

In the Beginning of 2026

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Date: 04 January 2026

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[0:00] Oh my goodness, we're going to start covering the whole Bible today, so start in Genesis chapter 1.! Because it's the beginning of a new year.

We call it 2026. It's hard to really believe that.

And you grapple with the thought of 2026, like some of you were alive back in the 60s and 70s and went through all of that.

You never believed in your life. You know, 2000 was something crazy. And it is crazy. It has lived up to the hype a little bit. I mean, there are self-driving cars, so we'll go with that.

But you know that the number points back to something. It points to Jesus Christ. And whether you want to deny him or despise him or reject him, whatever your case is, you can't get away from the fact that the whole world believes that Jesus came.

[1:05] The reality of this new year, though, is that it's not a new beginning for anything. I mean, anywhere around us, you look into the heavens and there's no reset, nothing particular going on in the heavens above us that we should start over.

There's no new beginning if you look on the earth. The planet itself is not reborn. In the northern hemisphere, everything's dead. If you're in the southern hemisphere, it's like you're approaching the heat of summer.

This is nothing new. It's not a beginning. There's no beginning in our society right now or in our nation. January 1st doesn't mark the beginning of any special event.

It does not mean that there's anything relevant taking place just because it's January the 1st. And so there is no new beginning. There is no reset. There's nothing really new about it.

But on our calendars, we turn the page and we rather throw it away and get a new one and say, this is the beginning of a new year. Now, I'm not going to go on my rant that I would have about the months in October, the 10th months, starting with oct and sept oct, novum, decem, all that.

[2:14] If you've ever heard that, it's a head scratcher. But besides that, here we are in the beginning of January and we're going to call it a new year. And so at the beginning of the new year, it becomes tradition to see this as an opportunity for a personal reset.

If it's not happening in the heavens and it's not happening on the earth and it's not happening in the nation, at least for me personally, the tradition is that I evaluate my life and I decide I'm going to make some changes in my life for the better because I want a better version of me after 2026.

And so the famous term, New Year's resolutions, we're all going to resolve that we're going to change, we're going to do something better. We're going to lose weight. Number one resolution. We're going to finish a project. We're going to achieve a goal. We're going to lose weight. It seems like January 1st is really just a reminder that you're overweight. That's really what it is.

Now, anyway, in light of the new beginning, in light of this new year, I want to take a look at what the Bible has to say about beginnings. And so let's go to the very first, the most obvious beginning ever.

[3:31] Genesis chapter 1 and verse number 1. The Bible says, In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

I want to show you this morning, just from this text, three things that I want to apply to the beginning of our new year of 2026.

Before we do that, let's just bow our heads to the Lord and ask His help. Father, please bless this time as we've come, we've traveled, we've braved the elements, as they say.

We've gotten here. We're blessed to be together this morning. We're blessed to have you as our Savior, to have your words before us, to have you in our hearts and in our bodies by your Spirit. We're blessed to know you. But Lord, this is all vain if you don't take your words and apply them and place them inside the hearts and minds of your people.

[4:29] And so God, please do a work and please challenge each one. And my prayer is that you'll get something from us, that you'll be pleased with today. And so Lord, please bless the message.

I can't just say things to these people that are going to help them. You have to do that part. And I ask you to do it, please. We pray it in Jesus' name. He's the one worthy. We ask it in His name. Amen.

Amen. At the very beginning, in the beginning, God. God. The fourth word of the Bible.

There He is. In the beginning. God. At the beginning of everything, there's God. And without God, there's no beginning.

Without God, there's no anything. He's all over it. It's because of Him. The Bible says He's before all things. And by Him, all things consist.

[5:27] And my question then, my thought to apply this to the new year, if He's at the beginning, and He is the beginning, and without Him, there is no beginning, then shouldn't He also be at the beginning of the new year?

You think, what do you mean? What do you mean? Well, when people look ahead to a new year, I've already commented on this, they set goals, they make plans, to do something they've always wanted to do.

I wonder if we could take that at this time of year and ask the question, do these resolutions, do these plans, do these decisions you make, does God ever come into the conversation for your new beginning?

Are your goals, are your thoughts ever spiritual? Or are they always about the way you look in the mirror? The way you feel today?

