

The First Nowell



The wind is blowing fiercely; darkness settles deeply over the hills and valleys. A cluster of shepherds huddle against the rocks, seeking shelter from the cold night air. Dozing fitfully, they pull their worn cloaks more tightly around their shoulders, ears attuned to the gentle bleating of the sheep. Without warning, the field is suddenly awash in light, and an unearthly creature begins to speak to them. An event is taking place in the city; something so unusual that the shepherds must go to see for themselves.

Born is the King of Israel!

Citizens of the towns and villages look up into the night sky and see an unfamiliar star. Seemingly close, the star was yet far away; but how brightly it lit the sky! Like a full moon illuminating the streets and rooftops, this star threw light on everything in its path. What has happened to cause such a star to appear in the heavens?

Born is the King of Israel!

This same star could be seen miles and miles away, in far countries. Men full of wisdom and knowledge of such things studied their maps and documents. What is the meaning of this star? Sages who had built their lives around following the heavenly bodies of light were confounded. This unusual star must have some significance or symbolic importance. To satiate their curiosity, these knowledgeable men sought answers. After days and weeks, possibly years, of travel, they found a peasant child who had been born in an unassuming stable. Who is this child? What will be the significance of his life?

Born is the King of Israel!

We know the story; we have learned the impact of this Baby and the life he lived. We know of the events surrounding his birth, and of those who responded and celebrated that first Christmas night. We have studied how the Baby's origin was that of the Creator, who brought life and breath from nothing. We know of the perfect life he lived, the agonizing and sacrificial death he suffered; of the resurrection that occurred thereafter, nothing short of a divine miracle. We understand and receive the forgiveness given to us because of this death and resurrection, the new life offered to us with unending love. We experience the grace and joy which come out of this love.

So, in the season of Christmas, let us sing heartily together: Born is the King of Israel!

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