

THE KING WHO REIGNS FOREVER

Leader pages on pp. 114-117

THE POINT:
JESUS RULES HIS KINGDOM NOW AND FOREVER.

ISAIAH 9:6-7; LUKE 1:26-33

MEMORY VERSE

Isa. ^{9:6} For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now on and forever. The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

+
+
+

.....
Luke ^{1:26} In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And the angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be. ³⁰ Then the angel told her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.

.....
³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end."

KEYWORDS

House of David (Luke 1:27)— One of the clans in the tribe of Judah, from which prophecies said the Messiah would come (Gen. 49:9-10).

Favored (v. 28)—Mary was favored because the Lord set His undeserved grace upon her, not because she had earned good standing.

Jesus (v. 30)—This name (Greek *-Iesous*) is equivalent to the Hebrew *Yehoshua* (Joshua), meaning "the Lord is salvation."

Son of the Most High (v. 32)— This title means Jesus was the Son of God Himself (v. 35) because God created the life in Mary's womb without the aid of a human father.

HOW DO WE KNOW JESUS RULES BOTH NOW AND FOREVER?

Sidney Poitier botched his lines when he first started out as an actor. He was told he should work as a dishwasher, because his Caribbean accent was so thick. It must've been a surprise when he won an Academy Award in 1963.³

Abraham Lincoln was another man most people didn't expect to succeed. After all, he failed in several business ventures, and during his service in the military, Lincoln went from being a captain to a private!⁴

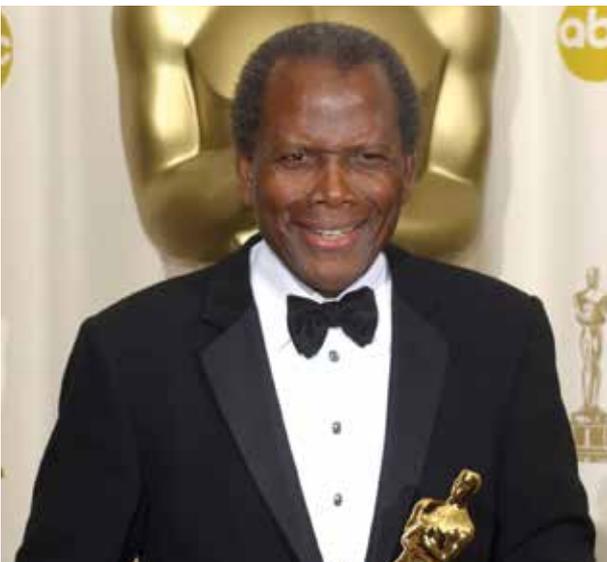
The work of Jesus far exceeded anything people were expecting from the Messiah; although they had expected a warrior, Jesus came to do far more than they could've imagined. Those who watched Jesus grow up like any other Jewish child and become a carpenter were likely surprised by His work as an itinerant rabbi. Even to those who knew the angelic announcement of His arrival, His ministry and work on our behalf far exceeded anything they expected. Jesus became King of kings and Lord of lords—titles He holds now and forever.

Prophecy Declares It // Isaiah 9:6-7

Jesus came to earth to bring us into God's eternal kingdom. Jesus would show us how to love God and people. He would be obedient unto death on a cross and rise from the grave, giving us new life.

Isaiah 9:6-7 is a prophecy that reflects the full picture of Jesus. Isaiah 9:1-3 tells us "a great light" one day would appear in the region of Galilee. Isaiah described how God would bless the people with joy and freedom from their oppressors and establish a new kingdom that would be ruled by a new kind of king. Verses 6-7 describe that King.

- **The government will be on his shoulders.** This is the image of a King putting on His royal robes, that represents who He is and the authority He has.
- **Wonderful.** The Hebrew word refers to that which is supernatural and miraculous. This is the same root word for the miracles that occurred in Egypt (Ex. 3:20).



THE POINT: JESUS RULES HIS KINGDOM NOW AND FOREVER.

- **Counselor.** This Counselor would give wise counsel. Putting “Wonderful” alongside “Counselor” pointed to a Ruler who would express God’s wisdom in all His words and actions.
- **Mighty God.** This is a common title for God (Deut. 10:17; Ps. 24:8; Jer. 32:18). It points to the deity of Jesus. This prophecy points to Jesus, the mighty, divine Warrior who fights for His people.
- **Eternal Father.** We associate this term with God the Father. We acknowledge the deity of Jesus, but the term refers to the King’s fatherly style of leadership. Jesus will wisely lead us forever.
- **Prince of Peace.** Jesus will establish a kingdom of peace. He brought us peace through His death on the cross. “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile everything to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Col. 1:19-20).

