

Serving the King in 2026

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[0 : 00] Can you believe it's 2026? Oh my goodness. I thought we'd be living in the future already. And flying cars and going to weekend trips to the moon. But here we are. And in some ways it is the future. In many ways it's the future, the technology. But in many ways it's still the past. We deal with the same issues. It seems to go around every year.

But we're on the brink of a new year. And it's always an opportunity for a bit of reflection. How was the year? How was our last year? A bit of opportunity to be optimistic and think about the future ahead. And people are often optimistic. That's why it's Happy New Year. It's going to be a great year. I hope you have a great year.

And for those of us who, when you were born, you've got a number 19 before the year of your birth. You're like, yeah, hopefully it'll be a good year. Let's see how it goes.

But it's good to be optimistic. You've got to start somewhere. Although there is a lot that dampens our optimism through the year and for the year. Often it has to do with politics. The things that are happening in the rulership of the world.

You think, gosh, what are our rulers doing? What are they meant to be doing? Because that puts a big break on the things that we want to plan and do, especially in South Africa.

[1 : 29] politicians are rulers. Don't seem that anyone is interested in uplifting our lives or making our lives any better. They just look like they're feeding themselves at our expenses.

You look at the politics of the world and you think, goodness, what are they thinking? I was just on holiday for a little bit now. And I got back yesterday just to prep for today.

And suddenly America is at war with Argentina. Just about. I don't know if you've seen the news, but something's going on there. And you wonder what's going on in the world.

There's turmoil in the world. That turmoil in the world often leads to turmoil inside of us. It dampens our optimism. What is God going to do for me if I don't understand what he's doing out there in the world?

Well, God's answer to what looks like the mess of the world, and especially the political situation, but also our own personal situation, is the kingship of Jesus.

[2 : 38] God's answer to the messed up situation of the world, both externally, outside, in the world of politics, in the world of culture, in South Africa, overseas. It's the same answer that he's got for the turmoil and the stuff that happens in our life that we can't control.

It's the kingship. It's the rule of Jesus. And that was God's answer all those years ago in Isaiah's day. That's why we've been spending so much time in Isaiah 9, unpacking what it means that there's this person, this being, this king that God has sent.

What is he going to do? What is he going to do about this world? And you might be thinking, when are we going to stop with Isaiah 9? But this is the last in our series, kind of the end of the Christmas series, really.

We're going to spend our last time in this section just looking at verse 6 and 7, about the rulership of Christ. And the people of Isaiah's day were facing the same questions we're facing.

They were living in a time of huge political upheaval. You've got the small little kingdom of Judah, which was centered around Jerusalem. And then to the north, they had a rival kingdom, the rival Jewish kingdom, their brothers, the kingdom of Israel, wanting to take them out.

[3 : 57] If they didn't help them take Assyria out, Assyria was this huge economic power, huge military power. And then Israel to the north of Judah was saying, listen, you better join us against Assyria.

And if you don't join us, we're going to come and take you. And then Judah was like, well, we better run off to Assyria to get help, because otherwise Israel is going to take us out. And the kingdom of Judah didn't know which way to turn.

And so God sends him the prophet Isaiah, and he says, guys, don't run around like a chicken without a head. You don't know how the world of politics works.

You can't plan, you can't scheme enough to get ahead. Trust me, the God who makes all of this possible, trust in the king that I'm going to send, who's actually the real ruler of all that's going on.

So if you've got Isaiah 9 open, or if you don't, then open up there to Isaiah 9, and we're going to look at a few points about Jesus being the ruler of the world.

[5 : 07] God's answer to the turmoil of Isaiah's day is the same answer for the turmoil of our day, and the turmoil that you might find in your life. So verse 6, to us a child is born, to us a son is given, the government will be on his shoulders.

The government, the rule, is going to be on his shoulders. The rule of what? Well, what kind of rule is he going to be?

Well, he's going to be a wonderful counselor, a mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace. We've unpacked those titles over Christmas time. But then he goes on to talk about his rule again, his government, of the greatness of his government, and peace.

There will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on, and forever.

And then we looked at the zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. We looked at that last week. So we're focusing on, on verse 6 and 7, the government of David's son.

[6 : 21] These verses speak of the overwhelming rule of the Messiah, and how that rule, his rule, his government, will conquer over every rule and authority in the world.

And we're going to look at how that lays the basis for our service to him. When we plan, when we think about what we want to achieve and do this year, how are we going to serve Jesus as our king?