The places that you've never gone to? Is that all the goals are you have for this year? Is to make myself look better? Is to make myself feel better? Is it all about you?

[6:36] In the beginning, God. In the beginning, God. I want to challenge you to make your goals, to make your thoughts for the new year have something to do with your walk with the Lord.

For instance, have you ever read the Bible through? From cover to cover? Have you ever read your Bible through the whole book? If you haven't, you should.

You should read your Bible from cover to cover. Every word of God is pure. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God.

I know there's places that'll weigh you down and they feel like mud. I know there's passages and chapters and even books that can really wear out your persistence.

So you know what? You should set a goal, a commitment that in the beginning, my goals are going to be about what God wants. If you've never read this Bible, then 2026 is the year for you to read through your Bible.

[7:46] You say, well, I've already missed a few days. You can catch that up. You can do that. What is today? The fourth? You can do it. And if you fall off, you might make that decision to fall off, just keep going, just keep going, just keep going.

Make a goal, whether it happens by December 31st or not. The goal is that I am going to read this book. It is God's book. He has gifted it to me.

It is a revelation of Him. I need to get more familiar with this book. So read the Bible. That's a goal that has spiritual content to it.

That's putting a goal that aims toward God, not toward the one in the mirror, not self. Do you ever have a desire in your heart to witness to somebody you know or love?

It would be a good idea to say, I'm going to do that this year. You ever have a desire to invite somebody from your work or your family or some neighbor to church with you? This would be the time to say, I'm going to do that this year.

[8:51] I'm going to resolve to invite them to church, to extend an invitation. This year would be a good idea to get consistent in your

prayer life.

You're making decisions and resolutions that are going to better your life, right? Well, why not better your prayer life? In the beginning, God, He belongs at the beginning.

So He belongs at the beginning of our year. He belongs at our thoughts for what this year holds.

You ever have a goal to be more faithful and consistent in your church attendance?

That's a good goal for this year. Some of you ought to set that goal, to be more faithful to your church attendance. It's easy to slip. It's just like money.

It's easy to get rid of, but it's hard to get back. And attending church and being faithful to it, it's easy to get rid of your faithfulness. It's easy to slide once, then twice, then three, and now I just don't do that anymore.

[10:01] And it's hard. It takes labor. It takes faithfulness and commitment to get it back. Some of you here need to get it back. Be consistent in your church membership. You ever have a goal that you give faithfully to the Lord?

I didn't say increase your giving and increase the blessings. I'm saying just give consistently and faithfully to the Lord's work. Is that a goal in your heart for this upcoming year?

Or are your thoughts and resolutions all about you? All about your career? All about what you want? What you desire? There's a new year here. And the thought is, how can I improve myself? Well, I'll tell you how. The first thing this morning is to begin your new year by prioritizing spiritual goals.

That is, putting God at the beginning of your new year. Say, Lord, what do you want from me this new year? What do you want out of this relationship from me?

[11:08] What goals would you impose upon my life in this year? What changes should I make going forward? God, what do you want me?

The Apostle Paul said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? That's setting a spiritual goal. Not a carnal. Not a fleshly one. Not about self.

You're not afraid to ask that of the Lord, are you? You're not afraid to be open and honest before Him and say, God, what is it that you want from me in this life?

You're not afraid to ask Him for forgiveness of your sins and to believe on His Son for your eternal salvation. You're not afraid to take that free gift, were you, that cost His Son everything.

Why would you be afraid to come back to the same God, the same holy and loving and righteous God that loved you enough to give His Son for you? Why would you be afraid to come back to Him and say, what do you want from me in this relationship?

[12:11] I'm challenging you this morning as a new year comes, it's a great opportunity for you to put God at the beginning of it. To make those decisions and those goals about your new year be about Him, not about you.

So prioritize spiritual goals. I'm excited for this meeting to start next Sunday. I mean, I'm excited every time it comes around I get fired up inside, I get thinking about it, thinking about it, thinking about it, and I'm excited for it to start next week.

I'm excited for Sunday school and for the second hour and for the evening service and to hang around with you at the meal. I'm excited for Monday night to come and Tuesday night to, I just, I'm excited.

Quit saying the same thing. I'm kind of a, you know, one horse whatever, one whatever whatever. It's a great opportunity this upcoming meeting next week.

