

Light for the Nations

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[0 : 00] Isaiah 49, 1-7. This is God's Word. In his quiver he hid me away.

And he said to me, You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified. But I said, I have labored in vain. I have spent my strength for nothing in vanity.

Yet surely my right is with the Lord and my recompense with my God. And now the Lord says, He who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him.

For I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength. He says, It is too little a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel.

I will make you as a light for the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth. Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers.

[1 : 38] Kings shall see and arise, princes and they shall prostrate themselves, because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.

Tomorrow is not Christmas. Tomorrow is December 23rd. But December 23rd is also something of an important day in my life.

Not nearly as important as remembering the birth of Christ. But eight years ago, on December 23rd, Casey and I were in the San Francisco airport with Piper.

Piper was two months old. We had just spent kind of an early Christmas with my parents, and we were waiting in this San Francisco airport to fly back to Indiana.

And I saw somebody who was important. Now he's sitting in the terminal with us. This is just an ordinary flight going to Indiana.

[2 : 37] Nothing particularly special about it. Lots of ordinary people there. And there was this man sitting across the way, looking down on his phone, and nobody around him seemed to know who he was.

But as an avid San Francisco Giants fan, I knew who this guy was. This was Larry Bear. And you all think, who's Larry Bear?

He's nobody to me. He's nobody. He's the president and the CEO of the San Francisco Giants. And here I am, welling up with excitement at the prospect of meeting Larry Bear.

I'm literally thinking, what do I say to this man to express my gratitude for the championships that he brought to San Francisco? But I'm also doubting that this man is who he is.

Because nobody else seems to bat an eye at the thought that that's Larry Bear. Even the guy sitting next to him, right next to him, doesn't seem to have a thought in the world that he's sitting next to this man.

[3 : 37] So I thought, maybe it's not him. But I got the courage to go and talk to him. Introduced myself and asked him, are you Larry Bear? And he was. Even though others overlooked him, turns out the man next to him was his son.

So his son didn't think very much of him being his dad. But Larry Bear was overlooked by everybody else in the terminal. Now here in the book of Isaiah, we are introduced to an important person.

Far, far, far more important than Larry Bear. Far more important than any other name that we could think of in the history of the world.

But this person too is often overlooked. This person is often missed in the book of Isaiah. We may hear words spoken about him.

We may even hear the very words coming from his own lips and miss him in reading the book of Isaiah. Not realizing who this person is.

[4 : 44] He has simply called for us here in Isaiah 49, the servant. Now there are lots of servants in the Bible. Lots of people who have that title. And many of them are not named.

Many of them are just common, ordinary people who are serving in households of perhaps people wealthier than they as servants. Now interestingly enough, some of those people in whose households those servants were found were very significant people who themselves were called servants.

People whose names we do know. People called servants of God often by God Himself. Like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, the Apostle John, the Apostle Paul.

A long list of people who are called God's servants. And we know who those people are. God often speaks of them by name. My servant, Moses.

Or my servant, David. So who is this servant here in Isaiah? This is not the only place that we find this servant.

[5 : 55] Sometimes we read of the servant in Isaiah and Isaiah himself fits the description.

Sometimes we read of the servant in Isaiah and the nation of Israel fits the description.

But ultimately, finally, the servant is Jesus Christ. He is the servant of the Lord. He is the servant that we know of as the suffering servant in Isaiah.

Sometimes in driving towards a mountain range, you approach that mountain range and it looks very flat. I remember traveling towards the Rocky Mountains and thinking, we're going to get past the Rocky Mountains real quick.

It's just right there and just get over them and you're done. But then when you reach the mountain range, you find, no, there's like another layer and another layer and they keep going back, back, back and that two-dimensional mountain range suddenly becomes very, very three-dimensional and you are left in awe of how great that mountain range is.

So too, as we see here in the Old Testament, the fulfillment that may initially be found in Isaiah or perhaps the fulfillment initially found in Israel points us to a further, final fulfillment in Christ.