But it's a service that can be filled with optimism, no matter how crazy the world around us gets. And the reason for that is because of the incredible power of Jesus' shoulders.

Because the government is going to be on his shoulders. And so we're going to look at what it means to be, the government is on the shoulders of Jesus. Now, we've got a saying about standing on the shoulders of giants, don't we?

In English, we're standing on the shoulders of giants. And so leaders in a certain field, let's say sport or science, will talk about how they can only achieve something because they're building on amazing work done before them by others.

[7 : 27] They're standing on the shoulders of giants. Well, nothing can compare to the shoulders of Jesus. Because the government, verse 6, is on his shoulders.

Verse 7, of the greatness of his government, there'll be no end. Only Jesus' shoulders are big enough to carry the eternal weight of the unfathomable glory of the celestial kingdom of the omnipotent God.

Only Jesus' shoulders are big enough to carry the eternal weight of the unfathomable glory of the celestial kingdom, the heavenly kingdom, the kingdom that comes from heaven, of the omnipotent God.

The government that Isaiah is talking about here is the kingdom that rules over all the other kingdoms of the world.

What the New Testament calls the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the rule of God come to earth whereby God's king rights all the wrongs of the world, gets rid of evil, and lets God's original purpose for creation flow out again.

[8 : 47] Blessing, goodness, and life. But this kingdom is an unconquerable kingdom that will grow and grow and grow and outlast every other kingdom.

Which makes it the strongest, most important rule in the world. You say, but is he ruling? Because it doesn't look like it sometimes.

So how do we figure this out? Well, there's a famous photo of Queen Elizabeth II with every minister that served under her. And so there's a picture of the queen and she's surrounded by all the ministers, the prime ministers that served under her.

Remember, she was the longest serving monarch. Was it like, must have been over 70 years or something like that. And they obviously digitized all the ministers and they're all processed around her.

and the picture makes it very clear that they come and go. Yes, they're the rulers that everyone sees. They come and go, but she was constant.

[9 : 52] Now, in the kingdom of England, she doesn't have a lot of political power, but just being there actually creates a stability and this authority that you can't place by just having people come and go.

But Jesus' kingdom is something like that. You can put every king and power and authority against him, they're going to come and go. Jesus' kingdom stays and Jesus' kingdom grows.

And it's only Jesus who's got the power, the authority, the ability to be that kind of a king. He's the only person untouched by sin. He's the only ruler untouched by corruption.

He's the only person that hasn't made a mess of things. Not us and certainly not the rulers of our day. One commentator compares Jesus to the rulers of this world and it's so clear what a difference there is.

He says this, Politicians of this day look for what they can get from you. Jesus looks for what he can do for you. Leaders of this day surround themselves with servants.

[11 : 06] Jesus surrounds us with his servanthood. Leaders of this day use their power to build their empire. Jesus uses his power to wash our feet.

Rulers of this day regularly make war and create unrest for their own gain. Jesus brings peace and rest to hearts that need it for their gain.

The higher the plane of importance one reaches in this world the more inaccessible one becomes. And Jesus as we've seen over this series is Emmanuel God with us.

So Jesus is a different ruler than the rulers of this world but he is a powerful one. And he's building a kingdom that we can trust in and it gives us hope and optimism because it can't be overthrown.

The government of the world rests on the shoulders of Jesus and that government is already there. At Easter time we're going to celebrate his death but also his resurrection.

[12 : 14] After his resurrection comes his ascension into the throne room of heaven where he sits down at the right hand of God and proceeds to bring all of his enemies and make them his footstool.

So Jesus is busy reigning now over the kingdoms of the world. But what's important about Jesus is kind of easily overlooked is that he will rule on David's throne.

Let's have a look at verse 7 in the text if you've got it open there. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end he will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom establishing and upholding it.

We overlook this little bit about Jesus being on David's throne because it's difficult to fit into our framework as Christians often especially the framework of the incarnate Son of God which we celebrate over Christmas.

And I think the sort of unsaid suspicion is that if Jesus is the Son of God in other words he's God in the flesh then what difference does it make if he's the Son of David? Because obviously being the Son of God is so much more important than being the Son of David.

[13 : 26] That's kind of the way that our minds tend to work. The Bible's a bit different because everything revolves around Jesus' Davidic kingship.

