

12-17-2011, COTR Texarkana

Title: God Is in Control

Purpose: Provoke people to have confidence in the future because God is in control.

Spiritual Truth: God controls world history and He will accomplish His purpose in the earth.

Text: Mt 1:18-2:6

Topic: Christmas, Sovereignty, Prophecy, Future

God Is in Control

I. Introduction

A. Video clip “2012”

1. This is what Hollywood is predicting about the future in a movie called “2012”. It’s based on an end of the world prediction from the ancient Mayans. The Bible also has predictions. They’re called prophecies. Unlike other predictions, Biblical predictions have a proven track record of fulfillment.

B. Matthew 1:18-2:6 (NIV) [Background of the 1st Christmas]

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit...²⁰...an angel of the Lord appeared to him (*Joseph*) in a dream and said, ...²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³**“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.”**

1. The Prophet Isaiah predicted approx. 700 years before His birth that the virgin Mary would give birth to The Son of God, (Isa. 7:14).

C. Ch 2, vs 1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem...Magi from the east came to Jerusalem² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? ...³...King Herod ...⁴...called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born.”⁵“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ⁶“**‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.’”**

1. The Prophet Micah predicted approx. 700 years before His birth the town of Christ’s birth.
2. Is the fulfillment of 700 year old OT prophecies mere history for us or does it tell us something more about the nature and plan of God?

D. Title: God Is in Control

E. Purpose: Provoke people to have confidence in the future because God is in control.

F. Spiritual Truth: God controls world history and He will accomplish His purpose in the earth.

II. Prophecy and predictions

A. **A prophecy is a prediction of the future.** It is supernatural because this prediction is beyond human ability to foresee or scientifically prove.

B. **Lots of people are trying to predict what will happen in 2012:** Google “prophecies and predictions 2012” 4.6 million hits.

1. **THE KOLBRIN BIBLE** "Millennia ago, Egyptian and Celtic authors recorded prophetic warnings for the future and signs are now converging on 2012. ...warns of an imminent, Armageddon-like conflict with radical Islam... an end to life as we know it, by a celestial event. *kolbrin.com*
2. [2012 Apocalypse: Will Village of Bugarach Be Spared?](#) " ... Residents of the tiny southern French hamlet are witness to a rising influx of Domsday believers convinced it is the only place that will survive judgment day, December 21, 2012, (the day the Mayan calendar ends) ..." *ibtimes.com*
3. [2012 Exodus - The Return of God Almighty - Ra](#) "... The year 2012 signals the return of God Almighty- Amon-Re. Ra is the God of the heavens and sky...So why is Ra returning? He is returning to start a new world... From a single strand of your hair and a photograph of you at any age, Ra can reconstruct you and you can live eternally at any age that you desire ..." *2012exodus.info*

C. OT prophecies about Jesus Christ: As the seed of the woman. Ge 3:15; As the seed of Abraham, Ge 17:7; Great persons coming to adore him, Ps 72:10; He'd be preceded by John the Baptist, Mal 3:1; He'd enter publicly into Jerusalem, Zec 9:9; His preaching by parables, Ps 78:2; His working miracles, Isa 35:5,6; His being rejected by his brethren, Ps 69:8; His being rejected by Jewish rulers, Ps 118:22; His being betrayed by a friend. Ps 41:9; His disciples forsaking him, Zec 13:7. His being sold for thirty pieces silver, Zec 11:12. His intense suffering would be for others. Isa 53:4-6; His being spit on and scourged, Isa 50:6; His hands and feet being nailed to the cross, Ps 22:16; His being forsaken by God, Ps 22:1; Lots cast for His garments, Ps 22:18; His intercession for His murderers, Isa 53:12; That a bone of him should not be broken, Ps 34:20; His being pierced, Zec 12:10; His resurrection, Ps 16:10; His ascension, Ps 68:18; He'd sit on the right hand of God, Ps 110:1; His kingdom would last forever, Isa 9:7.

