

THE JOY OF THE JOURNEY

During one of our Christmas studies, I became aware of a spiritual problem with Mary and Joseph associated with the birth of Jesus Christ. I believe they were spiritual mature believers who didn't experience the full JOY OF THE JOURNEY because they lived in the generality of doctrine rather than in the specific of it.

Doctrinal principle: Living in the generality of bible doctrine rather than the specifics of it can cause a spiritual advancing believer to miss the full JOY OF THE JOURNEY in the plan of God.

Matt.2:1-12 was chosen for this doctrinal study because it emphasizes the importance of the specific as well as the generality of bible doctrine. The Magi and Herod reflect the difference between understanding the generality of doctrine (Herod) and the specifics (Magi) - "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews" (2:2 - Herod) and "When they saw the star, they were overjoyed" (2:10 - Magi).

This lesson will study FOUR aspects of the JOY OF THE JOURNEY
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1. It is obvious that Mary and Joseph both knew Mary was to give birth to the messianic Savior of the world (generality) (Luke 1:26-38) [Mary] and (Matt.1: 18-25) [Joseph].

Gabriel, the teaching angel of messianic theology, reminded them of the need for specifics related to the birth of Christ.

They were given 9 months to investigate the specifics on this subject (Luke 1-3; Matt.1-2). Yet it doesn't appear that they advanced in the specifics of the birth of Christ.

2. According to Luke 1-3 and Matthew1-2, the word of God had a great deal of specifics associated with the birth of Christ.

For example, Matt.1-2 gives messianic genealogy and six prophecies associated with the birth of Christ that Mary and Joseph apparently learned after the fact (1:23; 2:2, 6, 15, 18, 23).

In fact, the Book of Matthew gives nearly 50 prophetic references to the historical coming of Jesus Christ into the world (Gal.4:4).

3. In spite of all these specific messianic prophecies, they applied only general doctrines associated with the birth of Jesus Christ such as His naming (Luke 2:21-24).

The other things they did were according to the traditions of the Law - "When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth." (Luke 2:39)

The following five specifics seem important to the doctrine of the birth of Jesus Christ. Yet they appeared to be ignorant of them. I am not being critical of them but inquisitive in hopes of better understanding my own spiritual dilemma. I know that hindsight is the most accurate but these seem obviously important.

- Why did the Magi and Herod search for specifics of the birth of Christ more than Mary and Joseph? (Matt.2:1-12)
- Why didn't they investigate the specifics associated with virgin birth of Isa.7:14? (Luke 1:30-35)

- Why did the Roman census rather than choice take them to Bethlehem for the birth of Christ? (Luke 2:1-7)
- Why did it take no room at the inn for it to make sense that the Lamb of God should be born in the manger of the temple sheep? (Luke 2:6-7, 11-12)
- Why do you suppose they went back to Bethlehem a year later to live in a house and put the Christ child at risk? (Matt.2:9-11, 17-18)

I think many of us do the same thing. We apply the generality of a doctrine by faith and then fly by the seat of our pants regarding the specifics of it. We sort of make it up as we go rather than search the Scriptures diligently (Luke 24:27; John 5:39; 1 Pet.1:10-12).

4. Failure to pay attention to the specifics of a doctrine is one way spiritually advancing believers miss the full Joy of the Journey in the plan of God.

Baby believers are so intense on learning the general doctrine that specifics are not an issue to them. They are just learning that there is a plan of God. They are just happy to be on the Journey (Matt.4: 4; 1 Pet.2: 2; Heb.5: 13-14).

Immature believers become over-whelmed with learning the specifics of doctrines. Their struggle with spiritual information of the specifics of the CWL and the spiritual walk cause them to miss the full Joy of the Journey (1 Cor.3: 1-9; 13:11; 1 John 2:15-17).

Mature believers are struggling with putting off old man cosmos diabolicus and putting on new man divine viewpoint (Eph.4:11-13; 22-24; Rom.12:2). They become so pre-occupied with application because of the struggle with OMCD that they can often miss the full Joy of the Journey.

If we want to experience the full JOY OF THE JOURNEY, we will need to pay attention to the specifics of cycling bible doctrine by faith (Heb.11:1; 2 Cor.5: 7).

What journey are YOU experiencing this Christmas?

Doctrinal principle: Living in the generality of bible doctrine rather than the specifics of it can cause a spiritual advancing believer to miss the full JOY OF THE JOURNEY in the plan of God.

“But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born for you; He is Christ the Lord.’” (Luke 2:10-11)