

UNSTOPPABLE

THE PEOPLE OF GOD LIVING THE PURPOSES OF GOD



UNSTOPPABLE GOD

The Transformation for Adult LifeGroups

God is unstoppable.

SEPTEMBER 9, 2018/SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: Isaiah 14:24-27, 40:21-26, 46:5-10

The Lord Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will happen." ²⁵ I will crush the Assyrian in my land; on my mountains I will trample him down. His yoke will be taken from my people, and his burden removed from their shoulders." ²⁶ This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. ²⁷ For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? ²² He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. ²³ He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴ No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. ²⁵ "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. ²⁶ Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

"With whom will you compare me or count me equal? To whom will you liken me that we may be compared? ⁶ Some pour out gold from their bags and weigh out silver on the scales; they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god, and they bow down and worship it. ⁷ They lift it to their shoulders and carry it; they set it up in its place, and there it stands. From that spot it cannot move. Even though someone cries out to it, it cannot answer; it cannot save them from their troubles. ⁸ "Remember this, keep it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. ⁹ Remember the former things, those of long ago; 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.'

FIRST THOUGHTS

- What comes to mind when you hear the word "unstoppable"?
- What things have you heard described as "unstoppable"?

As we begin this new series called "Unstoppable" we should start with the one who truly is—God. We often use the word to describe things that seem really powerful, but there is only one who is really unstoppable.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The Book of Isaiah is considered one of the greatest prophetic books of the Bible. It was written by the prophet Isaiah in the 8th century B.C. when God's people were divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). At this time the Assyrian Empire was on the rise as a great world power. They had swept through most of the ancient near east and were considered an "unstoppable force". They would destroy the Northern Kingdom and threaten the Southern Kingdom. Eventually, because of the preaching of Isaiah and the godly King Hezekiah, the Assyrians were defeated by God as they besieged the capital city of Jerusalem. Isaiah 36-37 relates the story of the Assyrians threatening Jerusalem and God's deliverance of his people. After focusing on the threat of the Assyrians and the deliverance of Jerusalem by God, Isaiah then predicts the coming of the Babylonian empire and the captivity of all of Israel. Isaiah contains much of the messianic prophecy about the coming of Christ (often called "My servant" or "the suffering servant" in Isaiah) as a deliverer for all people. The verses we'll look at today are from several sections of Isaiah (chapters 14, 40, and 46) and relate to God's reminding His people that His plans and purpose truly are unstoppable.

- Have you ever felt like you were facing something unstoppable? Maybe it was a crisis, an illness, a change, or a burden. What did it feel like?

EXPLORE THE TEXT

> Read Isaiah 14:24-27

- What do these verses tell us about God?
- What are some of the differences between God's plans and purposes and ours?

> Read Isaiah 40:21-26

- How do these verses compare God to the people of the earth and the princes of the earth?
- How does God demonstrate his power according to these verses?

> Read Isaiah 46:5-10

- How do these verses compare God to idols?
- What do you think the phrase “remember the former things, those of long ago” in verse 9 means?
- So then do these verses describing the unstoppable nature of God and his plans and purposes line up with your experience of life? Does it seem to you that in our current world, God’s plans and purposes are unstoppable? Why or why not?
- How do we help those who don’t believe in God to see him as unstoppable?

There are 4 sources of suffering in this world:

1. Suffering can be sent by God as a trial to strengthen us or to bring glory to him (for example in the Book of Job).
2. Suffering can be the result of our own or other people’s sinful choices (for example God’s judgment on David for his affair with Bathsheba).
3. Suffering can be the result of the sinful choices of others (for example the disciples suffered for their faith because of the sinful choices of the Roman Emperors).
4. Suffering can be the result of the fallen world we live in (for example natural disasters, sickness, accidents, etc.).

But one thing is universally true about suffering, although it may come from many causes, God allows it and uses it to accomplish his purposes and plans. Romans 8:28 reminds us “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

- How does knowing God uses suffering help us to deal with suffering?
- How can we help others when they are suffering without giving “trite answers” or dismissing the pain they are in?

Take 20 . . .

Each week during this series we will focus on a next step we can take based on what we’ve learned and discussed. We call this “Take 20”. The idea is to take 20 minutes (or seconds or dollars or whatever) and do something as a practical and concrete next step from today’s lesson.

Choose one or more of these Take 20 Challenges to complete this week:

- Take 20 minutes to write down some challenges you have faced that have strengthened you. Offer a prayer of thanks to God for using these difficult things to accomplish his purpose in your life.
- Take 20 minutes to think of someone who is going through difficult times or might be doubting God’s unstoppable nature. How can you encourage them? Send them a card or text, visit them, or call them. Be there to listen and support, not provide answers.
- Take 20 minutes/day to read the book of Esther in the Old Testament. By the end of the week you can finish the book. It records the amazing story of God’s unstoppable purpose for Esther and the Jews that he carried out despite the evil plans of others to harm them. The interesting thing is the Book of Esther never once mentions God’s name. But he is always behind the scenes working out his unstoppable plan. Look for how he worked anonymously through the story of Esther.

UPCOMING LESSONS

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| 9/16 | Unstoppable Vision— God has an unstoppable vision for my life. |
| 9/23 | Unstoppable Truth—We trust God’s Word. |
| 9/30 | Unstoppable Love—We love all people. |

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

10th – Lamentations 3-5; Revelation 15 | **11th** – Daniel 1-2; Revelation 16 | **12th** – Daniel 3- 4; Psalm 81; Revelation 17 | **13th**– Ezekiel 33-35, Revelation 18 | **14th** – Ezekiel 36-37; Psalm 110; Revelation 19 | **15th** – Ezekiel 38-39; Psalm 145; Revelation 20 | **16th** – Ezekiel 40-41; Psalm 128; Revelation 21