

The Christmas Promise – Week 3 – God’s Unstoppable Plan – Bible Study Helps

Title: God's Unstoppable Plan: The Christmas Story and God’s Intervention in His Plan

Sermon Summary: This Christmas sermon explores Matthew 2 and the arrival of Jesus Christ, emphasizing that God's redemptive plan cannot be thwarted by human opposition, political resistance, or spiritual warfare. The message traces how God orchestrated historical events—from Caesar Augustus's census decree to King Herod's murderous rage—to fulfill Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem. The sermon emphasizes that while God gives humans free will to make choices, He sovereignly guides all events toward His ultimate purpose. The sermon challenges listeners to recognize that just as Herod could not stop God's plan 2,000 years ago, no power today can prevent God's purposes from being accomplished. The message culminates in a gospel invitation, urging listeners to submit to Christ's lordship rather than resist like Herod, reminding them that eternity depends on their response to Jesus Christ.

Key Points:

- God's plan is unstoppable—no political, spiritual, or individual power can prevent what God purposes to do
- Knowledge about Jesus without submission to Him as Lord is not salvation—even King Herod and the devils know the facts but don't worship Him
- Fear of losing control is often the root of rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord
- God intervenes in human history, orchestrating events to fulfill His purposes while still allowing human free will
- God used a pagan emperor (Caesar Augustus) and his census decree to move Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, fulfilling Micah 5:2
- When Satan cannot stop God's plan directly, he attacks the innocent—as seen in Herod's massacre of children and in modern attacks on children
- God incorporated even tragedy and suffering into His redemption purposes
- Over 300 specific Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus Christ's first coming
- The Bible has over 10,000 prophecies that thus far have all come to pass exactly as written
- There are only two responses to Jesus Christ: receive Him through repentance and faith, or reject Him like Herod
- Jesus Christ will return and establish His kingdom, and nothing can stop this future fulfillment

Scripture Reference:

- Matthew 2:1-23 (primary passage)

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- Micah 5:2 (prophecy of Bethlehem)
- Genesis 3:15 (prophecy of the virgin birth and Christ defeating Satan)
- Isaiah's prophecy of virgin birth (referenced)
- Luke 2:1 (Caesar Augustus's decree)
- Revelation 12:4-5 (the dragon attempting to devour the child)
- Ezekiel 33:11 (God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked)
- Genesis 50:20 (What Satan meant for evil, God turned for good)
- Revelation 19:11 (Christ's return on a white horse)
- Psalm 2 (why do the heathen rage)
- Proverbs 21:30 (no wisdom or counsel against the Lord)
- John 3:16-17 (God so loved the world)
- Romans 10:9 (unbelievers – confess and believe)
- 1 John 1:9 (believers – confess our sins)

Stories:

- The rooster confronting the Suburban—illustrating the futility of opposing God's plan
- The wise men following the star from the east to find Jesus, guided step by step by God's light
- King Herod's paranoia leading him to murder his own family members to maintain power
- Herod's massacre of innocent children two years old and under in Bethlehem and surrounding areas
- The historical account of how Bethlehem was only five miles (a two-to-three-hour walk) from Jerusalem, yet the religious leaders who knew the prophecy never went to worship Christ
- Joseph's immediate obedience to angelic warnings, taking Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod's murderous plot
- The fulfillment of prophecy through Caesar Augustus's census, forcing Mary and Joseph to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem despite Mary being near the time of delivery
- Daniel's prayer in Daniel 10, where the angel was dispatched immediately but delayed by spiritual warfare
- The rich man in Luke 16 who woke up in hell immediately after death

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Discipleship Questions

How does Herod's response to the news of Christ's birth mirror the way many people today react when confronted with Jesus's claim to be Lord of their lives?

The religious leaders knew exactly where the Messiah would be born but never made the two-hour walk to Bethlehem—what prevents people today from taking simple steps toward encountering Jesus despite having knowledge about Him?

In what ways does God use seemingly negative circumstances, like Caesar's taxation decree, to accomplish His redemptive purposes in our own lives?

Why do you think God chose to reveal Jesus's birth to shepherds and foreign wise men rather than to the religious establishment in Jerusalem?

How does the reality that devils believe in God and tremble challenge our understanding of what it truly means to have saving faith?

What does Herod's willingness to murder innocent children to protect his throne reveal about the destructive nature of refusing to surrender control to God?

The sermon emphasizes that God's plan is unstoppable—how should this truth affect the way we respond to troubling world events and personal trials?