[7 : 11] Jesus is the servant of the Lord in Isaiah. So there's four poems in the book of Isaiah that are very closely tied together. They all center on this servant so much so that they've come to be called the four servant songs of Isaiah.

We're looking at one of those tonight in Isaiah 49. So who is this servant? Well, we learn who he is as we look at three things about him.

First, his firm request. Second, his far reach. And finally, his final reception.

So let's consider from verses 1-4 the firm reach or the firm request of the servant. Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar.

The Lord called me from the womb. From the body of my mother he named my name. He made my mouth like a sharp sword. In the shadow of his hand he hid me.

[8 : 16] He made me a polished arrow. In his quiver he hid me away. And he said to me, You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified. But I said, I have labored in vain.

I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity. Yet surely my right is with the Lord and my recompense with my God. So the servant here is speaking.

The servant here is calling to us. He is commanding us to listen to him. To focus our attention on his words. Now this is not the first time in the book of Isaiah that we are called to attention.

That the reader is called to listen. Back just one chapter. Chapter 48 we read in verse 1. Hear this, O house of Jacob. And again in verse 12.

Listen to me, O Jacob and Israel, whom I called. And so chapter 49 begins in a similar way. Listen to me. And we hear, pay, give attention.

[9 : 21] But there is a key difference. The servant of the Lord is not making his address only to Jacob and Israel. He's not speaking only to his chosen special people in the Old Testament.

This is an address for the coastlands. Or maybe your translation says islands. There are no islands in Israel. Maybe that's obvious.

Still said it. Just in case you didn't do too well in geography class. There's no islands there. And yet the servant is calling out to the islands. He calls out to you people from afar.

And not those just who are near right there in the land of Israel, but those in distant lands. This request is meant to be heard beyond the bounds of Israel.

It echoes abroad in the islands. Think of the Mediterranean Sea, the large island of Cyprus off the coast. Further towards Greece, many small islands found there.

[10 : 28] And so we have a hint here of what we will see even more clearly in verses 5 and 6. The reach of the servant is expansive and vast.

Israel is to hear the words of the servant, but so is all of the world. So are we. Far from the land of Israel, but through the word of God that is given to us, we are in fact near enough to hear this firm request of the servant.

And he has much to say to us. He tells us here of his calling. He tells us here of how he was set apart for a special purpose and set apart from the womb, from birth.

No part of his life did he live on his own terms. Just doing life in his way, doing life as he pleased. No, from birth he was called by God.

And what better way to convey that than to say from the body of my mother he has named my name. His mother did not name him. God did.

[11 : 38] Because he was born for a special purpose set apart by God. So God brought this servant into this world to do his will. We sung of that already. So here we have the first glimpse of Christmas.

That this servant in Isaiah 49 is ultimately Jesus. It's him. For who was it that named the baby in Mary's womb? Not Mary.

Not Joseph. It wasn't the human parents. It was God. An angel sent by God said to Mary, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus.

So it wasn't up to Mary. It wasn't up to Joseph. They didn't go through a list of baby names individually circling the ones that they liked and then came together and decided on the name that they both found they had circled.

No. The decision was made for them. Named by God because he had been commissioned by God. Set apart by God for a special purpose.

[12 : 45] And then there's this emphasis this special emphasis here in his commissioning on his words in particular. Set apart by God to speak.

We see that in verse 2. He made my mouth like a sharp sword. He says he made me a polished arrow. So he has words to speak.

He has words that are not dull but piercing. He is God's spokesman. He is God's ultimate prophet because what were the prophets to do? They were to speak the very words of God.

And so here we have the servant Jesus bringing a message from God. But he's not just blasting out the message whenever.

No, he was to bring the message. He was to speak God's words at the proper time. And we see that Jesus as the servant revealed here in Isaiah was hidden away.

[13 : 46] Verse 2 says he made my mouth like a sharp sword in the shadow of his hand he hid me. Then the parallel thought he made me a polished arrow in his quiver he hid me away.

And we see in the gospel accounts for much of Jesus' life he lived life in obscurity. He was hidden away until the right time. He was unknown growing up.

