



1

SCRIPTURE

- This is how the birth of **Jesus Christ** came about: His mother **Mary** was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with **child** through the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18)
- Because Joseph her husband was a **righteous man** and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. (Matthew 1:19)

2

SCRIPTURE

- But after he had considered this, an **angel** of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "**Joseph son of David**, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the **Holy Spirit**." (Matthew 1:20)
- "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

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SCRIPTURE

- All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The **virgin** will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him **Immanuel**" — which means, "God with us." (Matthew 1:22–23)
- When Joseph woke up, he did what the **angel of the Lord** had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. (Matthew 1:24)
- But he had no union with her until she gave **birth** to a son. And he gave him the name **Jesus**. (Matthew 1:25)

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INTRODUCTION



- If you are a **procrastinator**, you know what time it is!
- It is **Christmas Shopping season** and you may be running out of time to finish your shopping.
- Fortunately for you there is **Fast Company** magazine and they have a list of gifts you might want to consider.

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INTRODUCTION



- All are unique, unforgettable and frankly quite weird.
- Put one of these under the Christmas tree, and your **generosity** will never be forgotten.
- Guaranteed.

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- Made by a Japanese company called **Hydro-Tech**, these \$78 shoes have filters and micro fans built right into them.
- Give them to a person who wants to be cool.

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- For another \$20, you can buy your loved one an **OstrichPillow**.
- This napping pillow goes completely around a person's head, and can help them get some sleep on a couch or even at a desk.
- The company's motto: "**Dreams Happen Anywhere.**"

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- If your budget is a bit tighter, \$15 will get you a **toilet nightlight**, which will provide much-needed guidance in the dead of night.

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- Or maybe there is a man in your life who would be interested in a **clip-on man bun**.
- Only \$9.99, this hair accessory enables a **businessman** to be conservative all day and then turn into a **hipster at night!**

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- And for a **cat-loving friend** or family member, \$25 will buy the weirdest gift of all: A cat brush shaped like a tongue.
- It's called the **Licki Brush**.

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- Yes, that's right: This brush is held in your mouth, and you use it to bond with your kitty by pretending to lick it like a **mother cat**.
- By doing so, you are "communicating in their love language."
- Using the **Licki Brush** is said to be an "oddy meditative practice," soothing for both owner and cat.

For most people, a **Licki Brush** would be a truly unexpected gift.

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UNEXPECTED GIFTS

- So what were the people of **Israel** expecting during the rule of Emperor Augustus of Rome?
- They had no Christmas to celebrate, so they weren't looking for anyone to surprise them with a **Licki Brush** or an **Ostrich Pillow**.
- But the people had **hopes** and **dreams** in their time of oppression, and some of these expectations were based on their Hebrew Scriptures of a coming Messiah.
- But what they got was an **unmarried girl** who was pregnant, which was **totally unexpected** by her engaged husband, Joseph.

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UNEXPECTED GIFTS

- What was even more **unexpected** is that Mary blamed her pregnancy on the Holy Spirit.
- **Spoiler Alert!** Joseph didn't believe her!
- In fact, he was a **righteous man** and determined in his heart to divorce Mary.
- Nevertheless, **Joseph** probably still loved Mary and wanted to **divorce** her privately to minimize her public shame and disgrace.

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UNEXPECTED GIFTS

- But then again something **totally unexpected** happened to Joseph.
- *[A]n **angel of the Lord** appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the **Holy Spirit**. (Matthew 1:20)*
- Not only was Mary going to have a child, but a son who would be for Israel their **savior**.
- Which of course for both Joseph and Mary was **totally unexpected**.

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UNEXPECTED GIFTS

- In the **Gospel of Luke**, we hear some additional **surprising** and **unexpected** news.
- *When the **shepherds** of Bethlehem were watching their flock at night, "an **angel of the Lord** stood before them, and the **glory of the Lord** shone around them" (Luke 2:9).*
- The appearance of an angel to a bunch of common laborers in a field — that is indeed totally **unexpected!**

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UNEXPECTED GIFTS

- And what did the **angel** tell the Shepherds?
- Something **totally unexpected!**
 - *“Do not be afraid. I bring you **good news of great joy that will be for all the people.** (Luke 2:10)*
 - *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is **Christ the Lord.**” (Luke 2:11)*

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UNEXPECTED GIFTS

- Then what happened?
- Again more **unanticipated** events.
 - The Shepherds were told they would **find** the Christ in town and in a stable.
 - But before they went they were given a concert of all concerts as a host of heavenly angels sang, **“Glory to God in the highest!”**

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UNEXPECTED GIFTS

When God came to fulfill the **expected**, everything about the specifics was **unexpected**.

