they were the first evangelists.
- G. Then the shepherds returned to worship again.

III. Homeless Believers

- A. Jesus frequently taught that his home was not of this world, even though in Him God was demonstrating that His home was with us ("Immanuel," God with us).
- B. Jesus also taught us that our home was not to be found in this world, and those teachings are reiterated throughout the New Testament.
- C. In a very real sense, we are homeless in this world until we "go home" to Heaven for eternity.
- D. If we are too attached to "things" in this world, we will miss the angel's Christmas call to worship.

Conclusion: The Good Shepherd still seeks unattached people who are able to hear His call and follow Him. Our only home is always wherever God's heart is.