

December 24, 2022  
Luke 2:1-20

O God, we wonder on this holy night:

Did you plan for this all along?

Were you always preparing for your Word would become flesh and live among us?

Were you always getting ready for him to arrive in the world?

In a humble village, to a bewildered couple, Mary and Joseph?

To have him laid in a manger because that was all that was handy?

And be visited by shepherds, stumbling from the fields, glory dazed by heavenly hosts?

Was this what you were always planning on?

In the beginning, is this what you had in mind?

Way back before the creation

When everything was formlessness and void  
and it was darkness down to the depths.

There was nothing

And from that nothing, you created everything,

Light and matter and gravity.

Glorious galaxies, quasars, stars and planets.

And on a special planet, you formed life.

Back then, in that time of creation, were you planning on becoming part of life?

Did you create human being knowing you would be human too?  
That you would breathe life into us, and that same breath would give  
you life too?  
Someday, somehow, your timeless eternal self would become part of  
time and space?  
Your great, uncontained glory would be contained in a squirmy little  
body?

Were you always preparing for this?  
Was this always your plan?  
That as your Spirit once hovered over the face of the deep  
It would hover over a girl named Mary?  
And your angel would invite her to be part of your plan?  
And he would tell Joseph not to be afraid.  
Were you prepared for their fear?  
Were you surprised by their faith?  
Were you always planning on Mary and Joseph?  
So normal and so average,  
And yet so filled with imagination and hope?  
Did you know they would be willing in that moment?  
Or had you been working on this for generations?  
Building faith down through the ages,  
From father to daughter, mother to son, until it led here?

To this time? To these parents?

To this child?

Was it always your plan for them to go to Bethlehem?

Did you mean for Jesus to be born in the city of David?

David, the King, the anointed one, the original shepherd of Israel?

Did you plan for Mary and Joseph to be in Bethlehem,

So that this is where your new king would enter the world?

In this old-timey, forgotten, unexpected place,

Bethlehem, small but crowded that night?

Bethlehem, sleepy, and with no room to spare?

Bethlehem, where the only shelter was a place for animals?

And your first bed would be a manger?

Is this what you had planned on all along?

Did you prepare for your great gift to be given here?

In this place to these people?

No royal welcome or elaborate celebrations

Just shepherds peering in with wonder and awe

Saying they had been visited by angels.

Scruffy night-shift laborers with no names

They were the first to know who this child was

And even though they were terrified,

They came to find the baby in the manger.  
Because you had made this thing known to them and only them.  
Perhaps because they would appreciate it most.  
Because they would marvel and wonder  
And believe that it might just be possible.  
And that this just might be the kind of thing that God would do.

Maybe this was just your kind of plan  
From the very beginning, this is what you were preparing for.  
This moment, this night. This place and time.  
For love and grace to be born in the flesh  
So you could truly be with us and among us.  
So that we could be your parents and you would be our child.  
So we would be a family.  
And nothing would separate us.  
You would no longer be a universe away, an eternity away.  
You would be here and now.  
And we could hold you as you have always held us.  
You are born, so that we can be reborn with you.  
This was always the plan.  
This is what you have prepared for, for us and your creation, all along.