It is utterly central to the gospel because the kingdom he is going to rule over the kingdom that Jesus is going to rule over is David's kingdom. So all the things you get from Jesus you only get if you belong to that kingdom.

The kingdom of Jesus. The kingdom of David. If you belong to that kingdom you get the promise of peace. You get the promise of an eternal kingdom.

Of a kingdom that cannot be shaken. A kingdom that stands firm regardless of what's happening or who's trying to overthrow it. It's important to remember this because all the gospels link the birth of Jesus to his Davidic line.

We saw it in our series in Matthew when we did our series in Matthew and we saw it in our reading from Luke chapter 1. He says this verse 68 That's Zechariah speaking.

[14 : 48] He's received the news that he's going to have a son and he was told that his son is going to be the forerunner of the Messiah that's coming. And in the mind of the New Testament writers it's so important that they link the coming of Jesus to this king that was promised to David.

Why does it do that? How does that help us in having optimism for the earth in understanding that Jesus is in control and there's turmoil out there. How does that rest and give me peace in my mind?

The reason it's important is for us to get this link that Jesus is this Davidic king and that's an important part of the promise is because it makes the promises of God more sure to us.

If you link Jesus and the Messiahship to his Davidic kingship it makes the promises of God more sure to us because it means that God has been working through time and space generation after generation to make sure Jesus would come and be the king that he always promised.

So in that Luke chapter 1 it goes on to say in verse 70 as he said through his holy prophets of long ago he has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David as he said as he promised through his holy prophets of long ago.

[16 : 11] How long ago is Zechariah talking about? Zechariah's writing just when Jesus was born so just between B.C. and A.D. How long ago was Zechariah thinking of when he says oh when these holy prophets were speaking about this Davidic king coming?

The promise of a Davidic king goes back to 2 Samuel chapter 7 which is about a thousand years before Zechariah said that this is the promise that has come true.

God has promised to David David's about 1000 B.C. So God promises to David you're going to get an heir you're going to have a king he's going to be an eternal king and nothing can shake that kingdom.

That's a thousand years of history that God is directing to get to Jesus. That promise to David 1000 B.C. is based on a promise to Abraham that's 2000 B.C.

that goes back a thousand years before David. The promise that God made to Abraham in Genesis 12 that blessing would come through Abraham's line.

[17 : 19] That promise to David that promise to Abraham in 2000 B.C. is an outworking of a promise that God made to Adam and Eve that's about 4000 B.C.

And the promise he makes there is that someone is going to come from the line of Eve from the line of humans and they're going to defeat the evil that has defeated them.

So how does that help me trust God more to know that there's these promises that come through time and space?

The point is that if God has kept his promises to all those people through all that time to get to you today living 2000 years after Zechariah so that you can get the blessings God has promised to those who have Jesus as their king.

Just think about that for a second about how amazing that is and how much turmoil God has to control to be the ruler over to get his king at the right time at the right point in history so that later on he can reach down into your life and give you the blessings that God wants you to get to restore you to fellowship to him and to the world around you.

[18 : 48] It means God is in total control over everything that's happening in the world over all the news items over all the disasters over the rulers when they decide to invade one place or if they decide not to put the rule of law in place and make our lives you we talk about it all the time how difficult the rulers make our lives this promise that there's going to be someone from the line of David is a massive promise of God because it winds and weaves through time and space showing us without a doubt that God is in control and he's totally trustworthy over every area of our lives so what are those blessings going to be well what does he promise for us what are we going to get what is this unshakable kingdom going to give us well Luke 1 tells us what those blessings are going to be so Luke 1 verse 6 8 will pop up on the screen

Zechariah starts that section and he's just so thankful that God has finally come and going to do what he said he's going to do so he starts off praise be to the Lord the God of Israel verse 6 8 here's the first blessing he has come to his people he's not left them alone he's arrived where they are they're having issues he has come to them to solve those issues what is he going to do he's come to redeem them he's come to redeem them God is with us he's going to redeem us what does redeem mean free us from our past mistakes our past lives give us a new future and a new freedom we've all made mistakes in 2025 we're going to make mistakes in 2026 here's the challenge for us in 2026 because Jesus has come you don't have to make the same mistakes you made in 2025 you can make other mistakes and then next year you can check on those mistakes again well what if you make mistakes now what does this king do about those mistakes in ancient world you pretty got one chance at doing what the king wanted or the emperor wanted and if you didn't they just killed you in the modern world if you're useful to rulers and people in power they will keep you if you're not useful thankfully we live in the modern world because of 2000 years of

