

"LIFE THROUGH THE LENS"



Image: King County Recycling

THE GIFT OR THE WRAPPING

Finally came Christmas morning. As a young father with a young son, this Christmas would be "special". He would be old enough to understand and enjoy the gifts we had lovingly, carefully selected and wrapped with precision folded corners. Son was presented with the first Gift. The wrapping paper was so firmly attached Dad had to help. Then came the "let-down" I'm sure all parents have experienced. The colourful paper was more exciting than the actual Gift. The Gift just "sat there" while the paper could be "scrunched". It made a "scrunchie" noise; it could be pushed and pulled into interesting yet meaningless shapes, and it was good to suck. The parents, full of anticipation, discovered the child felt the wrapping was more interesting than the Gift.

I wonder if God feels a bit like that father. He presented his Gift to humanity with love, the simple Gift of His Son, born in a stable from a humble woman. A gift that brought the message that the great God of all dearly desires a restored relationship with people who had turned away from him.

He also wrapped this Gift with words that should help people understand this baby was an authentic and valid gift. A gift that people had been told for generations to expect. Some of those pointers: A virgin birth; **Isaiah 7:14**. He would be known as the "Prince of peace"; **Isaiah 9:6-7**. He would be born in Bethlehem; **Micah 5:2**. He would return to his home country from Egypt; **Hosea 11:1**.

The loving Father God, who never does anything by halves, added kings travelling to show people from outside the country believed this baby was royal. Shepherds demonstrated that even the lowly could approach the Son of God – this Gift is for everyone. Then to add some heavenly majesty, choirs of angels appeared—a wondrous gift of love surrounded by events orchestrated by His Father.

I wonder if God the Father would feel like the other father in my story.

Have we taken our focus from the Gift and placed it on the wrapping? Could it indeed have been a virgin birth? Are there actually angels? Were they kings or wise men, what is a Maggi, and when did they give gifts to Jesus? Why didn't God provide someplace to stay? When did Jesus return from Egypt? There are multiple discussions around the Christmas story, probably all interesting and valid, but what might happen to **YOUR** Christmas story, **MY** Christmas story, if we make a real effort to focus on the **GIFT – JESUS – GOD'S SON?**

God bless,
Kevin.