WHICH OF THESE TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS STANDS OUT TO YOU THE MOST?

The qualities of the One prophesied in these verses far outshine the greatest human leader. His righteous, benevolent, and peace-filled reign will never end.

This describes the character of Jesus and how He will rule and reign over the people of God. Jesus’ birth prepares us to hope for the day when He will come again. At His second coming, Jesus will come as the resurrected King who will bring justice, gather His faithful followers unto Himself, and establish forever the new heaven and new earth. God was faithful to send us a Savior. He will be faithful to send us a King!

IN WHAT WAYS DOES CHRIST’S ETERNAL REIGN OFFER HOPE?

Uniquely Designed for It

// Luke 1:26-31

Centuries after Isaiah prophesied about the coming Messiah, events unfolded regarding the promised child. Luke records the angelic announcement regarding the birth of John the



DIGGING DEEPER DAVIDIC COVENANT

Jesus’ birth fulfilled God’s promised Davidic covenant prophesied by Nathan to David. “When your time comes and you rest ... I will raise up after you your descendant ... and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son ... Your house and kingdom will endure before me forever, and your throne will be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:12-16). God promised David a descendant (Seed) who would be given a secure (eternal) kingdom (v. 12). He would build a temple for the Lord (v. 13). He would have a Father/Son relationship with God (v. 14). God’s promise is unconditional (v. 15). The Lord granted David an eternal house (dynasty), kingdom (nation), and throne (sovereignty) forever (v. 16).

What is the significance of this Davidic covenant for us today?

Baptist (Luke 1:5-25), followed six months later by the angelic announcement to a virgin in Nazareth named Mary. Gabriel, the same angel who announced the birth of John, now came to Mary with another announcement.

The word “angel” means messenger. Gabriel’s initial message wasn’t complex, but it was confusing. “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you” (v. 28). Luke reported, “she was deeply troubled by this statement” (v. 29). But “then the angel told her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary’” (v. 30).

Mary “found favor with God” (v. 30). To find favor with God means to be “full of grace.” Mary received God’s grace. All who have accepted Christ by faith are full of grace. Paul used this Greek word when he wrote, because we are adopted into God’s family through Christ, we have received “his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One” (Eph. 1:6).

For many, knowing God is present is comforting; for others, however, the presence of God causes them to be afraid. Mary, though, was troubled because she didn’t know why she was blessed with the presence of God.

Twice in verse 27, Luke used the word “virgin.” Luke emphasized God’s role in this event. This was no ordinary conception. Gabriel gave more detail in verse 35: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.” This angelic statement is clear: Mary’s son would “be called the Son of God.”

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS BEING FULLY GOD?

Mary’s role emphasized that this child also would be fully human. Jesus became one of us. He was born, lived, and died as a human being. Hebrews 4:15 assures us, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with

our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin.” Jesus knows what it’s like to face tests, trials, and temptations—yet He never sinned. Jesus is the only true Savior because He lived the perfect life we should live before God. “He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS BEING FULLY MAN?



Destiny Demands It // Luke 1:32-33

Gabriel announced the role and character of Jesus. Jesus’ mission was unlike any other mission the world has ever seen because of who Jesus is, what He will do, and where He will be for all eternity.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS JESUS RULES IN YOUR LIFE?

- **He will be great.** Gabriel’s announcement pointed to someone infinitely greater. “Great” was a word used frequently to describe God in the Old Testament (Deut. 10:17; Ps. 145:3; 147:5). No one is greater

THE POINT: JESUS RULES HIS KINGDOM NOW AND FOREVER.

than Jesus—and no one ever will be than our all-powerful Savior and Lord.

- **He will be called the Son of the Most High.** “Most High” was an Old Testament term reserved for God. Not only is Jesus great, but He is God’s Son. As Mary’s son, Jesus is fully human. As the Son of the Most High, Jesus is fully God.
- **He will be given the throne of His Father David and will rule over the house of Jacob.** God promised King David, “Your house and kingdom will endure before me forever, and your throne will be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:16). Jesus spoke creation into existence (Col. 1:16), and as the resurrected Lord, Jesus would sit at the right hand of God “far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given” (Eph. 1:21).

Jesus, Son of the Most High, will rule and reign above all forever. When we surrender our lives to Jesus, we receive the privilege of joining Him in this rule and reign for all eternity. He will be our King forever and ever.

WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD IT MAKE THAT WE ARE PART OF THE ETERNAL KINGDOM?