Christianity they don't kill you anymore but they can't use you and they don't care about you they just take your money make sure you pay your tax otherwise you go to jail and then they take our money and we all know what they do with our money in this country the last thing they're going to do with it is help the people that they're supposed to help but Jesus does everything differently he gives us so many things to use he doesn't take from us!

he's come to his people and he's redeemed them verse 69 he's a horn of salvation for us what is a horn of salvation we don't speak like that anymore what do they say in Afrikaans no they say you're a dwere yeah not quite the same thing but a horn of salvation is something that's strong and powerful Jesus is mighty to save nothing can get in the way of salvation for you nothing can get in the way of him giving you the blessings that he wants to give you he is mighty to save from all the things that get in the way of his love for us including our own sin he's mighty to save us from all the evils we face in this world the difficulty is he doesn't save us some of you have faced this past year okay has he saved me from them no he saved you in them but he's kept you he's held you and there's things you can do in the turmoil and we'll look at that in the last bit about trusting and serving in him because he is mighty to save nothing can get in the way of his purposes for you and through you to the world around us what if we don't do what he wants is he going to end us in verse 72 in

Luke chapter 1 he's doing all of this to show mercy to our ancestors! because of his tender mercy he shows us mercy he gives us relief he doesn't take us out when we don't make it when we mess up that's all been paid for Jesus paid for it at the cross he did this to show us mercy to make friends with us again and it's a friendship it's a bond that can't be broken because he's mighty to save okay so in your life when things are going wrong when there's turmoil internally when there's turmoil out there and that turmoil out there affects you you need to stand on Jesus shoulders what do I mean by that well are you trusting him is he your firm foundation is he your rock is he your fortress is he the basis of your is he the basis of your feelings have you submitted your fears and your hopes and your worries and your troubles to him

[24 : 32] Christians say we do but do you do it in a way that lifts you up out of your situation his shoulders the government is on his shoulders so I can if I'm standing on his shoulders then I don't need to carry the burdens myself are you doing it in a way that lifts you up out of your situation not completely remove you from the situation but lift you up so that you know that God is in control the rulership of God over every situation you will ever find yourself in is on Jesus shoulders they're not on your shoulders the rulership of God over every situation you will find yourself in is on Jesus shoulders not on your shoulders you say yes that's good to know how does that help me well this is where trust comes in you have to trust that

Jesus is in control so when you get anxious and you look at the chaos unfolding in the world when you look at the chaos unfolding in your life okay then you tell yourself it says I 9 verse 7 the government is on Jesus shoulders not my shoulders not on the shoulders of those who think they rule the world they don't know what they're doing they're actually doing Jesus bidding in some strange way and then you think but what is Jesus doing well he doesn't have to tell you you just have to trust him he does give us broad strokes we do know what he's doing he's busy making all of his enemies his footstool he's ruling over the fears of this world for our good but also to build his kingdom don't make the mistake that our good means our comfort that's what we think Jesus must make my life comfortable no he's not going to make your life comfortable but the best thing you can do with your life is trust him lean on his shoulders and it removes that anxiety it lightens the load that you carry on your shoulders and so you can trust and serve

Jesus in total freedom and that's just the last few minutes looking at trusting and serving Jesus more in 2026 so he's this great and mighty ruler he's got these shoulders that can handle what we think are the problems of the world and so what does that mean for us it means we can trust and serve Jesus more in 2026 now we all make new years resolutions sometimes you go through ups and downs with new resolutions sometimes you're strong with them and sometimes like you know they never work I'm not even going to bother with new year!

that's where I am! year but a typical one that Christians make is new year's resolution I need to have a deeper relationship with God deeper more intimate more personal but I think that's putting the cart before the horse the way that we get a deeper relationship is not by for so you are going to get a deeper relationship with God not by focusing on getting a deeper relationship but on trusting him as a king as a ruler who's in charge over more areas of your life with more things in your life in 2026 than you did in 2025 and to serve him as king in more ways in 2026 than we served him in!

2025 That's why it's another reason why it's important to have Jesus as an actual king as this Davidic king because it stops me from having feelings as the goal of my relationship with him very often we think of Jesus as the king of my heart and there's a sense where that's true but if he's only the king of your heart then it's very easy to make it all about feelings are important but they're not the goal of our relationship with Jesus he's not just the king of your heart he's the king of the kingdoms of this world so feelings are not the goal in the Bible when we're thinking of having a deeper relationship with God we think of that as a goal feelings are not necessarily the goal they're not unimportant!