How can we discern whether we are genuinely submitting to Christ as Lord or merely accumulating knowledge about Christianity like the scribes and Pharisees?

What does Joseph's immediate obedience to God's warnings teach us about the relationship between human free will and divine sovereignty?

If Jesus could return at any moment and His plan cannot be stopped, how should this urgency shape our daily priorities and evangelistic efforts?

Small Group Guide: God's Unstoppable Plan

Based on Matthew 2:1-23

Opening Prayer

Begin by thanking God for His incredible plan and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and open hearts to His truth.

Icebreaker Question

Share about a time when your plans were completely disrupted, but looking back, you can see how God was working things out for good.

Sermon Summary

This message explores the Christmas story through the lens of King Herod's opposition to Jesus, revealing that God's redemptive plan cannot be stopped by human resistance, political power, or spiritual warfare. Through Caesar's census, angelic warnings, and divine protection, we see God orchestrating all events to fulfill His purposes—and He continues to work in our lives today.

Key Scripture Passages

- Matthew 2:1-23
 - Micah 5:2
 - Proverbs 21:30
 - Romans 8:28
 - John 3:16-17
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Discussion Questions

1. The Threatened King (Matthew 2:1-8)

- **Why do you think Herod was so troubled by the news of Jesus' birth?**
- **In what ways do people today resist Jesus being "King" of their lives?**
- **The religious leaders knew the Scriptures but didn't go to Bethlehem (only 5 miles away). What does this teach us about head knowledge versus heart submission?**

2. The Protected Child (Matthew 2:9-15)

- **How did God use both supernatural means (the star) and natural means (government census) to accomplish His purposes?**
- **Share an example from your own life where you can now see God's hand guiding events you didn't understand at the time.**
- **Joseph obeyed immediately when warned by God. What makes immediate obedience difficult for us?**

3. God's Sovereignty and Human Choice

- **How do you reconcile God's sovereign control with human free will and responsibility?**
- **The sermon mentioned that God "orchestrates your life events so that Jesus Christ can be made real in your life." How have you seen this in your own journey?**
- **When bad things happen (like Herod's massacre), how do we maintain faith in God's goodness and plan?**

4. Personal Application

- **Are there areas of your life where you're still trying to be "king" instead of surrendering to Jesus?**
- **The wise men traveled far and rejoiced when they found Jesus. What does your pursuit of Christ look like?**
- **How does understanding that God's plan is unstoppable change the way you view current world events or personal challenges?**

Key Takeaways

1. **Knowledge without submission is not salvation** - Even the religious leaders and King Herod knew the Scriptures, but refused to worship Jesus.
2. **God uses all circumstances** - From government decrees to personal decisions, God weaves everything into His redemptive plan.
3. **God's plan cannot be stopped** - No political power, spiritual opposition, or human resistance can prevent what God purposes to do.
4. **God is actively intervening** - He's not a distant Creator but intimately involved in guiding events and protecting His people.

5. **We must choose** - Every person must decide whether to submit to Jesus as King or resist like Herod did.
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice:

1. **Daily Surrender** - Each morning this week, consciously surrender an area of your life to Jesus as King, asking Him to have complete control.
 2. **Share the Gospel** - The sermon emphasized urgency. Identify one person who needs to hear about Jesus and reach out to them this week.
 3. **Trust in Uncertainty** - Write down a current situation where you can't see God's plan. Pray daily, choosing to trust that He is working even when you can't see it.
 4. **Obey Immediately** - When you sense God prompting you this week (through Scripture, prayer, or conviction), practice immediate obedience like Joseph did.
 5. **Study Fulfilled Prophecy** - Research 5-10 Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. Let this strengthen your faith in God's Word and plan.
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Reflection Questions for Personal Quiet Time

- If I died today, am I absolutely certain I would go to heaven? Why or why not?
 - What does it mean practically for Jesus to be Lord (King) of my life?
 - Am I more like the wise men (seeking and worshiping Jesus) or the religious leaders (knowing about Him but not pursuing Him)?
 - Where am I resisting God's plan because I want to maintain control?
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Prayer Points

Praise:

- Thank God for His unstoppable plan of salvation
- Praise Jesus for willingly coming to die for our sins

Confession:

- Areas where we've resisted God's lordship
- Times we've relied on our own understanding instead of trusting Him

Intercession:

- For unsaved family and friends to come to Christ
- For believers to surrender fully to God's plan
- For wisdom to see God's hand in current circumstances
- For boldness to share the gospel

Petition:

- Ask God to help you trust His plan even when you can't see it
 - Request grace to obey immediately when He speaks
 - Pray for readiness for Christ's return
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Closing Thought

"God's plan is unstoppable. Jesus Christ is on the right hand of the Father today, and He will soon come for us, establish His earthly kingdom, and rule and reign from Jerusalem. The Christmas story reminds us that when the world rages and rulers resist, God is still on the throne."