DID YOU KNOW?

In the U.S., Christmas is generally celebrated without fear. In Bethlehem, there are political complications around Christmas. In 2002, Israeli Defense Forces occupied Bethlehem as part of Operation Defensive Shield.⁵ At this time, Palestinian militants took refuge in the Church of the Nativity. The same year, the Israeli West Bank barrier was erected, extending over 80 kilometers and surrounding Bethlehem on three sides. Consequently, checkpoints and roadblocks separate the church marking the place where Christ was born from the church marking the place of His crucifixion. As a result, it is more difficult for Palestinian Christians to visit Bethlehem and move between the two holy sites. However, Christians in the Middle East continue to celebrate Christmas.

What do you think the impact would be if Christians in the U.S. had opposition to celebrating Christmas freely?

LIVE IT

How will your life reflect the fact that Jesus reigns?

After Christmas, people pack up the decorations and don’t give Jesus much thought until next Christmas. They leave Jesus in the manger, but the events of His nativity are only part of the story. We must remember that Jesus grew into adulthood, lived a perfect life, and died on our behalf. He is the King who reigns as Lord over all creation forever. How will He reign in your life after Christmas?

+ + +

- **Be creative.** Think of some creative ways you can celebrate the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ beyond the Christmas season.
- **Seek Christ.** Make a list of weaknesses you struggle to conquer. Submit to Christ’s lordship over those struggles through prayer. Remember Christ is with you now and always.
- **Partner with Christ.** Begin each day in complete surrender to Christ. Then acknowledge His presence throughout day. Trust Christ to provide a solution to every problem you face.

DAILY READINGS

1. BORN LEADER // ISAIAH 9:7

We elect government officials according to our personal preferences, their popularity, and their ability to fund campaigns. They make campaign promises that may or may not be kept. Different political parties cater to particular views and people. This can lead to division, hatred, and sometimes violence. And even if they win, their rule is limited to a particular region, and there will be an end to their reign. In contrast, Jesus' reign is peaceable and prosperous. He rules the entire world. His reign is without judgment or broken promises. He rules with justice and righteousness. Jesus reigns forever. No matter who is elected to the worldly governments, we serve the King who reigns forever. We can be confident that His promise of peace, justice, and righteousness will never end.

Thank God for His uninterrupted reign.

2. NO FAILURE // LUKE 1:32-33

Celebrities are honored and often worshiped for the gifts (talents and skills) that God has blessed them with. Their fans will spend small fortunes and stand outside for over 24 hours for their concert or game tickets. Celebrities are idolized and put on pedestals and when they fail, their fans are devastated. They are treated as mini gods, but they are not the One true God. Only our heavenly Father deserves the glory. God sent His Son to die for us. Jesus never fails because He is the Son of the Most High God. All the glory and honor belongs to Him. Jesus reigns and His kingdom will never end.

Use your time, talents, and treasure to bless God. He alone should receive our praise.

3. SUPER POWER // EPHESIANS 1:21

The United States, China, and Russia rank as the most powerful countries in the world. The U.S. is ranked first because it's the most dominant economic and military power in the world.⁶ Many

people believe there is great power in this, but they are deceived. Jesus is more powerful than any earthly super power. He sits at the right hand of God, above all the earth. His position and power exceeds all that has ever been created. His excellence is beyond every being; more superior than all principalities and powers, all rulers and princes, all nations and dominions, all that is visible and invisible. He alone is transcendent.

Our response should be to give Him glory.

4. RIGHT LIVING // LUKE 2:25-27

Being righteous has nothing to do with being right with man. Righteousness is conforming yourself entirely to be right with God. It means your character, attitude, conduct, and words are right in the eyes of God and is based on God's standard alone. Simeon was described as a righteous and devout man who was filled with the Holy Spirit. He had favor with God because he was in a right relationship with God. God promised Simeon that he would see the Messiah before he died. His righteousness and obedience allowed him to receive the promise of God.

A righteous life honors God and results in the favor of God.

5. FIXED FIGHT // ROMANS 8:8-9

Pregnant women often have food cravings. When those cravings are not satisfied they can become irritable. Sin has the same effect. Sin is the flesh craving for desires that oppose the Spirit of God. The flesh wants what the Spirit doesn't and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh. Our flesh is constantly warring against the Spirit (Gal. 5:17). Catering to our flesh is sinning against God and is not pleasing to Him. We were created by God in His image. We belong to Him and the Spirit of God lives in us. His Spirit leads us to righteousness.

When the Spirit of God leads, the fight against the flesh is won.