He didn't have people following him around as a boy saying well how are things coming along for Jesus in anticipation of his great mission. He wasn't the talk of Israel when the people gathered in Jerusalem for a festival.

No, he was hidden away. He and his words just as Isaiah 49 says. And then in God's perfect timing he was revealed.

And his message from God was made known. His mouth opened and the sword came out. Meaning that the message Jesus brought was not meant to tickle ears.

[14 : 54] These are piercing words. These are words that boldly confront us. Think about the first recorded words of Jesus that we find in the gospel according to Mark.

Jesus does not come into Mark saying you all are doing real well. Keep up the good work the way you live in life. Jesus' first recorded words. The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. And then he gives a command. Repent and believe the gospel. Jesus calls us to repentance. At its very core repentance is saying we're to turn away from one thing.

Turn away from our sins. He's confronting us with the reality of our sin. He's not coming with some kind of message that's just carefree. His words aren't meant to just give us warm fuzzy feelings.

He didn't come with a pep talk or a motivational speech to make us feel good about ourselves. He didn't come saying you're doing just fine. Keep it up. No, just the opposite.

[15 : 59] Repent. Turn from what you've been doing and believe the gospel. Turn from your sin and trust in me for salvation. A motivational speech may make us feel good in the moment but a motivational speech will not save us from hell.

We needed words that probed our hearts. We needed words that made us uncomfortable. We needed words that speak the truth to us.

And those are exactly the words that Jesus brought. Words from God that he brought to us. So he came with a sword and it was the sword that we needed.

But it also meant that he was opposed. We see this fulfilled in Jesus. And we don't have to wait long after his birth to see this. when he was only eight days old and he was presented by his parents in the temple.

Luke 2, we looked at this on Wednesday night. We met Simeon. And Simeon held baby Jesus in his arms. He looked upon baby Jesus. This man was righteous and devout waiting for the consolation of Israel.

[17 : 18] The Holy Spirit was upon him. He blessed Jesus. He blessed his parents. And then he said some words that perhaps are startling to us.

He didn't give these real warm words of encouragement. No, what he said to them was this, Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is opposed.

And a sword will pierce through your own soul also, so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed. So yes, his birth was and it is a great reason for joy.

But his birth also absolutely brought great division. He didn't come to say what people wanted to hear or just what they wanted to hear.

He came to say the words that his father had given to him. He came to say words that would fall on many spiritually deaf ears. It was the truth and sinful man does not want to hear the truth and so he covers his ears and says I don't want that.

[18 : 23] How often did his words provoke people listening to him and stir them up to anger?

Especially so, even so, when he's saying the words that I speak are the words of God and people said we don't want to hear the words that you have to say.

Like in John 8. In John 8 Jesus is talking to a crowd of Jews and he says this to them, you are of your father the devil and your will is to do your father's desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies he speaks out of his own character for he is a liar and the father of lies.

But because I tell the truth you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth why do you not believe me?

Whoever is of God hears the words of God Jesus said. Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.

[19 : 35] And what do the Jews say in response to these piercing words? He must be a Samaritan and have a demon. They rejected his words outright entirely.

Words that he said were the very words of God. And why did they reject those words? Because he spoke the truth and the truth confronted their sinful pride.

The servant of Isaiah who stood before the people that day, the servant of Isaiah who still speaks to us here and now today is not interested in winning a popularity contest. He's not aiming to charm us with his words.

He doesn't speak with a velvet tongue. He speaks what is true. He speaks what comes from God. And so what he said was often opposed. Not met with fanfare.

Not met with continual triumph. Isaiah 49.4 helps us to see that he knew what it was like to grow weary. To labor and yet be met with unbelief and persecution.

[20 : 42] Even as he continued to trust in God and never wavering from that. Even as he continued to remember my right is with the Lord and my recompense with my God.

He trusted God yet he knew the feeling of sorrow and anguish when his words were met with unbelief. You get a glimpse of that in Matthew 17.17 Jesus says O faithless and twisted generation how long am I to be with you?

How long am I to bear with you? He spent his strength and yet his words continued to fall on the ears of a faithless and twisted generation but he never wavered from his mission.

