

The First Noel

Study

Take about 10-15 minutes to read through the lyrics of The First Noel. Make notes in the column to the right; there are some initial ideas to prompt you. See the “Note on Observations” if you are unsure.

A note on observation as a Bible study tool: observations are intended to be focused on the passage at hand, rather than ideas that the passage reminds you of. Though we are not looking at Scripture here, the skill of making observations is vital to good Bible study. What do you see in the lyrics of the carol? Are there repeated words? Do you see any connections to actual Bible verses or stories? Why did the author choose the words, ideas, descriptions, etc.?

Lyrics:	Observations (key words, active characters, symbols, descriptions, questions):
The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.	<i>Why call it the first?</i>
They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far; and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.	<i>The light was great... John 1</i>
And by the light of that same star three Wise Men came from country far; to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.	<i>"From country far..."</i>
This star drew nigh to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest; and there it did both stop and stay, right over the place where Jesus lay.	<i>Why Bethlehem?</i>
Then entered in those Wise Men three, full reverently upon the knee, and offered there, in his presence, their gold and myrrh and frankincense.	<i>What made the wise men revere a baby?</i>
Then let us all with one accord Sing praises to our heavenly Lord	<i>What is this one even saying?</i>

That hath made heaven and earth of nought, And with his blood mankind hath bought	
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.	<i>Born, a baby, a king</i>
Broad themes, repeated ideas, other ideas and notes	<i>People seeking Jesus, People told of Jesus, People led to Jesus</i>

? Of the groups mentioned in the song, who heard the angel's message first? What is the significance of that?

? Who else heard the message? What is different about these groups?

? What symbols do we use in the Christmas season? What role does 'light' play?

Luke 2:8-14 (NIV)

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Philippians 2:5-11 (NIV)

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

? What is significant about Jesus coming to earth as a baby?

? What do Jesus' actions teach us about our relationships and how to conduct ourselves?

? Why did God exalt Jesus?

? Why should we seek humility like Jesus?

? How does Jesus' kingship, a theme in the carol, conflict or resonate with his being born as a baby?

- ? How does Jesus' kingship conflict or resonate with his servanthood?
- ? How does our 'co-heirhood' with Jesus, as our King and Savior, conflict or resonate with our humility in life?

For Discussion and Accountability

- ? The First Noel is ultimately a call to worship. How will you worship King Jesus in the coming week?
- ? How are you being called to humbly serve others this Christmas season?