[29 : 18] but the goal is action what the Bible wants is not our feelings but our actions our service Jesus wants us to do stuff for him often our feelings get in the way of obeying him so we've got to make sure that feelings don't get in the way of obeying him you don't have to feel it to do the right thing you just have to do it in fact trust and service is the goal of Jesus kingship in Luke chapter 1 so Luke chapter 1 again verse 74 75 why is he come to redeem us why is he our horn of salvation why is he showing us mercy to our ancestors why has he made this promise of thousands of years what's that all for what does that mean for me well verse 74 and 75 in Luke 1 tells us it is to!

to rescue us from the hand of our enemies to make us comfortable and enjoy a good life it doesn't say that to rescue us from the hand of our enemies and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days so the whole purpose of being saved by Jesus and having him as your king!

to serve him what does it mean to serve Jesus it doesn't have to do with your feelings it's got to do with what you do so here's a thought for yourself this year as you do your new resolutions or if you don't have one then here's a good one how can I serve Jesus more in 2026 what can I do for him in 2026 that I haven't done in 2025!

Yes you've done stuff for that's fine if you want to break out of that cycle have as a goal this year to do something different serve Jesus in a different way in 2026 than you did in 2025 if we're going to be effective in Jesus kingdom if you're going to be more effective this year than you were last year we need to think of Jesus as a king with with this immense power and authority and don't worry too much about your feelings just trust him and continue serving him think of ways you can serve Jesus better as king what can you do for Jesus this year he didn't do last year what can you do to expand what can you do to grow what can you do to support his kingdom try a new area of service here at the church there's plenty of things to I'm not called to that who's calling you what voices are you hearing

I don't hear voices I see a need oh I can't possibly how do you know you haven't tried Adrian said we have to have mature Christians do we need mature Christians Tracy okay yes okay there's many things we can do in this church that you can do that you might not have done before think about that just think about that just the service in this church and you'll serve Jesus more in the area heaven and you'll see it lead to growth opportunities for you that's how you grow in your relationship by doing stuff you serve him by serving others maybe you need to think about how you can give to church work maybe you think about how you can give to

[33 : 13] Christian charities maybe it's reading good Christian literature to expand your thinking about who God is or expand your knowledge about amazing people in church history that have served God think about reading an awesome Christian book this year!

if you've! hadn't grown your relationship with God if you do that at school what can you do to serve Jesus better maybe there's a Christian union you need to join maybe you need to start a Christian union don't get to the end of 2026 don't get be in the same situation in January 2027 and say oh I haven't served Jesus differently this year don't stay the same grow in your service you grow in your service well you grow in your relationship by growing in service growing in trust is not the same as growing in comfort you'll only grow in trust if you grow in service because it's when you serve that you realize how much more you need Jesus than you thought so just have that as a mental thing you'll only grow in trust if you grow in service it's not an automatic well there is some of very much more if you just get active in service to

Jesus and then just review what did I do to serve Jesus in 2025 cool those were great cool I want to do something different in 2026 so I can grow my relationship maybe you looked at 2025 and you haven't really served Jesus yeah now what now okay do something this year that you haven't!

done before! then when you get to 2027 God willing you can look back and see how much you've served Jesus in spite of the craziness in spite of the problems remember his kingdom the promise is that his kingdom is going to grow and make 2026 a year in which your relationship with God grows as you trust him because he's the king that rules and as you serve him because he's the king that rules over all the other kingdoms and he's worth serving and you'll get much more stuff done for his kingdom but we need God's help with all of that and so let's pray to Jesus and ask him to help us in the year ahead let me pray for us Lord Jesus we stand at the start of a new year two thousand and odd years after you were born in a very few years it will be two thousand years after you died and rose again and were enthroned as the kingdom of the heavens

Lord Jesus we are so thankful for all you've done for us redeemed us come to be with us forgiven us our sins inheritors of all your promises and blessings but Lord we want to make this a year where we serve you and especially Lord in areas we haven't served you before help us to think about that help us to trust you that you will give us all we need to do that and be with us this year Lord as we build your kingdom as we expand your kingdom as we work with you and your Holy Spirit and the Christians around us to make this year where we serve you and grow in our trust and service of you in Jesus name Amen