

**Title: Stinky Shepherds - Luke 2 8-20**

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**Read:**

<sup>8-12</sup>There were shepherders camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger." <sup>13-14</sup>At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises: Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him. <sup>15-18</sup>As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherders were impressed. <sup>19-20</sup>Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherders returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!

**Think:**

Jesus starts as he means to go on. Jesus was never just interested in the posh people, Jesus always came for every single person on this earth. Shepherders were considered the low life's at the time Jesus was born. They were smelly and certainly couldn't read or write, they probably swore and spat and generally acted in an unpleasant way. Yet God choose them to announce the arrival of his Son on this earth. God sent an Angel to people that generally would not be listened to and said right now go and find him and then tell everyone. God has a habit of using people who don't think they have the skills to do important stuff. Look at Moses, another stuttering shepherd who God used to deliver his people. Or David a small shepherd boy who defeated the gigantic Goliath. And now we have the shepherders' announcing the arrival of the saviour of the World. If God can used the low of the low to do this important role of telling the world about Jesus. What's your excuse?

**Pray:**

Lord please give me the skills and confidence I need to tell my world about what Christ has done for me. Amen.

**Action:**

So who can you tell this week about Jesus? I'm not talking about beating them over the head until they commit. Just a one liner over a coke in the canteen, or a comment on a prayer that was answered. Can you commit and then go for it? Bye.

### Kings - Matthew 2 1-12

<sup>1-2</sup> After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory— this was during Herod's kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him."

<sup>3-4</sup> When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?" <sup>5-6</sup> They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly: It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land, no longer bringing up the rear. From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel." <sup>7-8</sup> Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship." <sup>9-10</sup> Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time! <sup>11</sup> They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh. <sup>12</sup> In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.

### Joseph Runs Away - Matthew 2 13-23

<sup>13</sup> After the scholars were gone, God's angel showed up again in Joseph's dream and commanded, "Get up. Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay until further notice. Herod is on the hunt for this child, and wants to kill him." <sup>14-15</sup> Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother under cover of darkness. They were out of town and well on their way by daylight. They lived in Egypt until Herod's death. This Egyptian exile fulfilled what Hosea had preached: "I called my son out of Egypt." <sup>16-18</sup> Herod, when he realized that the scholars had tricked him, flew into a rage. He commanded the murder of every little boy two years old and under who lived in Bethlehem and its surrounding hills. (He determined that age from information he'd gotten from the scholars.) That's when Jeremiah's sermon was fulfilled: A sound was heard in Ramah, weeping and much lament. Rachel weeping for her children, Rachel refusing all solace, Her children gone, dead and buried. <sup>19-20</sup> Later, when Herod died, God's angel appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt: "Up, take the child and his mother and return to Israel. All those out to murder the child are dead." <sup>21-23</sup> Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother, and reentered Israel. When he heard, though, that Archelaus had succeeded his father, Herod, as king in Judea, he was afraid to go there. But then Joseph was directed in a dream to go to the hills of Galilee. On arrival, he settled in the village of Nazareth. This move was a fulfillment of the prophetic words, "He shall be called a Nazarene."