



**Suddenly A
Surprise**

Luk 2:13 And **suddenly** there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

Luk 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
goodwill toward men!"



**A CHRISTMAS
SURPRISE**

Faith In The Marketplace Series

December 2015

www.churchonthego.ca

The Surprise Principle

Context: Luke 2

Glory in the Highest

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were

greatly afraid. **10** Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. **11** For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

13 And **suddenly** there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

14 “Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill
toward men!”

15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” **16** And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. **17** Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

18 And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

Text:

Luk 2:13	And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:
-----------------	--

The Surprise Principle - From God & The Physical Impact

- When what happens is not what I expect, I have to rethink my understanding of the world.

Dan 10:10	Suddenly , a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and <i>on</i> the palms of my hands.
------------------	---

How it works

Mal 3:1	“Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek,
----------------	---

Will **suddenly** come to His temple,
Even the Messenger of the covenant,
In whom you delight.
Behold, He is coming,”
Says the LORD of hosts.

- One way we manage the world is to make an educated guess as to what comes next and then see if we were right.

Mat 3:17 And **suddenly** a voice *came* from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

- This constant forecasting process allows us to make the right decision as to what to do next.

Mat 8:24 And **suddenly** a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.

- Surprise happens when what happens does not match what we expected or forecast would happen.

Mat 8:29 And **suddenly** they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

Nasty surprises

- When what we expect is more than what happens in reality, we are disappointed.

Mat 8:32 And He said to them, “Go.” So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And **suddenly** the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

- And the more we expect and the further away reality is from our

expectations, the nastier the surprise.

Mat 26:51	And suddenly , one of those <i>who were</i> with Jesus stretched out <i>his</i> hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.
------------------	---

- Our emotional reaction to a nasty surprise can range from a mild disappointment to deep shock.

Job 9:23	If the scourge slays suddenly , He laughs at the plight of the innocent.
-----------------	--

- Emotional ripples can spread further, with seething resentment and vengeance sought against the perpetrators of the surprise.

Psa 6:10 Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled;
Let them turn back *and* be ashamed **suddenly**.

- Generally speaking, nasty surprises will evoke the fight or flight reaction.

Psa 64:7 But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow;
Suddenly they shall be wounded.

Nice surprises

- When reality exceeds our expectations, we are pleasantly surprised.

Eze 37:7 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and **suddenly** a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone.

- A warm glow spreads across us. We feel ... BLESSED ... or honored.

Mat 9:20 And **suddenly**, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.

- When the reality is far from expectations, our legs can weaken as the disbelief of shock affects us.

Mat 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and **suddenly** a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

- You see this naturally on TV shows where prize winners and surprise recipients almost collapse with delight ... WOW ...

Mar 9:8 **Suddenly**, when they had

looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.

- It is actually possible for a nice surprise to backfire and turn into a nasty surprise, for example when the recipient feels they are being manipulated or when the sense of obligation is felt to be excessive.

Luk 9:39

“And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he **suddenly** cries out; it convulses him so that he foams at the mouth; and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him.

Neutral surprises

- As Freud said, sometimes ... a surprise is just surprising.

Luk 9:38	Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, “Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child.
-----------------	---

- When a person falls over in front of us or a news item tells of snowstorm in summer, we are surprised, but find it neither nice nor nasty.

Mar 13:36	“lest, coming suddenly , he find you sleeping.
------------------	---

- A common response to surprises that do not directly affect us is laughter.

2Ch 29:36	Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people, since the events took place so suddenly .
------------------	--

- Humor is a strange thing, but seems to be a response to unexpected events (which is probably why jokes are only funny the first time we hear them).

Surprise causes learning

Gen 41:2	Suddenly there came up out of the river seven
-----------------	--

	<p>cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow.</p>
<p>☐ Gen 41:5</p>	<p>He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good.</p>
<p>☐ Gen 41:18</p>	<p>“Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow.</p>
<p>☐ Gen 41:22</p>	<p>“Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good.</p>

- **When our forecast does not meet reality, we may be surprised this time, but we won't be caught out next time!**

Num 12:4	Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!” So the three came out.
-----------------	--

Num 12:10	And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she
------------------	--

was, a leper.