He continued to entrust himself to his father and he continued to speak the words that his father had given to him to speak and so like a sharp sword his words confront sinners.

We see that here in Isaiah 49. Do you know where else we see that? Revelation 19. The end of God's word we come to when Revelation 19 describes the end of the age when Christ returns with all the armies of heaven they are riding upon their white horses and Revelation 19 15 reads from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

[22 : 12] The servant of Isaiah came into this world speaking the very message of God. He came into this world confronting sinners and so in a figurative sense he came into this world cutting us down with the truth that we desperately needed to hear calling us to repentance and faith in him and that servant will return as king one day and he will literally cut down his enemies in judgment with his words once more striking them with the sword of his mouth do you see who this servant of is it is Jesus Christ the Lord now you might be thinking what about verse three isn't God saying that the servant is the nation of Israel there in verse three you are my servant Israel in whom I will be glorified seems straightforward enough at first glance but if we think about it for a moment we see a problem with this final identification of the servant it is difficult to say that the servant of

Isaiah is the nation of Israel here when the servant has come to save Israel we need to remember Israel is in need of restoration Israel is in exile as the people of God in the Old Testament Israel was tasked with being a light we'll see that light to the nations here soon but instead of shining bright for the nations being that beacon of light so that the nations might be drawn to God Israel was drawn into the sinful darkness of the nations and so when we come to Isaiah 49 we don't find the nations worshipping God in the light of his salvation but Israel having worshipped the gods of the nations now living in dark bondage in those nations Israel is most certainly not doing the saving here Israel needs to be saved Israel is desperate for salvation and who is going to save

Israel the servant in verse 5 he says he is going to bring back Jacob he says he is going to gather Israel to himself if Israel is understood here as just the nation it's hard to understand how the nation will save itself out of exile how Israel will bring back Israel but it makes a whole lot more sense when we understand this Israel in verse 3 is not to be the nation ultimately but a particular person even a particular Israelite the one representative of Israel from Israel who can indeed restore the people of Israel and so we can say Jesus is that true Israel he is the one who accomplished the mission the mission that Israel was given and yet failed to accomplish and so we need to see what that mission is and we see it here in verses 5 and 6 so we turn from the firm request of the servant to now see the far reach of the servant verses 5 and 6 and now the

Lord says he who formed me from the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and that Israel might be gathered to him for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and my God has become my strength he says it is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob my salvation may reach to the end of the earth so Israel was in desperate need of salvation at the time that this prophecy was given the nation is languishing in exile and so what a comforting promise these words are to the people salvation will come to you through my chosen servant he is the one who will bring back Jacob to God he is the one who will gather Israel to God but God has far greater plans for the scope of his salvation one nation is not enough one nation will not do so God says here that's too light a thing or your translation might say that's too small a thing that's not grand enough that's not glorious enough we're going bigger God says for one nation to be redeemed that is a marvelous thing for God to do but this is and the salvation of one nation is not a full demonstration of his ability to save how much greater the glory that he receives as his salvation reaches to the end of the earth when Michelangelo was commissioned to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel he could have painted just one marvelous scene from the Bible upon that ceiling it would have been magnificent in its own right it would have been a marvelous piece of art it would have been worthy of admiration but it certainly wouldn't have been a true picture a full picture of Michelangelo's artistic ability it's one thing to paint a single painting but this is

[27 : 54] Michelangelo he can paint the whole ceiling it's one thing to save a people from one nation but this is God he can save a people from every nation and so in that saving work to the ends of the earth Habakkuk 2 14 comes to pass for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea God's glory the brilliant light of his glory that we heard of this morning his salvation reaching to the ends of the earth his glory covering the earth now in saying all of this we need to be clear about something this salvation of the nations wasn't some kind

of modification to God's plan of salvation it wasn't as though this was a last minute change like a quarterback who comes to the line of scrimmage and calls an audible because he realizes

