

24 December : The Whole Story

Doors - Songs - Gifts - Lights

Three Pages

Long Version

Joseph encourages the donkey with a click of his tongue, he looks back now and again to comfort Mary, they are both too tired to speak. Is it possible, Mary wonders, to go to sleep on the back of a donkey and not fall off? She peers into the darkness, where have all the other travellers gone? Are they the last people on the road?

Bethlehem is shining there are lights in every window. Bethlehem, it's name means 'The House of Bread' a house, some bread and a bed, that is exactly what Mary and Joseph and their baby need; a house some bread and a bed. Mary smiles and places a hand on her tummy, this is God's baby, but he will need the same things as every other baby.

Bethlehem is closed, all the doors are all shut. Every time Joseph knocks it's the same answer – 'sorry full up' they see the lights, hear the chatter from inside, smell the food. Mary and Joseph are as hungry as they are tired.

A house some bread and a bed these words have become Mary's prayer.

Joseph knocks at the next inn and Mary eases herself from the Donkey's back. As the door creaks open she decides she will ask for help, but she doesn't need to. 'What you two need is a house, some bread and a bed'; says the gentle Innkeeper.

'Follow me.' He takes a lantern and walks towards a small door; where will it lead them? It's a stable! The inn keeper brings them bread and blankets.

'A house, some bread and a bed' Mary sings softly to the baby in her tummy, as she and Joseph settle in their warm hay bed. Bethlehem's hills are still and quiet. Shepherds are settling down too. The familiar sounds of the night are like a song to rock them to sleep; the soft bleating of the sheep, the crackling of the fire and the singing, the singing!

Glory be! What is that singing?

And the light – what is that light?

Their fire must be out of control, quick, get up put the fire out!



'Hush' says a voice, a beautiful, gentle voice. 'Don't be scared'.

The shepherds stand together with their hands over their eyes, slowly they look around, peeping through their fingers and then, even more slowly they look up.

What is it they can see? They have never seen an angel before.

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Out from the dazzling light the beautiful voice speaks again. 'I am bringing you good news of great joy for everyone. Today, in Bethlehem God's son has been born. A Saviour, just as God promised. Go now to Bethlehem, you will find him in a manger'.

Then the light grew stronger and brighter and a host of angel voices sang praises to God.



Bethlehem is sleeping, the baby is sleeping and love fills up every corner of the stable.

The little door isn't quite what the shepherds were expecting, where will it lead them? As the door opens they know they have found the right place. It is full of love and right in the centre is the baby. The shepherds tell Mary and Joseph about the angel and the singing and the light. One of them lifts his cloak and lying in his arm is a lamb. 'This is our gift, for the baby, it's all we have'.

Bethlehem is waking; the sun rises over the hills spilling light and colour everywhere. Doors are opened to welcome the new day. Excited and full of wonder the shepherds go out into the streets, they want to tell everyone that Jesus is born.

Mary has never seen people look so happy. The shepherds are actually shining! Shining with a light that is so lovely they want to know it with all their hearts, shining with the light of Christ.

The bread of life. The Good shepherd. The lamb of God. The Light of the world.

Short Version

Bethlehem is shining; there are lights in every window. Mary and Joseph are so happy to reach the end of their long journey, but they are tired and hungry, they need somewhere to rest. Bethlehem is closed; all the doors are shut, all the houses are full.

One kind Inn keeper can see that Mary and Joseph need help. He shows them to a stable, and brings them some food. In the night Mary's baby, God's own Son, is born. Mary wraps him gently in a blanket.



Bethlehem's hills are still and quiet. The shepherds are going to sleep, the sheep baa softly, the fire crackles and the angels sing. The Angels Sing!

The shepherds are frightened they have never seen angels before. A beautiful angel voice says 'don't be scared'.

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The angel tells them that God's own son has been born in Bethlehem and they will find him wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.

Bethlehem is sleeping, the baby is sleeping.

The shepherds find the door to the stable; they know it is the right place when they peep inside. The stable is full of love and right in the middle is the baby, God's own son. Mary has never seen people look so happy; the Shepherds are shining with the light of Christ.

Bethlehem is waking; the sun splashes colour everywhere. Doors are opened to welcome the new day.

Excited and full of wonder the shepherds go into the town to tell everyone that Jesus Christ; God's own son is born.