Next Steps

- Memorize this week: Proverbs 21:30 - "There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord."
 - Read through Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 this week, looking for evidence of God's sovereign plan
 - Consider: Have I truly surrendered my life to Jesus Christ as King?
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Leader's Note: Be sensitive to those who may not yet be saved. Give opportunity at the end for anyone who wants to trust Christ or discuss their salvation privately with you or another mature believer.

5-Day Devotional: God's Unstoppable Plan

Day 1: When God Breaks the Silence

Reading: Matthew 2:1-6; Micah 5:2

Devotional: After 400 years of prophetic silence, God spoke through the birth of His Son. Like Israel waiting in darkness, we sometimes experience seasons when heaven seems quiet. Yet God's silence doesn't mean His absence. He was orchestrating events across empires, moving rulers and nations to fulfill ancient promises. The wise men sought diligently, following the light God provided step by step. When you feel distant from God, remember that He is actively working behind the scenes of your life. His timing is perfect, His promises are sure, and His plan for your redemption cannot be stopped. Are you willing to follow the light He gives you today, even when you cannot see the complete picture?

Day 2: The Choice Between Two Kings

Reading: Matthew 2:7-12; Joshua 24:14-15

Devotional: Herod knew the prophecies, consulted the Scriptures, and understood where Christ would be born—yet he refused to worship. Knowledge without surrender is not salvation. The wise men traveled thousands of miles to bow before Jesus, while religious leaders five miles away never made the journey. Today, Jesus still threatens human pride and self-rule. Many want information about Christ but resist His lordship over their lives. The fear of losing control becomes the root of rejecting Him. But consider this: opposing your Creator is as futile as a rooster standing against a very large vehicle. Which king rules your life today? Will you, like Herod, protect your throne, or like the wise men, will you surrender everything to worship the true King?

Day 3: God's Providence in Unlikely Places

Reading: Luke 2:1-7; Proverbs 21:1, 30-31

Devotional: A pagan emperor's tax decree became God's instrument to fulfill prophecy. Caesar Augustus sought political control and revenue; God used his decision to move Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. No government census, no virgin birth in the prophesied city. God doesn't need miracles when He can redirect human choices to accomplish His purposes. What seems horrible to us may be part of God's greater plan. When life feels chaotic and circumstances seem against you, remember that God is the master orchestrator. He moved an entire empire so a carpenter could obey a law, and a Savior could be born exactly where Scripture predicted. Nothing in your life is random. God is actively guiding all events, working everything together for good for those who trust Him. Will you surrender your plans to His greater purpose?

Day 4: Protected by Divine Intervention

Reading: Matthew 2:13-18; Psalm 2:1-6

Devotional: The devil tried to destroy the Christ child through Herod's murderous rage, attacking innocent children when he could not reach Jesus. Evil is real, suffering is painful, yet God remains sovereign. He warned Joseph in dreams, guided the wise men by divine revelation, and protected His Son through human obedience. God's plan advances despite spiritual warfare and human wickedness. The same enemy who sought to devour Christ still attacks the innocent today, especially children. But remember: when Satan cannot stop God's plan, his resistance is futile. Kings rage, rulers plot, nations resist—yet God is not worried. Jesus Christ reigns whether people accept Him or not. In your battles, take courage. The God who protected His Son through Herod's fury will protect His purposes in your life. Trust His unstoppable plan.

Day 5: Your Eternal Decision

Reading: John 3:16-21; Romans 10:9-13

Devotional: God orchestrated history, fulfilled prophecies, and sent His Son to die for you. Jesus lived sinlessly, died sacrificially, and rose victoriously—all so you could be saved. Your eternal destiny depends on what you do with Jesus Christ. You cannot remain neutral; indecision is a decision to reject Him. Like the wise men, will you worship Him, or like Herod, will you resist His rule? God has brought every event of your life together to bring you to this moment of decision. He wants you saved. The invitation is open, but eternity is a long time to be wrong. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved. Today is the day of salvation. Will you surrender your life to the King of kings?