I think we could do a Hail Mary here I think we could get it is not as though God is saying you know what I have looked at my resources and I guess we can go a little bit bigger now so let's go to the ends of the earth let's go to all the nations no this was God's marvelous worldwide plan of salvation from the beginning go all the way back to Genesis 12 God calls Abram and what does God say to Abram in you all the families of the earth will be blessed and then throughout the Old Testament that promise is repeated like in Psalm 22 27 all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nations shall worship before you and so in Jesus these words are fulfilled he is the servant who has come to bring Jacob back to gather Israel to

God he is the light of salvation for Israel but not only for Israel for God that would be too small of a thing God is worthy of all glory and so his salvation will extend to all nations through his chosen servant and in the birth of Jesus that plan of salvation we see come to pass Simeon the man in the temple full of the Holy Spirit he knew it because as he held baby Jesus in his arms what did he have on his lips but Isaiah 49 in in his prayer to God he says Lord now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel so here in his arms Simeon holds the one who will bring salvation to the ends of the earth and we are the wonderful beneficiaries of that plan

God has brought salvation to us through Christ the light has shown on us the light reveals what was once hidden what was once in darkness and obscured light makes known and so Jesus Christ the servant promised from Isaiah he is the light for the Gentiles that means he brings salvation to the ends of the earth starting there in Israel and then expanding out across the earth the light of God's salvation it shines bright the light of his glory seen by all people just as we heard this morning from the angels who appeared to those shepherds what did the angel say fear not for behold I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people all the people the light of salvation for all the people for all the nations and it comes to us in

Jesus Christ makes sense then as we come to the last chapter of the Bible Revelation 22 Jesus Jesus calls himself the morning star salvation it shines forth from him and it's why the hymn writer of O come O come Emmanuel penned these words O come O bright and morning star and bring us comfort from afar dispel the shadows of the night and turn our darkness into light and so that is just what Jesus has done the light of the world has come and he's brought the light of salvation to Gentiles like us that through his death and his resurrection he might then gather a people for himself from every tribe from every nation from every tongue in fulfillment of Isaiah 49 did you know that the book of Acts shows us exactly this it shows us how

[33 : 13] God has marvelously brought to pass the words of Isaiah 49 in the opening chapter of Acts as Jesus is preparing his disciples for his time to leave them and to ascend into heaven he says these parting words to them but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends there's Isaiah 49 Jesus is saying I am the servant who will accomplish this by my spirit through you you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth so we find Isaiah 49 at the beginning of Acts and then we find it again repeated in the middle of Acts Paul along with Barnabas they have just begun their ministry to the Gentiles in chapter 13 and guess what they quote Isaiah 49 and they say this for so the

Lord has commanded us saying I have made you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth now Paul and Barnabas were not claiming that they were the true servants of Isaiah 49 they were simply saying through us the servant of the Lord is fulfilling his mission so we see in the beginning of so it's not surprising that we find Isaiah 49 at the end of Acts as well tying it all together in the very last chapter Paul has reached the ends of the earth he's reached the ends of the known world at that time the city of Rome he's under house arrest and he's preaching the gospel to anyone and everyone who will listen so some local Jewish leaders come to him to hear him speak and Acts tells us that some of them were convinced by what he said but others of them didn't believe and in response to those who did not believe this is what

Paul said therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles they will listen there's Isaiah 49 yet again woven throughout the book of Acts it shows us the risen Christ is bringing to pass the promised salvation of Isaiah 49 and we are recipients of that salvation

