

SCRIPTURE

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

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SCRIPTURE

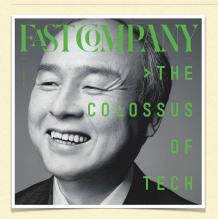
- But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 1:20)
- "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name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

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SCRIPTURE

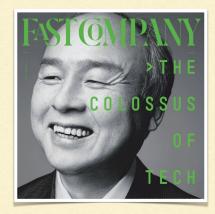
- All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" — which means, "God with us." (Matthew 1:22–23)
- When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took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

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.

INTRODUCTION



- All are <u>unique</u>, <u>unforgettable</u> and frankly <u>quite weird</u>.
- 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 <u>filters</u> and <u>micro fans</u> built right into them.

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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.

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■ The company's motto: "Dreams Happen Anywhere."





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.



- 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 <u>conservative</u> all day and then turn into a **hipster** <u>at night</u>!

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





- 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 "oddly meditative practice," soothing for both owner and cat.

For most people, a **Licki Brush** would be a truly <u>unexpected gift</u>.

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

- 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 <u>both</u> Joseph and Mary was **totally** unexpected.

UNEXPECTED GIFTS

- What was even more unexpected is that Mary <u>blamed her</u> pregnancy on the Holy Spirit.
- Spoiler Alert! Jospeh didn't believe her!
- In fact, he was a **righteous man** and determined in his heart to <u>divorce</u> 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

- In the Gospel of Luke, we hear some <u>additional</u> 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 <u>common laborers</u> in a field that is indeed totally **unexpected**!

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

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.

UNEXPECTED GIFTS

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

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GOD'S PURPOSE

- The Jews of Jesus' day were waiting for a Messiah that would <u>deliver</u> them from their oppressors and restore the greatness of their country and bring God's Kingdom to the earth.
- However, it was a <u>shock</u> 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 <u>closed</u> their hearts to Jesus' ministry and <u>sought</u> to kill him instead.

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 <u>has predicted it first by his prophets</u>.

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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 <u>bottom</u> of my list.
- In fact, <u>several people</u> 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 <u>didn't</u> or <u>don't</u> **expect**.

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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HOW TO COPE

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

- I. 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**, <u>always have an alternate plan</u>, in case the first plans fails. This would prevent you from falling into a state of <u>helplessness</u>, <u>fear</u>, and <u>not knowing what to do next</u>.

HOW TO COPE

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

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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.
 (I Thessalonians 5:2)
- But you, brothers, are <u>not</u> in darkness so that this day <u>should surprise you like a thief</u>. (I 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. (I Thessalonians 5:5-6)

GOD'S PURPOSE

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

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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 <u>manifestations</u> 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!