

The number seven in the Bible is symbolic of completion or perfection. Seven candles, seven characters of a perfect, the Christmas story.



The three smallest candles remind us of three individuals that are key characters which provide the story's compelling Christmas drama.

Mary was a young peasant girl overlooked by most of society but captured God's attention. As a young woman from a godly family her greatest virtues were her innocence, humility and purity (Luke 1:26-38). It was the apparent loss of those virtues that introduced one of the Bible's most dramatic stories. She set out to convince her fiancé' **Joseph**, that the child she was carrying was from God. He chose to "set her aside" or divorce her quietly rather than normal punishment of being stoned for

infidelity. Joseph's compassion overruled his sense of justice. But possibly his greatest virtue though was his faith demanded to heed the Angel's call to take Mary unto himself and name the child Jesus (Matt. 1:18-25).

In contrast to these godly characters is the third individual **King Herod**. He lied to the Wise men, driven by jealousy he murdered all boys 2 years and younger in the Bethlehem region to keep the child-king from taking his throne (Matt. 2:1-18).

The mid-sized candles represent three groups that were the first to hear and respond to the Good News of Jesus' Birth.

For nearly two years **Wise Men** from the east (Matt. 2:1-2) had been armed with the words of the Hebrew prophets and a curiosity that only astrologists can understand (Num. 24:17) set out to follow a star until they found the Christ child, destined to be a King. These men represent wise men from other nations that are wise enough to seek the truth and foolish enough to believe the gospel truth when they find it. It was their gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh. that supported the family while they lived in exile in Egypt. They symbolized Jesus royalty, suffering,

and priesthood. While all the world was scurrying to meet the demands of Augustus Caesar's Roman census all **the Heavenly Host** stood to their feet to declare to the Shepherds the good news for all mankind. (Luke 2:18-14)

The Shepherds were social outcasts, but counted as most blessed and "the first to know" of the Christ-child's birth.



The largest candle in the center represents the smallest individual of the story, the baby Jesus; deity wrapped in humanity; completely God, and totally human. The Creator of heaven and earth lying in a feeding trough for cattle. The Savior of the world that would pay the price none of us could afford, taking up residence in a borrowed barn. The fresh breeze on earth and the Breath of Heaven!

Certainly Jesus is the center, the best, and the biggest part of the story!



Seven candles, seven characters, a perfect story. No one that wishes to be included is left out of this story. Jewish shepherds close by and Gentile Wise Men from a far, everyone is welcome.

Whosoever will, may come! But just like Joseph and Mary, you will not leave the same as you came. And just like Herod, no pride or wickedness will be allowed to stay.

The baby grew to live perfectly, love fully, die completely, and be raised to new life eternally. Now that all the candles are lit, you know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Merry Christmas to All!

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when^[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed,^[b] who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.^[c]

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart."

Christmas Candles