- **So we change our forecasting to account for the new things we have learned about how ... God ... and the world works.**

Surprise causes inner change

Num 16:42 Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and **suddenly** the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

- When we change our forecasting, we seldom do it by changing the actual process.

Deu 7:4 “For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you **suddenly**.”

- Instead, we change such things as our models of how ... God and the world works, and our beliefs about ourselves and other people.

1Ki 19:5 Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, **suddenly** an angel touched him, and said to

him, “Arise *and* eat.”

Surprise causes denial

- 'Well, I'm not surprised!' is a common retort by people to whom all kinds of surprisingly different things happen.

2Sa 15:14 So David said to all his servants who *were* with him at Jerusalem, “Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us **suddenly** and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city

with the edge of the sword.”

- A simple way we avoid embarrassment is to pretend that we are not surprised, and that we had expected the surprising event to happen after all.

1Ki 11:22 Then Pharaoh said to him, “But what have you lacked with me, that **suddenly** you seek to go to your own country?” So he answered, “Nothing, but do let me go anyway.”

- The danger of denial is that we are so good at it that we convince

ourselves that we were not surprised and hence don't change!

So what?

1Ki 18:7 Now as Obadiah was on his way, **suddenly** Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, “Is that you, my lord Elijah?”

- So manage the surprises. If the other person is surprised, it should be because you want them to be.

1Ki 20:13 **Suddenly** a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Have you seen all this great

multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.’ ”

- It should be because you have a pretty good idea as to how they are going to react to the surprise.

2Ki 2:11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that **suddenly** a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Manage expectations and reality

Managing expectations means:

- Understand what others current expectations are.**
- Understand how they expect the future, including their mental models and beliefs around the area of interest.**
- Subtly guiding their expectations.**
- Creating a reality that is different from what they expect ... God can change things ...**

2Ki 13:21	So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band of raiders; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.
------------------	--

Use nasty surprises to move people

- Nasty surprises can be used to shake people out of a complacent state.

2Ki 3:20	Now it happened in the morning, when the grain offering was offered, that
-----------------	---

suddenly water came by way of Edom, and the land was filled with water.

- When they are clinging to their current comfortable position and refusing to see another point of view, a short shock can be effective at awakening them from their slumbers.

Job 1:19 “and **suddenly** a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell

you!”

- Use nasty surprises with care, lest they rebound on you. A fight reaction can easily get out of control and a flight reaction can make them run away from you.

Job 5:3 I have seen the foolish taking root,
But **suddenly** I cursed his dwelling place.

- Play the bearer of bad news, but beware of being that bad news.
- You can create nasty surprises by:
- Telling them they cannot have what they want.

- Shouting at them (when you are normally timid).
- Telling them the awful truth.

Nice surprises lead to exchange

Act 2:2 And **suddenly** there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

- Nice surprises will predispose the other person towards you, setting up the **exchange** effect.

Act 9:3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and **suddenly** a light shone

around him from heaven.

- Make them feel good and they'll be happy to return the favor.

Act 22:6 “Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, **suddenly** a great light from heaven shone around me.

You can create nice surprises by:

- Promising them something, then giving them more than promised.
- Not promising them anything, just giving them something pleasant.
- Praising them.

Neutral surprises lead to interest

- You can intrigue people by being, saying or doing something different.

Act 16:26	Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.
------------------	---

- A neutral surprise can be an effective hook that pulls people in, leaving them wanting more ... like Salvation.

God in you can create neutral surprises by:

- **Being different from other people.**
- **Being different from how you normally are.**
- **Being different from what they expect.**
- **You can also be humorous or otherwise cause a surprise that grabs their attention ... as God did with Paul ...**

Act 28:6	However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they
-----------------	---

had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

CONCLUSION – Heaven’s Surprise At Christmas was ...

Luk 2:13 And **suddenly** there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

Luk 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
goodwill toward men!"



**Do You Want God's Surprise
This Christmas?**

Let's Pray!

Compiled By:

Pastor Rev. C.E. Stephen Coates

December 2015 www.churchonthego.ca



RESOURCES:

<http://changingminds.org/principles/surprise.htm>

<http://www.blbclassic.org/search/translationResults.cfm?criteria=suddenly&page=3&sf=5&t=NKJV>