

CHRISTMAS CANDLES

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The glory of the Lord shone around them (Luke 2:9).

When we want to have a party or a special celebration we often decorate. At a birthday party we usually have a cake. At Christmas time we trim a tree and set up a representation of the manger scene. When we prepare our living room for family worship we may set the Word on a pretty cloth and put flowers around it. For a wedding we decorate the altar with ribbons and blossoms.

Now, there is one thing we use at all these celebrations to make them even more wonderful—lighted candles! We put candles on a birthday cake. We burn candles on Christmas or Christmas Eve. We use candles at family worship. And candles are set up at weddings to make everything more beautiful. So candles remind us of happy times. They help us remember festivals of the past with many lovely thoughts. But candles are also used to remind us of something more important than parties. There are words in the Christmas story that give us a clue about what candles can mean. These words tell about the angel who first appeared to the shepherds: “And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.” What shone or glowed all around them? The *glory* of the Lord! But what is that? What is the glory of the Lord that could shine brightly enough to frighten the shepherds? It was the light of heaven! It was the light coming from the Lord! The shepherds were able to see into heaven for a few moments. And the brightness was so strong that it frightened them. Now that same light can shine on us today. Today it does not come from an angel of the Lord. It shines in the Lord’s Word. It is a spiritual light. It is a light pouring into our minds from the heavens. We can even feel it! It is a warm glow, a glad and joyous gleam. It brings love as well as brightness.

Something that is like this glimmer in our minds, something we can see in this world, is the flame of a candle. Candles remind us of happy things, of holy things. And the fire from candles gives warmth as well as light. Candles glow. They give us a glimpse of heaven. When we place candles beside the Word, they help us think of worshiping the Lord and of His love for us. Christmas candles bring the story of the Lord’s birth into our thoughts. We can see and feel what the shepherds felt—the “glory” of the Lord. The glory of the Lord can fill our minds with understanding. And it can swell our hearts with love as well.

So, whenever we see candles burning we can think about the glory of the Lord. And this will remind us of the glad tidings that the angels brought to the shepherds—that Christ the Lord was born among us on Christmas Day!