1. Using probability theory, the likelihood that one man would fulfill all these predictions made over hundreds of years is as unlikely as a tornado going through a junk yard and assembling a 757 jet unless God was behind it.
2. Christ's fulfillment of these prophecies tells us that God is in control and He will accomplish His purpose in the earth.

III. 3 lessons from fulfilled Biblical prophecy

A. God will accomplish His purpose in the earth. Nothing can stop Him.

1. God predicted the birth of Christ 700 years in advance because He knows in advance what will happen because He causes the future to unfold to accomplish His predetermined plan.
2. Ephesians 1:8-11 (NCV)
⁸ "...God... ⁹ let us know his secret purpose... ¹⁰ **His goal** was to carry out his plan, when the right time came, **that all things in heaven and on earth would be joined together in Christ as the head.** (NIV) ¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having **been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,**
 - a. God had a grand design when He began creation. All human history is being funneled into His purposes. God is preparing a people, the Bride of Christ, to be with Him for all eternity. We will live in the "new heaven and the new earth". We will rule and reign with Him for all eternity.
3. 2 Timothy 1:9 (NLT)
⁹ For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because **that was his plan from before the beginning of time**—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus.

4. God is creating the future, not people of power, satan, or chance and no power on heaven or on earth can stop Him.
 - a. Sometimes it seems like the devil is winning, e.g. Freedom from Religion group but they can't stop God any more than I can stop the sun or waves.

B. God will accomplish His purpose in me. Nothing can stop Him... but me.

1. God looked ahead in time and saw Mary, the mother of Jesus. He knew Mary would be a virgin; he knew she would be engaged to righteous Joseph. Just as He looked to the future and saw them, He sees me. They were a part of God's purpose on the earth. So are we.
2. Psalm 139:16 (NCV)
 - ¹⁶ you saw my body as it was formed. **All the days planned for me were written in your book before I was one day old.**
 - a. My goal in life needs to be to fulfill the plans written in God's book for me.
3. God isn't just concerned about the big global picture. He's concerned about the details of my life.
 - a. Psalm 37:23 (NLT)
 - ²³ **The LORD directs the steps of the godly.** He delights in every detail of their lives.
4. When I pray as Jesus taught me, "let your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven" I am including myself in His plan. I'm asking that God would direct my life much like a boss directs the activities of his employees.
5. When an obstacle gets in my way, God will provide a way around, over or through any obstacles in my path.
6. When I get off the path God will help me get back on...no matter how far I've drifted. I can be a preacher in jail.

C. I can face the future with confidence instead of fear.

1. When the prophets Isaiah and Micah wrote there were dark days ahead for Israel. Judgment was coming because of the nation's sin. Captivity and exile awaited them. They saw beyond the trouble and saw God at work through Jesus birth.
 - a. When we look at the future we see trouble for the world. The economic problems, persecution of Christians, war between militant Islam and Israel...it would be easy to worry. We can face the future with confidence and hope because I am God's child and my life is in God's hands.
 - b. John 14:27-28 (NLT)
 - ²⁷ **"I am leaving you with a gift—peace.... And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."** ²⁸ **Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again...**
 - i. We can see beyond the trouble and see Jesus. God cares about what happens to us so we don't have to worry and fear the future. We can face tomorrow with Jesus.
2. God controls world history and He will accomplish His purpose in the earth.

IV. Conclusion: What does the future hold?

A. Movie "2012" predicts the end of the world. Jesus predicted something very different.

B. John 13-14:6 (NIV)

¹ ...Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father...¹⁹
"I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He..."³⁶ Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later..."² **In my Father's**

house are many rooms...I am going there to prepare a place for you.³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me...⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

1. Jesus predicted He’d die and be resurrected. History records it. He predicted He’d go to heaven for awhile. People saw Him ascend to heaven. He said He’s return.
2. His next prediction will happen one day soon; He will come back to earth for His followers and take them to be with Him forever. He told us to be ready to go at a moment’s notice. I’m ready; are you?

V. Response...Souls: If Jesus came today would you go with Him? Are you afraid of the future or do you have peace?