

Sing We Now of Christmas



This lively, traditional French carol invites worshipers to sing about Christmas. The various stanzas call to mind aspects of the story of the birth of Christ: the angels who summoned the shepherds; the shepherds who visited Jesus; the kings or wise men who journeyed to Bethlehem carrying precious gifts, following a star.

The term “noel,” frequently found in this carol, is taken from the French word *noël*, which means “Christmas.” The same term, however, can refer to a Christmas carol, which is likely the meaning employed here. During the month of December, we sing of Christmas; we sing noel.

Looking carefully at the text, we see the immediate action taken by the characters in this nativity story, and realize their sacrifices. The shepherds “left their flocks”—their livelihood, their source of income and way of life—and journeyed forth to Bethlehem. We don’t know the details of their lives, but perhaps they faced consequences for their actions. Yet they were rewarded by being among the first to witness the miracle of the birth of the Savior of the world.

Similarly, the kings left their homes and country, traveling for many months or years to find this child. Perhaps they saw themselves as ambassadors or seekers of wisdom for their people. Nevertheless they chose to leave a place of comfort, guided only by a star, to seek the baby. They brought with them valuable items to give to the unknown Child, another example of sacrifice.

The result of these unlikely heroes traveling to Bethlehem at that time is that they each experienced the incredible act of worship. Perhaps they did not understand fully the significance of the life of this Child, but their worship was authentic and heartfelt. They came, they offered what they had, and they worshiped.

As we sing of Christmas, during the Christmas season, may we recognize the state of our hearts and attitudes. May we leave behind the things that hinder or prevent us from authentic worship; may we give what we have, no matter the sacrifice. Let us sing grateful praises to Christ Jesus, our King.