

10-29-2016, COTR Texarkana

Title: God Is in Control

Purpose: Provoke people to trust God because He is in ultimate control of America's future and is orchestrating world events to fulfill His plan for humanity.

Spiritual Truth: I can face the future with confidence because God is in control.

Text: Isaiah 46:9-10

Topic: Sovereignty, Joseph, Election, Predestination, Election

Series: Not Your Average Joe

Series Purpose: Provoke people to live an extraordinary life by following the example of Joseph.

God Is in Control

I. Introduction

A. Review

1. Listen to live stream @ChurchOnTheRock.org or the COTR iPhone/ Android app
2. Last week I interrupted my "Not your Average Joe" series with an election sermon called, "Judges Matter". We talked about candidates and issues from a Biblical perspective and I challenged you to vote Biblical values. (Listen before you vote and get voter education material before you vote.) Christians have a responsibility to vote our values, be involved in government and pray. This is "our part", i.e. human effort aimed at making life on earth better. However, God is a sovereign/ all-powerful God and He is working behind the scenes in ways we don't understand. He controls human events to accomplish His purpose on the earth.
3. Isaiah 46:9–10 (NIV) Remember the former things... **I am God**, and there is no other; **I am God**, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and **I will do all that I please.**' (NLT) 10 Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. **Everything I plan will come to pass**, for I do whatever I wish.
 - a Our God is the only God. He predicts things before they happen. He controls the future. Nobody can stop His plans on the earth from being fulfilled. He does everything He pleases; when He says something it happens.
4. If we can make an application from this Scripture, it's this. God is ultimately in control of America's destiny. He uses politicians, good and bad, like puppets to further His will on the earth. This doesn't mean everything they do is good and approved by God but God will use them like He did Joseph's evil brothers to accomplish His will on earth

B. Title: God Is in Control

C. Purpose: Provoke people to trust God because He is in ultimate control of America's future and is orchestrating world events to fulfill His plan for humanity.

D. Spiritual Truth: I can face the future with confidence because God is in control.

II. The theological tension between sovereignty and free will

A. Definitions

1. Sovereign: Supreme lord or ruler; one who possesses the highest authority and cannot be controlled by others. Proverbs 16:9 (NLT) We can make our plans, but **the LORD determines our steps**. (NCV) People may make plans in their minds, but **the LORD decides what they will do**.
2. Predestination: Acts 4:27–28 (ESV) For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus...both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 **to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place**.
 - a Predestination: God determining what will happen before events take place.
3. Free will: The power God has given man to choose, especially as it relates to choosing or rejecting God's purposes.
 - a God knew a deliverer would be needed to save Israel in the famine and get them to Egypt as a part of redemption's story. God chose Joseph and used the evil act of his jealous brothers to accomplish His will. Joseph chose to continue to follow God when his life was difficult and confusing.
4. A Seminary professor called this, truth in tension. Free will/ man's choices and predestination/God's will are like 2 wings of a bird, our part and God's. Larry/Jay say that they work like it all depends on them and pray like it all depends on God.

III. Joseph, unaware of what was happening, was part of God's plan for humanity/

- A. Context: Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. Genesis 45:4–8 (ESV) So Joseph said to his brothers... "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for **God sent me** before you to preserve life. 6 For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years...7 And **God sent me** before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth...8 So **it was not you who sent me here, but God**. He has made me...ruler over all the land of Egypt. (Context: After his father's death) Genesis 50:20 (ESV) As for you, **you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good**, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.
- B. 3 spiritual Lessons we can apply to our life
 1. God can use difficult, even painful circumstances to accomplish His will, e.g. Joseph's evil brothers, 3x "God sent me", 13 hard years as a slave. Joseph had no idea something incredible was around the corner. Romans 8:28 (ESV) And we know that for those who love God **all things work together for good**, for those who are called according to his purpose.
 - a The key is "work together" and "His purpose". Our part is to keep on serving God, keep a good attitude and not quit when we are disappointed or confused.
 2. God has mapped out a plan for world events to follow. Prediction to Abraham: Genesis 15:13–14 (NIV) Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that **for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own** and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. 14 But I will punish the

- nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions...16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here...
- a Approx. 300 years before Joseph was sent to Egypt God made this prediction. He marked a path for Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Moses to follow hundreds of years before they were born. God spoke to Abraham over 700 years before Moses was born. God sees the end from the beginning.
 - b God orchestrates world events to accomplish His master plan. This is why I can say with confidence, no matter who wins the election, God is still in control. This doesn't take away from our part to vote, be involved in our gov. and pray for His will but it emphasizes His power over what happens.
3. God can use unbelievers to accomplish His purposes. Context: time for Israel to return from captivity. Ezra 1:1–3 (NLT) In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, **the Lord fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah**. He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing...2... “The Lord...has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem...3 Any of you who are his people may go to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this Temple of the Lord, the God of Israel...And may your God be with you!
- a Archaeology:Pic of The Cyrus Cylinder, inscribed in 539 BC when king Cyrus conquered Babylon, discovered in 1879, was an ancient text on human rights.
 - b Cyrus wasn't a believer but God used him to further God's purposes on earth, // modern politicians, puppets in the hand of the Master.

IV. Sometimes our dreams are centered around our desires and not His

- A. Acts 1:6–8 (NLT) So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “**Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?**” 7 He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And **you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere...**

- 1. Sometimes our priorities don't line up with God's. They were looking for a kingdom on earth while Jesus was focused on building the eternal KOG. Election //
 - a It's hard for me to understand why God allows abortion, the destruction of the family, Israel to be under constant attack, persecution and martyrdom of believers, etc. I want to see another Great Awakening in America but God may be moving us 1 step closer to the antichrist and end time events in Revelation. Time will tell. But no matter who wins on November 8th, on Nov 9th Jesus still holds the future in His hands.

V. Conclusion: No matter what happens, God's purpose will prevail because He is in control

- A. Context: 400 years after Joseph died. Exodus 1:6–2:10 (NLT) In time, Joseph and all of his brothers died...7 But their descendants...multiplied so greatly that they became extremely powerful and filled the land. 8 Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done...11 So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves. They appointed brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with crushing labor...15 Then Pharaoh...gave this order to the Hebrew

midwives...16...If the baby is a boy, kill him...17 But because the midwives feared God, they refused to obey the king's orders...2: 1 About this time, a man and woman from the tribe of Levi got married. 2 The woman...gave birth to a son. She saw that he was a special baby and kept him hidden for three months. 3 But when she could no longer hide him...She put the baby in the basket...along the bank of the Nile River...5 Soon Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe in the river...When the princess saw the basket among the reeds...6...The little boy was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This must be one of the Hebrew children," she said. 7 Then the baby's sister approached the princess. "Should I go and find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" she asked. 8 "Yes, do!" the princess replied. So the girl went and called the baby's mother. 9 "Take this baby and nurse him for me," the princess told the baby's mother. "I will pay you for your help." So the woman took her baby home and nursed him. 10 Later...his mother brought him back to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him as her own son. The princess named him Moses...

1. Little did Pharaoh know that he was raising the baby that would one day lead Israel out of Egypt back to the Promised Land.
2. Joseph and Moses were part of a divine plan and so are we. God has His part in this heavenly drama and we have ours. I will vote Biblical values and be involved in our government but most importantly trust God with the future because He is in control.
3. Prayer for America and the election

VI. Response

- A. Prayer: Are you fearful and worried about the future?
- B. Souls: God has a plan for our life. It starts when we reach out to Him to save us.
- C. *** *Logos Bible Software and library, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Commentary Critical and Explanatory of the Whole Bible, A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Genesis, American Dictionary of the English language were used to prepare this message.*