

**Intro**

In the opening pages of his autobiography, "An American Life," Ronald Reagan writes, I was raised to believe that God had a plan for everyone and that seemingly random twists of fate are all a part of His plan. My mother - a small woman with auburn hair and a sense of optimism that ran as deep as the cosmos - told me that everything in life happened for a purpose. She said all things were part of God's plan, even the most disheartening setbacks, and in the end, everything worked out for the best. If something went wrong, she said, you didn't let it get you down: You stepped away from it, stepped over it, and moved on. Later on, she added, something good will happen and you'll find yourself thinking -- 'If I hadn't had that problem back then, then this better thing that did happen wouldn't have happened to me.' After I lost the job at Montgomery Ward, I left home again in search...

The passage starts with Christ and ends with Christ

**Text**

V18 = God has a Plan

- ~ God has a plan – Wonderful little words – because in these words we see the work of God on behalf of mankind
- ~ When a person has a plan it means they have a method in mind on how to accomplish something
- ~ Man has made a mess of God's world. Adam and Eve ruined creation
- ~ God gave Adam one simple command – not to eat from the tree of life – they disobeyed and sin was introduced
- ~ Since sin was introduced into the race man and woman have hurt each other, hated, killed, and mistreated each other. The world is a mess because man has made it that way.
- ~ Yet man blames God for all the cruelty. The government permits the murder of babies and takes God out of our country and yet it's God's fault
- ~ But, God has a plan – and this is the story that Matthew begins to tell us – God has a plan
- ~ This plan begins and ends with Christ
- ~ Christ is the plan of God
- ~ This is how the story goes – Mary was espoused to a man names Joseph yet she was pregnant
- ~ Espoused - Betrothed, or engaged to be married. There was commonly an interval of ten or twelve months, among the Jews, between the contract of marriage and the celebration of the nuptials (see Gen\_24:55; Jdg\_14:8; Deu\_20:7), yet such was the nature of this engagement, that unfaithfulness to each other was deemed adultery. See Deu\_22:25, Deu\_22:28. (Barnes)
- ~ Yet, Matthew clarifies that this pregnancy was created by the HS (Matt 1:18; Lk 1:26-38, especially v35)
- ~ Lk 1:26-38 tells us how the Angel Gabriel approached Mary and announced God's plan that she would be the earthly mother of the Messiah

V19,20 = Trying to Make Sense of that Plan

- ~ Joseph is a just man, caring man and a thinking man
- ~ Joseph is a just man but while God had spoken to Mary He hadn't spoken to him about this plan
- ~ Joseph is a caring man and the fact he's a just man is seen in that he's trying to preserve the integrity of Mary while divorcing her
- ~ Joseph had the right to divorce her but because he's a caring person he doesn't want her hurt
- ~ Joseph is a thinking man
- ~ Matthew Henry - Observe, it is the thoughtful, not the unthinking, whom God will guide. God's time to come with instruction to his people, is when they are at a loss. Divine comforts most delight the soul when under the pressure of perplexed thoughts.
- ~ It's while he's contemplating what to do the angel of the Lord appears to him and speaks to him
- ~ While he trying to make sense of God's plan – God speaks to him

V20-23 = The Plan of God Unveiled

~ There's a message for Joseph

1 Don't be afraid of God's plan (v20)

- The will of God can be scary because God often asks us to do things that are beyond our natural and require faith
- Joseph wasn't the only one to be fearful with the will of God (Abraham, Moses, David, Gideon, Jacob)

2 Mary's child was conceived by the HS (v20)

- Mary hasn't been unfaithful. She is carrying in her womb the Son of God. The HS created this child

3 This plan is about Christ

- This relationship and pregnancy is all part of the plan of God
- The child will be called Jesus
- This child will save people from sin
- The plan of God is bigger than we are

4 This is a fulfillment of OT prophecy (Is 7:14)

- Joseph has a third affirmation – the angel of the Lord quotes Isaiah 7:14
- Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel
- Other OT passages that speak of the coming Christ
- Isaiah 9:6,7
- Micah 5:2

V24,25 = Joseph Accepts God's Plan and doesn't Fight it

~ He takes Mary to be his wife

~ He names the child Jesus

## Conclusion

1 God has a plan even though we may not know it or understand it

- Is 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
- 1 Cor 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

2 God uses to accomplish that plan even though they're not perfect

- Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Samuel, disciples – all had their faults yet used by God
- God will use anyone for his purposes, no matter how unlikely.
- God often uses the humble and willing (Joseph and Mary) rather than the high and mighty (King Herod) to accomplish his greatest missions on earth.
- No one can thwart God's plans (not even the politically powerful Herod).

3 God's plan is bigger than we are – This plan was bigger than Joseph and he was fearful

- This plan would require faith as Joseph and Mary would be the object of scandal and gossip

4 God's plan is Christmas – At this time we celebrate Christ

- Christ's becoming human is the greatest thing to happen to mankind
- Christ is the promised savior
- While Joseph is a just man Jesus is the only truly righteous man who lived
  - His prediction also that Christ
  - The Timing – 700 years prior
  - The Manner – Virgin birth
  - The Name – Emmanuel = God with us
  - The Purpose – Save his people from their sins
  - The greatest gift at Christmas is Christ
- Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of all God's promises to Israel and to us.