today it has come to us the light of the gospel has reached to the ends of the earth that we might turn from the darkness of our sin and find life in Christ the light has shown on us that we might have eternal life light and life found together often in the scriptures they're found together in Psalm 36 9 for with you is the fountain of life in your light do we see light in speaking of Jesus John 1 4 says in him was life and the life was the light of men and then again in 2nd Timothy 1 10 we hear that our Savior Christ Jesus has appeared and what has he done in his appearing he has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel that is the far reach of the servant to the ends of the earth his salvation has come finally we see the final reception of the servant just verse 7 thus says the Lord the redeemer of Israel and his holy one to one deeply despised abhorred by the nation the servant of rulers kings shall see and arise princes and they shall prostrate themselves because of the Lord who is faithful the holy one of Israel who has chosen you in his first coming Jesus was rejected he came to his own John 11 says and his own people did not receive him the Jews did not recognize here is the long awaited servant of Isaiah they concluded no this can't be the promised savior it can't be him and so instead of rejoicing at his coming they rejected him they plotted to kill him and the gentile nations went right along with that plot he was deeply despised he was abhorred by the nation and he stood before rulers like a servant do you hear the play on words there he's not recognized as the servant the servant of the lord from Isaiah the long promised savior he's not seen as the capital s servant rather he's seen as the lower case s servant one who's common ordinary not worthy of any kind of esteem or honor they questioned him they doubted him they brought these false witnesses against him they mocked him and spit upon him they dishonored him and treated him with contempt they looked at him and they saw a servant but not the servant they saw a lowly lowly servant little status in this world and the capital s servant of the

[38 : 45] Lord stood in silence he made no defense he bore the cross to calvary he died alongside criminals just as Isaiah said would happen not in the servant song of Isaiah 49 but in another servant song of Isaiah Isaiah 53 there in Isaiah 53 well known we read these words he was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that is before its shears is silent so he opened not his mouth by oppression and judgment he was taken away and as for his generation who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living stricken for the transgression of my people and they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth in the servants first coming we esteemed him not but in his second coming things will be very very different the words of

Isaiah 49 will come to pass kings shall see and arise princes and they shall prostrate themselves why is that because the Lord is faithful he is faithful to his chosen servant so when the servant returns the rulers of this world are going to give him the honor that he deserves they will see and they will arise they will stand to recognize him and they will then fall down before him they will bow before him in reverence they will prostrate themselves before the king of glory the one who himself came first to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many he will return with grandeur he will return with honor that is only deserving of a king and not just a king he's not just some king revelation 19 again helps us see he is the king of kings he is the lord of lords written on his robe and on his thigh is that name and that king of kings and lord of lords will return with that sword in his mouth to bring the righteous wrath of

God down upon all of those who oppose him so every eye will see him every heart will be exposed for those who have trusted not in him for salvation but themselves and eternity in hell awaits if you are outside of Christ tonight you will be struck down by that sword of his mouth by his very word that day is coming and it is a day of great terror for those who rebel against the servant of the Lord but if you are in Christ trusting in him for your salvation turning away from your sin putting your faith in him as your only hope of salvation having believed that he did die on the cross and rise you will find that he is not one to fear on that day you will find actually the opposite this will be a day of great joy you will see the king as he comes but as

Isaiah 36 says you will see the king in his beauty you will see him and your heart will be glad because he comes not to strike you down with the word of his mouth but to an eternity with him in the new heavens and the new earth to save you where there you will see the faithfulness of God to his word there you will see the fulfillment of Isaiah 49 that God did in fact make his son to be a light for the nations and that God did indeed make his salvation to reach to the ends of the earth how do

we know that because this is just what John saw in Revelation 21 as God gave him a vision of this glorious future so John says there beginning in verse 22 and I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb and the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it for the glory of God gives it light and its lamp is the the earth will bring their glory into it and its gates will never be shut by day and there will be no night there they will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations let's pray together heavenly father you did send your son into this world born as a baby to be just as Jesus said he would be the light of the world and in him those who follow him they have life they do not walk in darkness what joy we have at this time of year to consider his coming into this world and we pray that we would go from here rejoicing that we would tell others that he is the light of the world and in that we would do as he said that we would be the lights in this world that we would testify to his greatness to his glory to the salvation that has reached to the ends of the earth so send us from here rejoicing that those we meet this week many of whom celebrate something they think of as [44 : 31] Christmas but they know not the Savior we pray that they would hear of the Savior by the words we speak and that light and life to them you would bring we pray all of this in Jesus name amen first Timothy 3 16 says great indeed we confess is the mystery of godliness he was manifested in the flesh vindicated by the spirit seen by angels proclaimed among the nations believed on in the world taken up in glory amen