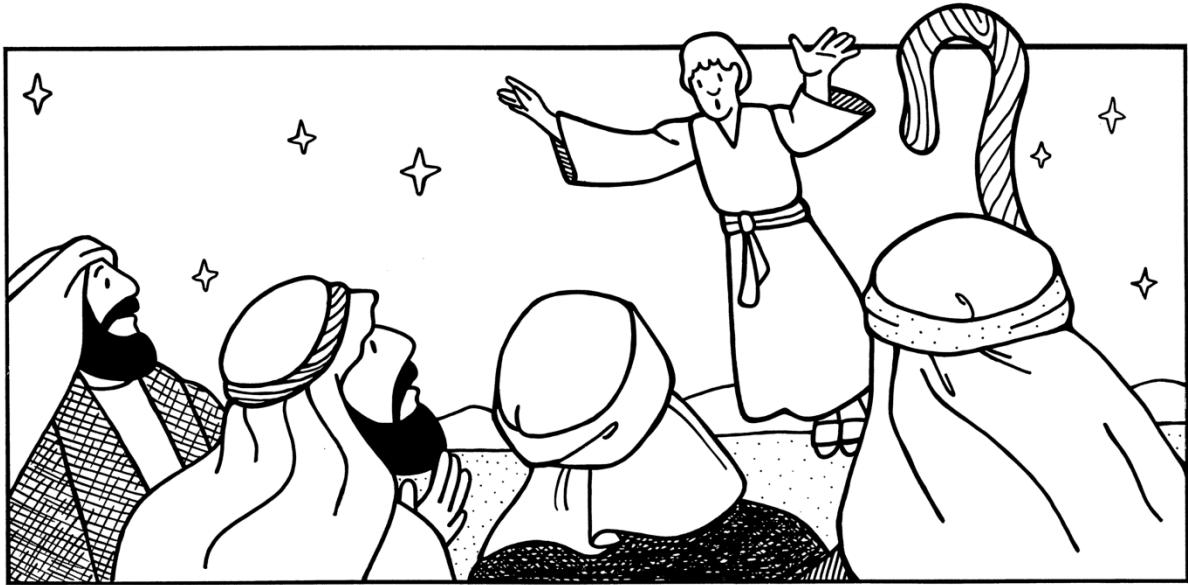


## SHEPHERDS VISIT THE MANGER

Luke 2:8-20



IT was a starry night. The little lambs were sleeping with their mother sheep. The shepherds were standing and sitting around the fire talking softly in the cool night air. It was very quiet and still.

As the shepherds watched the twinkling stars something wonderful happened. Suddenly, quickly the sky was just filled with a bright, bright light and there was an angel from Heaven. The light was so bright, it perhaps hurt the shepherds' eyes. It wasn't like any light they had ever seen before. They had never seen an angel before, either; and they were afraid.

Then the angel talked to the shepherds way out there in the hill near Bethlehem. The angel in the bright light said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

The shepherd men stood very still as the angel talked to them. They listened to every word. The angel said that a Baby was born, "You will find the Baby Jesus, and His mother Mary, and Joseph. The Baby is sleeping in the hay in a manger."

Quickly, again, even before the shepherds could say a word, they heard some beautiful, beautiful music coming from the sky. The whole big sky was filled with more, and more, and more angels. They were singing a beautiful song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The singing filled the air. None of the shepherds had ever heard such pretty singing. Only the angels could sing like that.

Now the light began to go away from the sky. It went away just a little more and a little more until the shepherds could hardly see it. The singing and the angels went away, too; the singing got softer and softer until it couldn't be heard at all. The light

was gone. The angels were gone; the music was all gone. It was just as dark and quiet and still as it was before the angels had come. The angels had gone back to Heaven.

“Something wonderful has happened,” said the shepherds to one another. “Let us go and find the Baby Jesus. We will go into the city of Bethlehem and find Him.” He was the Son of God — God’s little Boy.

Down the hillside the shepherds hurried in the cool night. They went along a little road looking for the stable where the Baby Jesus was sleeping.

There it is. Into the little stable quietly and lovingly went the shepherds. They knelt before the manger where the little Baby Jesus lay. They knelt to show Him how much they loved Him, just as we kneel today when we pray to Jesus. We do it to show Him how much we love Him.

After the shepherds had seen the Baby Jesus, they went back to the little lambs and sheep out on the hills near Bethlehem. They always remembered what they saw that night when Jesus was born. They never forgot the beautiful music and the angels from Heaven.

We are like the shepherds, a little. We don’t take care of any little lambs but we have been told again and again that Jesus is coming to earth. The shepherds knew He was coming someday too, but they didn’t know when. He came as a little Baby then. When Jesus comes back to us He will be the same Jesus. The Baby Jesus grew up and became tall and had a real kind face. He blessed the little children and healed the blind and they could see. He made the sick well and they became strong. The shepherds believed that Jesus would come. He did. We believe that Jesus will come back to get us. He will. We are looking for Him every day, just as they were looking for Him.

The angels came down from Heaven all of a sudden and talked to the shepherds. Jesus is coming down from Heaven someday, all of a sudden, and He will take all those who love Him and obey Him right into Heaven to live with Him.

We did not get to go to the stable that day to see little Baby Jesus, but we will see Jesus; when we go to Heaven we will see Mary and Joseph and the shepherds who loved Him.

How glad the owner of the stable must have felt to have the Baby Jesus come to the stable where the cows and sheep stayed! He did not know that Jesus was coming, but when Mary and Joseph found no other place he made room for them.

Jesus’ loving Spirit needs a home on earth today. Jesus’ love cannot live in a house as we do. There is only one place Jesus’ love can live, and that is in a heart. Is Jesus living in your heart?