It's a great opportunity for God to challenge us at the beginning of our year. For God to deal with our hearts. What I want you to do today is prioritize that meeting.

[13:21] Prioritize spiritual things. I am not trying to put a burden on anybody here. And I'm not trying to guilt trip anybody into anything at all. This is between you and God.

But my advice, my challenge to you is to, in the beginning of this year, prioritize spiritual goals. And here's one that's right in the near future and I think it's a softball.

I think it's just God laying it right there in your lap saying, do you want to hear from me? Do you want to come and join with God's people? Do you want to get stirred up or not?

Do you want the word of God? Do you want your cup filled? It's available to you and it will be. But not till next week. I want you to prioritize that meeting.

That's something that you could do. Secondly, in our verse, it says, in the beginning, God created. God did something. In the beginning, God created.

[14:28] This is an act. And I want you to see that it's not random. It's definitely not without a purpose what God created. I have to just go off on a little side trail here just because it ties back in.

But what God did was he created something of absolute wonder and marvel. The Bible says that by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.

And in Isaiah, it says that his hands have formed it. He created it to be inhabited. And what God did was a creation. He prepared a creation. But what I tire of is this element of these scientists that get into the research and the study of the physical world and they realize that this evolution thing just doesn't work.

This theory doesn't work. There has to be an originator. There has to be an initiator. There has to be a designer. And so there are some scientists that will recognize there's a designer.

There's an initiator to what we have. It's impossible for it to be any other way. And what I tire of is the Christian community going and patting them on their backs saying they believe in God.

[15:46] They believe in God. And yet they don't believe anything concrete about God. They just believe there has to be an initiator.

They've rejected the first ten words of the word of God saying that God created the heaven and earth. They say no some being has to be an initiator that just calls it to start then evolution took place over billions and billions of years as if they can have both.

And I'm just saying they pose as good guys but their wickedness is in a different form. They're rejecters of the word of God. Now the Lord can use the light that he gives them of their being a designer himself of course being the designer to cause them it has happened to bring them to the word of God and to bring them to Jesus Christ and some have gotten saved but for the Christian community to pat these men on the backs as if they're our heroes because they have PhDs and they believe in a designer I don't know I believe in God a creator without a PhD I believe it because it's right here in this book that I'm staking everything of my soul on not my reputation in the scientific community spit on all that in the beginning God created the point I'm getting to is that God created with intention and purpose not just let's just put it out there and see what happens as it evolves into whatever it evolves into what God did was placed a couple on this new planet and said be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and I've given you dominion of the whole thing what God did was he calculated and he constructed all things with incredible exactness with absolute precision the physicists will say that there's no room for fluctuation in certain laws and things of nature there's no room it's something called fine tuning of the universe it's part of it

I believe part of it I think they're trying to merge evolution into it as well but nevertheless there's some very interesting things as you study even down to the molecular cellular level that just proves this is not by chance in the beginning God created with intention and with purpose but purpose and intention of what well let's take a look at that we're going to come back to Genesis but you can go to Revelation and I want to just pick out a few quick passages starting in chapter 4 and then 5 God created all things to bring glory to himself to bring praise to himself to be known in Revelation 4 you're very familiar with verse 11 where these 4 and 20 elders are worshipping him and they're doing it by saying thou art worthy oh Lord to receive glory and honor and power now why are you worthy for thou has created all things because

God is the creator then he is worthy of the glory and the praise or here the honor and power that that creation has to offer him he is worthy of it he created it to receive that come to chapter 5 now Revelation 5 and here's another group that's opening their mouths to the Lord verse 11 5 11 I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beast and the elders and the number of them was 10,000 times 10,000 and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing and every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in them heard I saying blessing and honor and glory and power be to him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb forever and ever and there goes the beast amen they can't they hear that just like you hear some truth you say amen those beasts heard that truth they said amen

[20:22] I'm with that God's getting some glory getting some praise look at chapter 7 Revelation 7 and verse 9 after this I beheld a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindred and people and tongues stood before the throne and before the lamb clothed with white robes and palms in their hands and cried with a loud voice saying salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and under the lamb and all the angels stood round about the throne and about the elders and the four beasts and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God saying amen blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be unto our God forever and ever amen and I have amen that's what God deserves from his creation that's what he's going to get from his creation now what am I saying

