

## WHEN ONE LOOKS AFTER THE DETAILS

With the American Thanksgiving taking place this week, and Advent beginning on Sunday it is now time for Nadine and I to get more intentional about shopping for Christmas. My daughter Coral has made it much easier for us this year. She has always given us a list of the things she wants for Christmas, but this year it was more detailed than in any previous one.

When I first saw the list, I noticed Coral had it all typed out so it was easy to read. Besides typing it out she had all of her gift wishes arranged by category. Books and records were just two of the categories that were included on her list. In previous years she ranked which books she wanted in order of preference. This year I noticed numbers placed beside some of the other items she had listed in other categories.

At first, I thought she was ranking her preferences like she does with her book wish list. Nadine pointed out to me that the numbers beside certain items actually referred to links and websites where we could purchase these items. Sure enough at the bottom of her list was a whole series of links we could click on to buy these items. She provided us with eleven links in all. When I looked at all of her links it reminded me of a list of citations one might see at the end of an essay.

Coral put so much work and detail into providing us with her Christmas wish list this year. If she had just provided us with a list with no links included, it would take a lot of work on Nadine's part (notice I did not say my part) to research where to find and purchase them. By providing us with all the details, Coral has made our job (okay I should say Nadine's job) of purchasing gifts for Christmas a whole lot easier.

Coral's Christmas list reminded me how much easier some things can be for us when somebody else looks after all the details. It made me begin to think how God looked after all the details that first Christmas in order to make things easier for all involved. One of the details foretold about the Messiah was that His birthplace would be in Bethlehem. This detail was actually told 500 years before the birth of Jesus by the prophet Micah:

**But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past. (Micah 5:2)**

God not only provided details here about the birthplace of the Messiah but also revealed how His origins were eternal. For this to happen Christ, who is eternal, would have to enter into His own creation. The details of when this was about to happen began to unfold in Luke 1 when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to reveal how she would conceive through the Holy Spirit and give birth to a son to be named Jesus, the Son of the Most High. Mary agreed to be the Lord's servant and Joseph eventually did the same after learning from an angel in a dream how she became pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

God looked after the detail of His Son soon entering into His creation, but there was still the matter of the birth having to happen in Bethlehem. It was not Mary or Joseph who looked after this detail but rather God Himself. In Luke 2 we read how the Roman emperor, at that time Augustus, decreed that a census be taken throughout the empire requiring everyone to return to their ancestral home to be registered. Joseph was a descendant of King David, so this required him to travel with Mary to Bethlehem to register for this census close to the time of the child's birth. We know it was God, who is always in control, guiding the timing of these events.

When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem there was no room for them to stay due to how busy it was, but God looked after that detail for them as well. Then we read in Luke 2:6-7:

**And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger because there was no lodging available for them.**

We discover through the story of that first Christmas that something God is perfect at doing is looking after the details in order to make things easier for us. Mary and Joseph were asked by God to walk in faith and obedience in this journey He had planned for their lives. God's plans for them came with some challenges, especially having to travel to Bethlehem so close to the birth of this child. They walked in trust, relying on God to look after the details. God did that for them.

Scripture shows us how God not only looked after the details with respect to Jesus' birth but also when it came to His death on the cross so that our sins would be forgiven. He also looked after the details when it came to His resurrection so that we have the hope of eternal life by believing in Him.

Life is so much easier for us when we have somebody to look after the details for us. Isn't this why we sometimes ask a travel agent to plan our trips? God has not stopped doing this even though 2,000 years have passed since Christ's birth. **If we walk in faith like Mary and Joseph did, we can trust God to look after the details for us.** It is one of God's gifts to us just as the Saviour is. If we are not already doing so, this Christmas may we give ourselves this gift as Mary and Joseph did by walking in faith and trusting the details of everyday life to God.

My daughter Coral has certainly made our lives easier by providing a detailed list complete with links of where to buy the items. It will be easy to go on those sites and purchase those items. What won't be easy is to see the credit card bill when it comes in after Christmas.

**I hope we all enjoy the gifts of the season including walking in faith and entrusting the details to God.**

**Keep Safe and God Bless**

**Pastor Dean**