

## TO SHEPHERDS AS THEY WATCHED BY NIGHT Worksheet

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### *Verse 1*

To shepherds as they watched by night  
Appeared a host of angels bright;  
Behold the tender Babe, they said,  
In yonder lowly manger laid.

### *Verse 2*

At Bethlehem, in David's town,  
As Micah did of old make known;  
'Tis Jesus Christ, your Lord and King,  
Who doth to all salvation bring.

### *Verse 3*

Oh, then rejoice that through His Son  
God is with sinners now at one;  
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,  
Your Brother is the eternal God.

### *Verse 4*

What harm can sin and death then do?  
The true God now abides with you.  
Let hell and Satan rage and chafe,  
Christ is your Brother-ye are safe.

### *Verse 5*

Not one He will or can forsake  
Who Him his confidence doth make.  
Let all his wiles the Tempter try,  
You may his utmost powers defy.

### *Verse 6*

Ye shall and must at last prevail;  
God's own ye are, ye cannot fail.  
To God forever sing your praise  
With joy and patience all your days.

**Vocabulary** In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

*Verse 1:* host, Behold, tender, yonder, lowly, manger

*Verse 2:* doth, salvation

*Verse 3:* rejoice, eternal

*Verse 4:* sin, abides, rage, chafe, ye

*Verse 5:* forsake, confidence, doth, wiles, Tempter, utmost, defy

*Verse 6:* prevail, patience

**Word Pictures** Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, without making an image of Christ, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

*Verse 1:* shepherds ... watched by night; host of angels

*Verse 2:* Bethlehem, in David's town;

*Verse 4:* Satan rage and chafe;

*Verse 5:* wiles [of] the Tempter

*Verse 6:* sing your praise

**Mechanics** are the nuts and bolts of a poem. Verbally discuss.

***Who is the speaker?*** (Does the speaker have a specific personality or has the author remained in the background so the message of the poem will be more clear?)

***What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?*** (Sometimes, poems reveal nothing about the speaker's personal thoughts, feelings, or attitudes. Yet, the poem may demonstrate those character traits that are important to the author like courage, loyalty, perseverance, etc.)

***Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone?*** (Sometimes poems are not directed to anyone in particular, but to anyone that may read it.)

***Does the poem have a setting?*** (Does the author tell where the poem occurs? Is the poem about a specific event?)

***Is the poem about a particular event?*** (Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?)

***Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?*** (Some poems are straightforward and are meant to be taken literally. In songs, the theme may be presented in the refrain or in the last few lines. Sometimes the theme is a little bit more difficult to discern as it is made with figurative language or symbols.)

***What point of view or perspective is the speaker?*** (What meaning do you think the poem has for the author?)

***How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?*** (Did your thoughts and feelings change after you took time to study it?)

**Comprehension Questions** Verbally discuss

*Verse 1:* What appeared to the shepherds? How are they described? What was their message?

*Verse 2:* What town is mentioned by name? How else is it referred to? Who else made "of old" known this event? Who, according to the author, is Lord and King? Do you agree? What did this Lord and King do?

*Verse 3:* What does the author tell us to do in the first line? Why? Explain and discuss: "Your Brother is the eternal God."

*Verse 4:* Explain and discuss: "What harm can sin and death then do?" Who now abides or lives with Christians? According to the author, what should Christians let Satan do? Why do you think the author holds to this? Explain and discuss: "Christ is your Brother---ye are safe."

*Verse 5:* Why do you think the author holds to: "Not one He will or can forsake, Who Him his confidence doth make." Give Scriptural support. Did you notice the term "doth"? Why do you think the author used this word? Explain and discuss: "Let all his wiles the Tempter try, You may his utmost powers defy."

*Verse 6:* According to the author, what shall and must you do (first line)? Relate this concept to Phil. 4:13. Explain and discuss: "God's own ye are, ye cannot fail." Why do you think the author holds this view? Give Scriptural support. What is the reader told to do in the third line? Why do you think the author told the reader to do this? What two character traits are mentioned in the last line by the author? Why do you think this is so?

Did this historical event or message become more real to you after reading this poem? Why?

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

### **What Does the Bible Say?**

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the six verses.

Re-read the Gospel accounts of the Nativity along with Isaiah 53.

### **The Author/Poet**

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The author's name for this poem or lyric is Martin Luther (1483-1546). He was born 10 November 1483, in Eisleben, Germany, and died 18 February 1546, in Eisleben, Germany. Interestingly, he was buried in Wittenberg, Germany. Martin Luther is credited with beginning the Protestant Reformation 1517. This 1529 poem is referred to as the "Battle Hymn of the Reformation." The poem was translated from German to English by Frederic H. Hedge in 1853.

### **Geography**

Locate Germany on a globe, map and atlas.

*Challenge* Locate Eisleben (Germany) and Wittenberg (Germany) on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast weather from Germany with your own for one week.

Make a German meal for your family.

### **Activities**

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each verse. (Note: that will be six different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the song and the author's name which will be your book's cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the event or message discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the historical event or message of this poem.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, "interview" various individuals connected with this poem (e.g., John the Baptist, King Arthur, Jane Austen, King Richard III, Canute, repentant sinner, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents' permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author's view of the impact of *To Shepherds as They Watched Their Fields by Night*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about John Needham and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.