I'm saying that in the beginning God created and what he created was with intention and with purpose that that creation turns to him and exalts him and praises him and glorifies him because without him they have no mind they have no air they have no eyes they have nothing no family no friends no house no job no teeth no shoes nothing God created and he did a marvelous thing and he deserves the glory to come back to him now what am I saying about this new year in the beginning of the new year begin your new year of 2026 with that same intention purpose that you're going to bring glory to God determined that this year is not going to be about me this year it's going to be about him

I cannot predict where I'll be in a year's time I don't even know what a day may bring forth but one thing I can determine in my heart I can resolve within my being is that I want to be where God wants me to be I want to be doing what God wants me to be doing it's not going to be what I want or what I feel my life is his and if it can bring glory to him if it can turn praise and thanksgiving and honor back to him then praise the Lord look at Isaiah on your way back to Genesis stop at Isaiah 43 Isaiah 43 and God created something else he created a people a people named Israel and it was the apple of his eye this nation was beloved and is beloved by God and in verse 7

I just want to show you this as a people I want to apply this to you and I as another people the church 43 verse 7 the Lord says even everyone that is called by my name for I have created him for my glory I have formed him yea I have made him he's speaking about the nation here Jacob Israel he says I created him for my glory I formed him I've made him called him by my name if you bear the name Christian that's Christ that's the Lord Jesus Christ and he created us in Christ Jesus as new creatures and formed us as a new body a body of believers for the same purpose for his glory now flip look at the verse 21 Isaiah 43 21 this people have I formed for myself they shall show forth my praise does that sound like something that you ought to be doing a people of God formed created for him for his glory to show forth his praise that almost sounds exactly like something in Ephesians the purpose then for this beginning of a new year

I'm challenging you to purpose that the work of your hands will bring him praise will bring him glory as God in the beginning created did a work not random but a work on purpose to bring glory then at the beginning of this year let us purpose with the same intention to do all to the glory of God your life in 2026 should not look like an arrangement of random chaos it should display purpose it should show that there's a God working in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure let us be to the praise of his glory at the beginning of 2026 now finally in Genesis chapter 1 we read in the beginning God created and the last part of that verse says he created the heaven and the earth

[26:14] God created the heaven and the earth in the beginning he did something that man cannot do the only thing that man or that his creative beings are capable of doing is bringing about the destruction of what God has created the heaven and the earth man can bring sorrow and can bring a curse and can bring in pain and sin and death into God's creation but what God did in the beginning creating heaven creating the earth it is an absolute wonder he hung the earth upon nothing God created something good he said it was very good and he did it with intention and purpose but that creation from Genesis 1 1 that creation being led by Lucifer and then later repeated by Adam did not meet the expectations or the intentions or the purpose of their creator there was a rebellion that emerged then there was judgment that ensued that rebellion and in verse

number 2 of Genesis 1 you've got darkness and floods of water and the same thing gets repeated by Adam's race from chapter 3 when they sin to a flood that he brought about in chapter 6 through 8

God created something that failed more than once now the failure is not a reflection of God's character just please don't even think I'm going that direction the failure wasn't God's doing it wasn't God's fault and he did not set anybody up for failure he set it up to bring glory and worship and praise to him it was very good in the beginning but it didn't stay that way although God is good although his creation reflects his goodness eventually it failed and brought about very ugly destruction and judgment the Bible says that hell was prepared for the devil and his angel probably a likely an appropriate outcome of that initial rebellion from Genesis 1 verse 1 that creation but what does all that have to do with 2026 well in the beginning it was good in the beginning it was a clean slate in the beginning it was created by God and the touch of his holy hand was upon everything but then failure came about that was not predetermined by God the beginning of this year Christian is much like that beginning a clean slate it doesn't have to match the past failures or destruction it can begin brand new how here's my third challenge to you this morning is to begin your new year by putting the past under the blood putting the past failures the past falling and destruction and judgment and where you messed up in 2025 put that under the blood and move on if you face some hard times in 2025 if you felt the pain and the sorrow that comes from some of this lay that at the throne of grace and move on leave it in God's hands and start new in a new year I challenge you don't carry the bitterness don't carry the baggage into a new year let it be new in the beginning in the beginning