- Birth of John the Baptist.
- Virgin with a child.
- Appearance of angels.
- Humble setting.
- Purpose of the Messiah.

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GOD'S PURPOSE

- The Jews of Jesus' day were waiting for a **Messiah** that would deliver them from their **oppressors** and restore the greatness of their country and bring God's Kingdom to the earth.
- However, it was a shock to them when both **John the Baptist** and **Jesus** came out preaching about **sin and the need for repentance**.
- In fact, even though **Jesus** performed many signs, wonders, and miracles, many still didn't respond as they didn't accept Jesus' moral standards and teachings on true righteousness.
- Since all of this was totally **unexpected**, they closed their hearts to Jesus' ministry and sought to kill him instead.

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GOD'S PURPOSE

- So then, when the Jews had Jesus put to death it was totally **unexpected** by his disciples.
- In fact, even though Jesus told them all about this and his resurrection, it was still **unexpected**.
- Even in the New Testament, when the **Gospel** was taken to the Gentiles and they received it with gladness, this was **unexpected** as well.
- The point is that God has a way of doing things **unexpectedly**, even when he has predicted it first by his prophets.

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GOD'S PURPOSE

- Christmas is a season in which we celebrate the **unexpected**.
- The **birth of a child** born in humility who received gifts for a king by wise Gentile stargazers.
- To tell you the truth, no one was more **surprised** about of all this more than **Joesph** and **Mary**.
- *But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.* (Luke 2:19)
- Why? An **unusual birth** means an **unusual destiny**.

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GOD'S PURPOSE

- If you would have told me as a teenager or young adult that I would be a **pastor** of a church, I would have thought you were crazy.
- To tell you the **truth**, it was on the bottom of my list.
- In fact, several people here tonight too can testify how God has led them down roads that were totally **unexpected**.
- The issue is however, how do we **deal, adjust, and cope** when God takes us places that we didn't or don't expect.

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HOW TO COPE

In an article by Remez Sasson, he gives "10 Tips for Dealing with **Surprises** and **Unexpected** Events."

1. Acknowledge the fact, and learn to accept that **surprises** and **unexpected** events are part of life and are unavoidable.
2. The **key to everything is your attitude**. A **positive attitude is an asset in unexpected situations**.
3. When making a **plan**, always have an alternate plan, in case the first plans fails. This would prevent you from falling into a state of helplessness, fear, and not knowing what to do next.

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HOW TO COPE

4. **Wait for a few moments**, before blurting out when confronting **unexpected** or **unpleasant** turns of fate.
5. If what happened is irreversible, what good would you gain by becoming **angry**, **stressed** or **panicked**? You would gain nothing.
6. Take the initiative, and introduce **small changes** into your life. Teach yourself to accept change.
7. Always focus on the **present moment**, living it the best, learning from it the most you can, and taking advantages of new opportunities that come your way
8. Learn to **cast your cares upon the Lord**. For he has promised never to leave us or forsake us. **There is a better day coming**.

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GOD'S PURPOSE

- At the present moment we live in a world where **good** and **evil** coexist.
- Meaning **unforeseen** problems are part of life.
- Frequently, like the **birth of Christ**, God works in mysterious ways—even when he fulfills prophecy and his own promises.
- Nevertheless, the day is coming when the **unexpected** will no longer threaten our peace and security.
- But when it does come, it will certainly be **totally unexpected** by the world.

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GREATEST UNEXPECTED EVENT

- *For in the days before the flood, **people** were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they **knew nothing** about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. **That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.** (Matthew 24:38–39)*
- *... for you know very well that the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief in the night. (1 Thessalonians 5:2)*
- *But you, **brothers**, are not in darkness so that **this day** should surprise you like a thief. (1 Thessalonians 5:4)*
- *You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be **alert** and **self-controlled**. (1 Thessalonians 5:5–6)*

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CONCLUSION

- So then, when **unexpected** things happen in our lives remember that Jesus has not promised us a **care free life** but a **life** where his mercies are new every morning.
- Just as bad things can be **unexpected**, so can the manifestations of **God's grace**.
- Just when you think all **hope is lost**, God can **surprise us with a visitation of his goodness**.
- As Jesus has said, "*In this world you will have **trouble**. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*" (John 16:33)
- Therefore, let those who **believe**, expect the unexpected!

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