

THAT'S BAD! NO, THAT'S GOOD!

*And we know that for those who love God
all things work together for good... (Romans 8:28)*

One day an unmarried teenage girl named Mary discovered she was pregnant. Oh, that's bad. *No, that's good!* The pregnancy was not the result of immoral behavior. She was a virgin and the baby in her womb was conceived by God Himself. Oh, that's good. *No, that's bad!* No one believed her story, not even her fiancé, Joseph. Oh, that's bad. *No, that's good!* An angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him that God was indeed the father of the baby and that his job was to care for her and the baby and protect them. Oh, that's good. *No, that's bad!* When she was nine months pregnant they had to travel to the Joseph's ancestral home in Bethlehem many miles away because the emperor in Rome was conducting a census and raising taxes. Oh, that's bad. *No, that's good!* A prophecy written seven centuries earlier had stated that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. God was orchestrating events so that Mary would arrive just in the nick of time to give birth in the place foretold. Oh, that's good. *No, that's bad!* Wicked king Herod also knew this prophecy and thus was able to know where the baby was and make plans to kill him. Oh, that's bad. *No, that's good!* God protected and blessed the baby so that he grew up to become a man who taught God's truth, worked miracles and brought hope and peace wherever he went. Oh, that's good. *No, that's bad!* Most people didn't realize who he was and they rejected him and his message. They conspired together and had him crucified. Oh, that's bad. *No, that's good!* God raised him from the dead and offered the free gift of salvation to all who believe in his Son. Oh, that's good. *No, that's bad!* Many refused to believe. Many rejected the gift God was offering them. Oh, that's bad. *No, that's good!* The offer of salvation is still open to anyone and everyone at any time... today, for example. Oh, that's good. Yes, indeed, *that is very, very good!*¹

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The light of Christmas reveals that things are not always what they seem. Not all that appears to be good is good and not all that appears to be bad is bad. The One in the manger has come so that for those who love God, even the worst situation can be turned to good.

Pastor Stan

¹My story is inspired by the delightful children's book *That's Good! That's Bad!* by Margery Cuyler (1991) that is the humorous account of a boy going from one adventure to the next, alternating between terror and relief.