God created something that was special when he when he reformed the whole thing and said it's very good it was a clean slate it had an opportunity just like you do in 2026 an opportunity to leave some things at the cross or to leave some things at the throne of grace and begin brand new God offers you a new beginning an opportunity to start fresh the truth is it's not the year at all but every day is an opportunity for a new beginning for a child of God the Bible says his mercies are new every morning every morning thank God for that when God starts over in verse 3 he calls for light let there be light I'm tired of the darkness let's start over with some light let's start over and get rid of the darkness and the destruction and let's dispel all of that mess and all that happened in the past and let's bring about some light let's walk in the light where he is in the light and let's have fellowship with him the new year is a new beginning if you need a new beginning here's an opportunity for you take advantage of it this morning we're looking at

Genesis 1 at the beginning of everything and in the beginning God God is at the beginning God belongs at the beginning and so my challenge is for you to prioritize not selfishly but spiritually prioritize your decisions and goals to be about God to put him at the beginning of your new year in the beginning God created with purpose with intention something to glorify him to bring those waves of praise up before him a sweet smelling savor so you determine that this year is not going to be random acts whatever happens happens but I'm going to purpose to make efforts that I can bring glory to God the heaven and the earth is what he created it was something that failed and was destroyed but this is a new beginning so put behind you whatever needs to be put behind you either the sins of your past leave them at the cross

[32:51] God has blood that can forgive and wash it away you don't have to carry guilt forward you are guilty but it doesn't have to go with you and if you have things that have hurt you and broken your heart and caused you pain a trial a test whatever it is from God learn to leave it at the throne and begin new it's up to you if 2026 is going to produce any fruit that God gets if any treasure is going to be laid up in heaven because of your efforts you know at the end of years and I know it's fiscal and such but with companies they keep books and each month or week or however they lay it out they have numbers and they want to see how we're doing here and how we're doing there and at the end of the year they want to see what they gained hopefully not what they lost do you realize that in the heavens if we could use this analogy there are books and you could have it so that at the end of 2026 there's some gains and you won't have to suffer loss because you put your efforts into bringing glory to God the slate is clean 2026 is empty the treasures are there for you to lay up

the victories are there for you to win the opportunities abound and it's the beginning and so I'm challenging you challenging all of us to make this about God he's in the beginning he deserves to be there so put him there and let's not ever make this about us let's bow our heads and before we dismiss or do anything else with your heads bowed and nobody looking around

I want to ask something of every one of you not corporately but individually are you willing to bow your head before God Almighty your Savior your Creator and openly and honestly ask him what kind of goals would you have me strive for in this year God you just show me and lay it on my heart and I'll do it if I'm going to set goals and make plans I want them to be about what you want me to be accomplishing in this year not me not my will but thine be done he must increase I must decrease will you do that you don't have to come up here but you surely can but will you ask God openly what do you want from me this year open my eyes speak into my heart and I will be willing to follow your voice will you put the priority on your walk with the

Lord on what he wants from you in this life will you give God glory in your body and in your spirit which are God's do you desire to do all to the glory of God it's the beginning it's a perfect opportunity to start over if you need it take it take it don't let the devil come in your ear and say hey you've done this before and you've messed up before this is nothing new no this is new God made it new he's giving you a clean slate let's take it and let's do something with it father please bless your people please encourage and strengthen each of us in the inside Lord we need strength our flesh is strong we need our new man to be stronger and only you can give us that strength feed us from your word strengthen us by your spirit draw us to a relationship and communion and fellowship with you

Lord minister to us from your word please challenge each to not be afraid and not fear but to have courage and to trust you God I pray that as these words before you I pray that you'll hear and that you'll respond in a personal way in a way that they sense you and know you and hear you and rejoice and may this bring pleasure to you that's why we're created God as we look forward to our next week's meeting my prayer is that you'll get us here that you'll help each to commit to being here that you'll bring about some change in our lives in our church some revival some life some energy some focus some commitment and some joy and some peace and rejoicing may this all be done because you love us you sent your son to give us his eternal life because we're thankful for that

Lord help each to submit to you this morning and take it and use it that the glory may redound unto many thanksgivings in Jesus name we pray Amen